*ALTER*NATION

Decoloniality and Decolonial Education: South Africa and the World
Volume I

Editor: Rozena Maart

COVER

Rozena Maart

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

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Decoloniality and Decolonial Education:
South Africa and the World
Volume I

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Rozena Maart

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Acknowledgement of Reviewers

Contents
Volumes I & II

ARTICLES

OPINION PIECES

ROUNDTABLE 1

ROUNDTABLE 2

INTERVIEWS

BOOK REVIEWS

Contents
Volume I

ARTICLES

Editorial
Decoloniality and Decolonial Education: South Africa and the World

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The decision to put together this collection began as an initiative to engage with presenters and participants of the UNISA Decolonial Summer School of 2019 beyond the content that was presented. UNISA, referring to the University of South Africa, was established in 1873 and is South Africa's foremost distance learning university. UNISA is situated in Pretoria in the province of Gauteng, which is one of South Africa's three capital cities where the executive branch of government is located, with over 400,000 registered students, including its international student population that come from 130 countries around the world. UNISA's Decolonial Summer School commenced in 2013 for the first time, under the direction of the School of Humanities, and has thus far run every year except for 2021, due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This collection is composed of an introduction, seventeen articles by eighteen authors, two opinion pieces, two roundtables by eight authors, two of whom have articles in the collection, three interviews and three book reviews, and as such contain the work of twenty-eight contributors. Critiques of racism, definitions of decolonisation and decoloniality, histories of enslavement, coloniser – colonised relations, the coloniality of language, the colonial teaching practices of empire colonies, Black and racialised bodies as sites of racism and colonisation in the afterlife of apartheid, the recolonised economy, and the European colonial curricula that continue to support such practices, especially in law schools in South Africa, run between and among the work in this collection. Not only are we confronted with the overwhelming critique of colonial pedagogies, we are also confronted with an ongoing critique of teaching and learning practices within the university system that almost all of the contributors draw attention to. Some authors utilise the terms, Black and White when referring to racialised identity, with capitalisation, and some do not – those who write Afrika in its newly adopted form within the

South African academy, and those who do not. The collection made provision for these choices, with the full knowledge of how named identities and their writtenness differ from one region to the next.

Drawing attention to the local – South Africa – and the various locations within the world – Bhutan, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Germany, India, Ire-land, Jamaica, Oman, Senegal, the United States of America, the United Kingdom – are not just places where contributors were born or have lived and worked but places where our agency remains active, where we engage with the world, where we challenge the many ways in which colonisation continues to inform how we write, speak, think, imagine, and produce knowledge.

In this collection, we took a broad approach to the study of decolonisation. The collection is composed of varied engagements with decolonisation and decoloniality and is intentionally inclusive of community-based contributions – those outside of the academy, as well as from within it. Students, alumni, activists, and former students play an important role in this collection not only because they are shaping the work that is being carried out in activist communities in South Africa and around the world but because many are student-cum-activists and are, as such, actively involved in communities where dispossession of Indigenous land, forced removals, and forced migration continue to inform the afterlife of apartheid and colonisation.

Strict protocols with the blind-review process were observed throughout, including the work of the editor, which was handled by the editor-in-chief. The process is taken very seriously in the South African context and one that secures that a journal maintains its national and international standards of excellence and repute. Because of the length of time that this process took, we decided to open the call to contributors and participants of the UNISA 2020 Summer School (referring to the University of South Africa and hereafter referred to as the school), as some of the 2019 discussions found continuity there too. All forms of collective work require a commitment to see that the process is adhered to in the best possible way. Here, for this collection, the process took longer than expected as the pandemic forced us into isolation without colleagues to rely on for face-to-face dialogue and discussion, administrative and technical support, which we often take for granted and only realise when those services are not available to us, especially when computers and printers crash, malfunction, and we are left helpless, incapable of furthering the work we stored on computers upon which we rely. For students

who are contributors, this process was more difficult than anyone anticipated as the closure of library facilities impacted access to resources enormously.

The format that has been chosen situates Puleng Segalo's article, as one of the organisers of the school, as the opening article.

Puleng Segalo's, '**Critical Reflections on UNISA's Decolonial Summer School: In Conversation with Rozena Maart',** takes us directly into the call to decolonise the university curricula in South Africa. From Segalo's input, we get a sense of why and how the presenters carry out their work with the community of scholars who attended the school. Segalo informs readers on how the Decolonial Summer School began at UNISA, whilst also sharing her reflections on the accomplishments and challenges of the school in a dialogue session with the editor of the collection. The dialogue format was seen as an important shift in the style of the article as it allowed for questions to be put forward and for the two researchers to engage one another. As the opening article in this collection, it gives an overview of the impetus of the school and why it was offered annually with the broad range of participating national and international scholars. Hereafter, the sequence of articles follows a thematic order and are divided into four segments.

The **first segment** is composed of four articles and features the work of Lewis R. Gordon, Sabine Broeck, Thomas Meagher, and Patrick Bond and Gumani Tshimomola as co-author. The articles in this segment address definitions of colonisation, decolonisation, decoloniality and racism (and their interre-lationships) whilst also noting the afterlife of slavery, and what Sabine Broeck terms 'enslavism'. The third article in this segment, by Thomas Meagher, addresses the spirit of seriousness as a problem for decolonial theory, whilst Bond and Tshimomola address the process from recolonisation to decoloni-sation in the South African economy.

Lewis R. Gordon's article, **'Some Thoughts on Decolonisation, Decoloni-ality, Racism and Challenges of Citizenship in Communities of Learn-ing',** situates, from the outset, what he calls the 'metatheoretical debates', a struggle before the struggle, among theorists who not only spend their time differentiating decolonisation from decoloniality but about the location of where these struggles take place. Lewis Gordon takes readers through some of the differences in the arguments of decolonisation, as taken up by scholars of the global South, some of whom have engaged with questions of depen-dency whilst others address anti-Eurocentrism thought. In

this regard, Gordon foregrounds the work of Samir Amin, Africa's leading political economist, and the work of Peruvian sociologist and humanist thinker, Anîbal Quijano, who developed the phrase, 'coloniality of being'. The world lost both Amin and Quijano in 2018. Gordon is not arguing against poststructuralism. Rather, he is concerned with the kind of poststructuralism, decolonial scholars are engaged with, and whether they produce the knowledge against the Eurocentric paradigm they assert their vehemence to.

Sabine Broeck's article, **'Decolonality and Enslavism',** follows on from Gordon's and continues with the focus on enslavement. Histories of enslavement, and what Broeck calls, enslavism – the historical and ongoing practice of structural anti-Blackness – is central to her discussion of decolonisation. Broeck consistently offers a basis for discussion, by asserting that we engage with the afterlife of enslavement. Broeck's focus is on the connection between the concept of decoloniality which she considers critical, and the framework of such practices which, informed by the work of Black feminists in the United States and Bulgarian psychoanalytic scholar, Julia Kristeva, she reads through the abjectorship of Black bodies.

Thomas Meagher's 'The Spirit of Seriousness', is situated in the existential phenomenology of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir and unpacks why the spirit of seriousness is important for decolonisation. Meagher tackles philosophical concerns pertaining to decolonisation and unpacks them by drawing on, in addition to the work of Sartre and de Beauvoir, the work of W.E.B du Bois, Lewis Gordon, Sylvia Wynter and Frantz Fanon. Drawing on Hegel, which we see on several occasions in this collection, Meagher situates seriousness as a value – one of bad faith – and offers several examples of how it is utilised. He includes acts of colonisation that are committed in the name of Christianity, civilisation, King and country, where colonisation is treated as a value, as we have seen globally with enslavement as the end-result of such justification.

Patrick Bond and Gumani Tshimomola's 'From Recolonised to Decolonised South African Economics', start their article by asserting that replacing a neocolonial project of financial control by neoliberal forces, with one that represents genuine economic decolonisation has never been more urgent, in South Africa and everywhere. At the time of the #FeesMustFall protests, students demanded an extra R40 million be added to the annual budget, and their power of protest was sufficient to defeat Treasury neoliberals. The limits of bourgeois nationalism are essentially defined not just by

its underlying loyalty to the institutional structures inherited from colonialism but also by the belief of colonial elites that capitalism remains valid despite the state of their underlying and impoverished societies. Samir Amin, born of an Egyptian father and French mother, is considered a pioneer of Dependency Theory and World Systems Theory. Amin, however, situates his work within the school of global historical materialism, and his analysis in this regard is key to the articulations put forward by Bond and Tshimomola, when addressing the move from recolonisation to the decolonisation of the South African economy.

The **second segment** is composed of six articles and focuses on racialised identity, particularly the body as a site of colonisation, and engages with the work of Fanon and Biko, both of whom draw on Hegel. Hegel is key to several articles in this collection especially those by Malick Diagne, Oumar Dia and Rozena Maart. The Black body as a racialised body, along with racialised identities are key themes in this segment and draw out the philosophical and psychoanalytical elements of coloniser-colonised relations vis-a-vis Hegel, by focusing on desire, recognition, the gaze, and the return of the racialised gaze by the recipient. From the body, Dey and Maart open the mouth of the coloniser and unravel how the taste-buds of the coloniser informed the process of colonisation: it was not only the spice route to India or the coffee route to Java but also the clash of the colonisers over food and enslaved cargo as capital, as a social and cultural property of culinary traditions that the coloniser wanted to possess and reap the benefits. The Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, French, Germans, English, primarily although not exclusively, sought out particular regions to flavour their palate, and return to the slowly emerging empires with what they considered 'exotic' food. This segment then moves to Jade Gibson's article where heterotopias of self are problematised, vis-à-vis Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopias, followed by Danille Arendse's coming to consciousness of her racialised and legalised Coloured identity. It is important to situate the history of Coloured identity in South Africa.
   In **Malick Diagne's 'The Socialism of Frantz Fanon: A Theory for the Rehabilitation of Subjugated Peoples',** engages with the historicity of Fanon's thought that addresses the radicality of the colonised subject and the drive towards freedom. Herein lies the crux of the decolonial project for the colonized. And as Diagne asserts, Fanon's position on socialism is rooted in the fight for the values and culture of the colonised – much like Amílcar

Cabral had postulated, which only the colonised can take the lead in fighting. What is clear in Diagne's article, is that it is not the imposition of Marxism or the interpretation of socialism based on European notions of exploitation that are important to the decolonial project, but one where the virtue of African life and African survival to the commitment to decolonisation is accentuated, and which Fanon resolutely postulates.

In **Oumar Dia's 'Fanon's "The Negro and Hegel" or How to Appropriate the "Miraculous Weapons Found in the Oppressor"?',** Dia takes us through the process of how Fanon utilized Hegel's master and slave dialectics to produce a theory of liberation. Dia relies on the work of Alexandre Kojève, known worldwide for his ground-breaking lectures on German philosopher Hegel. Kojève's interpretation of Hegel's master-slave dialectic had an enormous influence on Jacques Lacan, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Georges Bataille, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and later, on Black Consciousness ideologues and revolutionaries such as Frantz Fanon and Bantu Stephen Biko who envisaged theories of liberation. Dia raises crucial questions about the use of European thinkers in adopting and fashioning theories of liberation from their work. He discusses the reluctance that the colonised have in this regard by noting that the Europe-centric philosopher is often rejected, and notes that this is 'rightly so'.

Rozena Maart's 'Black Bodies on South African Beaches: "Lus" en "Smaak" jou lekkerding', offers a systematic unpacking of the text unleashed by Penny Sparrow – a White South African woman – who along with several others between 2015 and 2016, at the height of the #FeesMustFall protests, continued to attack Black bodies on social media platforms. Maart borrows from Algerian Jacques Derrida's approach in revealing the hidden, forbidden and repressed within Sparrow's text. Beaches as sites of enjoyment and pleasure for Black bodies, Maart argues, become yet another site for the Hegelian master and slave relationship, which Fanon expounded upon extensively. Maart moves her critique to desire and recognition, injecting the Lacanian *jouissance* with the *Kaaps* expressions of *lus* and *smaak*, that define, in a limitless way, a particular history of sexuality, pleasure and enjoyment. The reader gets to see a politics of desire that is already present through the history of apartheid, and how the decolonisation of the beach reveals one of the cornerstones of apartheid legislation. Maart draws on Anton Lembede in asserting the qualities of the Black body – as mind, spirit and body that has needs, desires and aspirations whilst also bringing Lacan into the scene of the

segregated Whites-only beach of Lewis Nkosi's *Mating Birds* in articulating the transgression of desire, the pinnacle of apartheid legislation.

N. Jade Gibson's, **'Decolonising the "Eye" within the "I" – Heterotopias of Self: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Visual and Material Relationships among and between Space, Body, Memory, Identity and Place',** addresses multifaceted heterotopias. Heterotopia is a world within a world. The world projected by the author and/or artist mimics the world in which she lives by problematising it, disturbing its socio-cultural spaces since the subject of ridicule turns the lens on those who 'other' and by so doing exposes the world they live in for the disjuncture that it causes. Gibson draws our attention to the I and the Eye – a gaze that she encounters and one she recreates, participating in a self-critique and performance of the gaze that is inflicted on her viewer. She returns the gaze by presenting her version of the racialised stereotypes inflicted upon her as she questions under which conditions her physical appearance draws the viewer into a form of ownership of her.

Danille Arendse's **'"Coloured" Consciousness: Reflecting on How Decoloniality Facilitates Belonging',** offers a series of reflections of her Coloured identity from a place of complex existential experiences: she traces these from the place of her birth, early socialisation and education, and then later, as she moves from one province to another upon the completion of her doctoral degree how her understanding of her identity takes on a different shape. Coloured identity is for Arendse, the psychologist-cum-scholar, an imposed legal identity that stems from the period of racial classification in South Africa, which she notes as such, by indicating her choice of expression as 'Coloured' – a term, she addresses as not accepting but which through a series of interactions at the Decolonial Summer School of 2020, forged a path for a deeper engagement as she comes face to face with her decolonial project and comes to grapple with her history of belonging.

Sayan Dey and Rozena Maart's article, **'Decolonisation and Food: The Burden of Colonial Gastronomy – Stories from West Bengal',** is a collaborative article, and brings together Dey's work on the food customs of precolonial Bengal and Maart's work on food colonisation from Bengal and Java to District Six, the old slave quarter of Cape Town. Bengali families were enslaved by the Dutch and brought to the Cape to serve as cooks in the middle of the 1650s to work for the food supply of the DEIC's passing ships *en route* to India. The authors not only link the act of usurpation and ongoing colonisation to the extraction and cargo of enslaved labour but also to the social

ownership of the means of production, such as culinary skills, expertise and ancestral knowledge of food, as such intellectual property, which the enslaved are not paid for but which the Dutch colonisers relied on and anticipated in advance. Various examples are cited of particular culinary dishes, its preparation, and how colonisation influenced the dishes through ingredients brought from freshly colonised territories into Bengal. Anyone who has a cup of tea and sees the name, Earl Grey or Lady Grey, must know that Britain has never grown tea, or coffee, for that matter, and yet have garnered a reputation for their quaint teashops, which they managed to raise to the level of exquisite, an exercise of elitism borne off the backs of the tea-pickers whose land and culinary histories they stole and continue to take credit for.

The **third segment** in this collection moves from the Model-C school system in South Africa and into the university setting; it has us paging through the texts that continue to serve as primary reading, in the language of the coloniser, upholding the colonial civilisation of the coloniser despite the government-driven transformation policies and the call to decolonise by students in South Africa and around the world.

      Christopher Gevers's article, **'South Africa, International Law and "Decolonisation"',** takes us back to 1962, to the opening of Ghana's Law school where Nkrumah made the opening speech. Gevers is one of South Africa's emerging law scholars, and his participation in projects hosted at UKZN, such as 'Critical Times, Critical Race', and 'Race, Space and the City', fostered a platform for his work to be brought to our attention and also for students and scholars to experience the depth and richness of his analysis as a legal scholar challenging the law academy to interrogate their reliance on schools of thought that does not propel South Africa – a country at the tip of the African continent – into the international arena but maintains the links of coloniality through its teaching practices and choice of outdated curricula. Gevers' article asks questions about the absence of 'Third World' law and why they are still truanting outside of the pages of the academy. Gevers also directs readers to African international legal scholarship vis-a-vis the literary foundational works of Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o.

      Sieraaj Francis's article, **'White line-managers and Black labour: Ticking the Boxes of Decolonisation in a Teaching and Learning Unit of a "First Class" University in South Africa',** undertakes an interrogation of his refusal to participate in 'decolonial pedagogical practices' as instructed by

his White line-manager, and the existential journey that ensues. Francis's point of departure is located in the ebb and flow of the university's decolonisation agenda, steered in his view by colonisers who have not questioned their lived experience and as such perpetuate the very racism they claim to be against. Francis's article started as a letter, detailing how he was treated, which he terms a 'less-than' by a White woman line-manager and grew into a historical unpacking of all of the ways in which his multi-dimensional Coloured, Cape Malay, Muslim and Black identity was under attack at this place of work, which he does not name not out of fear but as a means of not drawing attention to one university in South Africa as he believes that racism is rampant everywhere in South African universities. Francis's article offers readers an analysis of the dynamics of racism he experienced in the 'Teaching-and-Learning setting where his curriculum vitae was overlooked but the stereotype of his racialised identity treated as his vitae, which meant that he was not afforded the tasks consistent with a person who went to an ivy-league university in the United States but one that by virtue of this racialisation afforded the gazer the benefit of treating him like an uninformed technician.

Juan Ignacio Solis-Arias's article, **'Acts and Actors: Decolonising the study of Architecture at a South African University',** begins with the author's location as a foreigner from Colombia in South Africa, and within the university setting where he works within the school of architecture, which forms part of a large structure of the School of Built Environment and Development Studies. At first, using an existential approach, Solis-Arias informs readers of his own racialisation in Colombia and how this informed the way in which he entered South Africa. The racialisation that he speaks of, could easily have been anyway; colonised peoples from around the globe show evidence of internalised racism towards themselves and their loved ones, in similar ways, with hierarchies of skin colour playing a crucial role in how they are able to love and shame simultaneously. Solis-Arias offers an account of his place within the setting that he is unfamiliar but quickly observes that the East African architects who enter the university premises as examiners have come equipped to dehumanise the last of the continent's Black students who dared to enter into the domain of architecture – previously reserved for their colonisers.

Philile Langa, in her article, **'Rainbow Schooling Pains: An Auto-Ethnographic account of Model C Schooling in South Africa: In Dialogue with Rozena Maart',** offers an existential account of her schooling years

within the Model-C school system. The author considers herself a political experiment: someone who went to a Model C school, which is a structure that emerged after the formal end of apartheid (1990), with the idea that Black learners would need to be educated by White teachers as a means to address previous inequalities. The notion of imitating White speech, White thoughts and ideas also meant the denunciation of African languages, African cultures and African identity. Langa's article offers an analysis of her decolonial project, which also asks questions about Black presence and the absence of Black teachers as disseminators of Black knowledge.

The **fourth segment** is composed of two articles, by Sukla Chatterjee and Cloris Porto Torquato, and focuses on literature and language. This focus is not one that South Africans or those in the African diaspora can overlook. When Kenyan writer and academic Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o announced that he would only write in Gikuyu in the mid-1970s and, penned his *Decolonising the Mind*, he opened up already ongoing discussion in India but probed the possibility for contemporary writers to think critically about our writing practices and the dissemination of the coloniser's mindset. It is to the latter that Cloris Porto Torquata takes us: a tour-de-coloniality-of-languages, as plurality, as she exposes the many facets of coloniality still maintained and reproduced in Brazil, in the name of modern euro-driven civilisation, which has meant a denunciation of the many African and Indigenous communities of Brazil.

Sukla Chatterjee's 'Redrawing Dystopian Borders: A Decolonial Reading of Vernacular Dystopias through Mahasweta Debi's Short Stories,' brings us into the realm of literary dystopias, which is not only on the decolonial agenda in South Africa and in India but across the globe. Starting with Chatterjee's choice of asserting the Bengali spelling of Mahasweta Debi's Bengali identity, and the pronunciation and writtenness of her surname, as Debi, Chatterjee brings the canon of dystopia out of its elitist status and into the world of postcolonial and vernacular Indian literature, which the current decolonial agenda in India, among a handful of scholars, has pushed to the fore. Chatterjee asserts that vernacular dystopias have been the outcome of fears and anxieties, as well as the production of apocalypse scenarios that further entrench the gentrification and regentrification processes, thereby neglecting to address how gentrification reproduces the very inequalities that writers of vernacular dystopias are against.

Cloris Porto Torquato's article, 'Challenging the Coloniality of Languages,' is focused on a teacher's education as a site through which to

challenge the coloniality of languages, which she addresses as plurality, from the context of Brazil, where she is located. Porto Torquato draws on Fanon, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Bakhtin, Ta-Nehisi Coates and a range of authors, to challenge the coloniality of languages in Brazil, where Portuguese continues to be treated as the main and only language of speech, knowledge production and knowledge dissemination. Porto Torquato is interested in the social and cultural production of knowledge and the limitations that are imposed by the Brazilian government's insistence in continuing a legacy of coloniality long after the coloniser has left, and which continues to have implications for a population, especially those racialised by the cruelty of divide-and-conquer identity politics.

Following the articles, the collection shifts to **two opinion pieces**, the first by Sipho Singiswa and the second by Gillian Schutte.

   Sipho Singiswa, 'White Arrogance Tramples Mandela's Legacy for African Self-Determination', addresses the inhumane treatment of Indige-nous peoples of South Africa by White colonials. Singiswa also likens White liberals to Mahatma Gandhi, who in his view was considered a leader yet had no regard for Black people or Indigenous peoples of South Africa. Singiswa is not the only person who holds this view; Gandhi has been outed as a racist and casteist by South Africans and Indians in his homeland and across the African and Indian diaspora. Singiswa offers insight into the fallacy of the Mandela presidency, noting that the masses were duped into believing that self-determination and dignity would be restored after apartheid.

   Gillian Schutte's, 'The Fallists and White Male Hegemony' situates the actions of the Fallists as central to her critique of White hegemony in South Africa. Schutte is well-known for her critiques of White South Africans, which she argues are only interested in maintaining apartheid-style White privilege for their exclusive benefit. Schutte argues that the Fallist movement shook the White status quo in South Africa and created a paranoia, which fostered a crisis mode reaction among those who occupy and seek to maintain their occupancy of White bourgeois democracy, a delusion that White men, in particular, she notes, care to cultivate. This is despite the generation of young students who forge ahead with the decolonisation agenda, whether White South Africans approve of their actions or not.

Hereafter, the collection proceeds with two roundtable discussions.

Rozena Maart

The first roundtable is composed of four contributors all of whom form part of the research group called, 'Race, Space and the City'. Nandipha Makhaye, Nompumelelo Kubheka and Londiwe Sokhabase were students in Archi-tecture when the group started in 2013, and Rozena Maart, who facilitated this roundtable, was then the Director of the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity (CCRRI). The research group was established as a consequence of one of the three women in the group questioning the absence of African identity in their education and training as architects at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, for which she was chastised. The three women as architects in this discussion were in the same year of study, each encountering similar experiences of racism such as shunning, ostracization, punishment for speaking out, and public humiliation for their refusal to participate in colonial practices that have continued to be part of the architecture academic environment. In joining the seminars at CCRRI and engaging with students who were part of 'Critical Times, Critical Race', students who were interested in the built environment, were also able to engage their peers on these inter-relationships of land, space and African identity.

The second roundtable is composed of the contributions of five panellists and bring a particular point of view to this collection – they form part of a research group called, 'Critical Times, Critical Race', which emerged in 2013 at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity (CCRRI): Philile Langa, Ayanda Ndlovu, Phezu Ntetha and Jackie Shandu, share the round-table, chaired by Rozena Maart. When the research group was established all the participants were students. Most have remained students for the past seven years whilst also being involved in various activist work. Ayanda Ndlovu reminded us recently of the activism surrounding #KingGeorgeMustFall in 2014 at Howard College at a time when the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town had not made the news. King George V was the King of the United Kingdom and its dominions from 1936 until 1952. As such, he was the last emperor of India until the partition between Pakistan and India in August 1947. The University of KwaZulu- Natal's Howard College campus where students and alumni in this collection enter, is located on the former King George V drive. The Howard College campus has a King George V statue on display as a reminder of his status as a British imperial and also his position in Natal, as the province was previously called, as the last bastion of the British empire. It is twenty-

seven years after 1994, and our sites of education are still named after these colonisers, the arches that we walk under, flawlessly marbled with the names of colonials who fought in the First World War, sculpted into the fabric of the building, amid the glisten of the violence which remain absent on their breath but very present above our heads.

The **final component** of the collection has three interviews and three book reviews: Sabine Broeck's *Gender and the Abjection of Blackness*, Jane Anna Gordon' third single-authored book, *Statelessness and Contemporary Enslavement*, and Leonard Harris's *A Philosophy of Struggle: the Leonard Harris Reader*, edited by Lee A. McBride III. What makes this segment so important is that so many of the contributors in this collection have been influenced by Broeck, Jane Anna Gordon and Leonard Harris. The work on enslavement carries links to all of the three scholars, and whilst there are distinct paths that each of them focus on, they each offer a unique contribution to the growing dearth of decolonial studies intent on examining the previously neglected histories of enslavement, and statelessness, which Broeck and Jane Anna Gordon argue with depth and effortless persuasion. Leonard Harris's work in the ground-breaking formation of *Philosophy Born of Struggle* as an annual conference that has drawn an international community of scholars, and the collections that he has produced under the same name, for more than three decades, stand as a mark of resilience in a world where philosophy's White mythology, hides behind its inability to articulate a philosophy of justice and a philosophy that brought the history of the masses into the classroom because Harris dared to persevere.

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Unpacking Decoloniality and Decolonial Education: South Africa and the World

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Abstract

In this article I unpack the terms 'decoloniality' and 'decolonial' as a means to address their respective histories in the South African context whilst also drawing on key examples within the global South. Many countries in the global South share histories of usurpation, coloniality and brutality at the hands of the same European colonisers. So, I offer, with overlaps, examples of the early stages of Portuguese, Dutch, British, Spanish, Italian and German colonialism, and their attempts at enslavement and colonisation. Whilst colonisation was for Europeans an escape from poverty, warfare, famine and disease, the promise of immediate and continued wealth through usurpation, settler-coloniality and the acquisition of raw materials through forced slave labour in Africa and the Americas, it secured their prosperity into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the afterlife of which they remain beneficiaries to, and which historical texts fraudulently offer them praiseworthy mention as empire builders.

Keywords: colony, decolonial, decoloniality, Arab Slave trade, colonialism in South Africa, #MustFall, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, Black Consciousness, Pan Africanism

Any unpacking of the terms employed in the title, such as 'decoloniality' and 'decolonial education' requires an understanding of how these terms have been employed, what we understand as their meaning, how we carry out the work in their name, and to which purpose. Decolonial education is always in the present, and as such, our concern is then with the moment of insurgence, interrogation, and resistance to colonisation – the act that is in the moment of, that moment of execution, an in-progress process that is constantly unravelling, a process that involves the undoing of colonisation in the flesh, through thoughts and ideas enacted through the body of the subject(s) who under-

stands and identifies the features of colonialism that hamper the continuity of a dignified lived experience – the subject acts, entrenches its decolonial position, enforces it, breaks with coloniality despite the shunning, the punishment the colonial threatens to inflict, despite the cunning coercion of complicity disguised as collegial congeniality. This in-the-moment process, is also an in-the-present one, a warding off of persistent, vigilant coloniality that has many tentacles, even if it hides under the rubric of democracy, such as in contemporary South Africa where the agents of coloniality draw from a bottomless pit of historical White privilege to refuel their attacks.

Each time I am with a community of scholars in a room where decolonisation and decoloniality are discussed, I generally ask, from the onset of the discussion: what is decolonisation and who are we decolonising from? *What* are we decolonising from? The questions noted here were also the ones I asked at the start of the sessions I presented at the University of South Africa Decolonial Summer School of 2018, 2019 and 2020. Attempting to address them, I drew on key tenets of Black Consciousness both in the analytical tools laid down by proponents such as Frantz Fanon, the Black Panthers under the analytical leadership of Stokely Carmichael, Angela Davis and Huey Newton, and Bantu Stephen Biko, revolutionary and trainee medical doctor from the Eastern Cape of South Africa, one of the founding members of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania. These thinkers, whose analysis of the colonisation and enslavement of Africans come with rigorous analytical tools, collectively inform my interrogation of coloniality and decoloniality. Here in this collection, as noted earlier, our attention is focused on South Africa and various countries around the world, through the contributions of authors who were born and/or whose racialised identities and lived experience stem from Bhutan, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Germany, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Oman, the Philippines, Senegal, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. These are not only countries where coloniser-colonised relations inform our lived experiences, they are also geographical locations where our agency remains active (for some of us there is one location whilst for others, there are multiple locations), where we engage through various forms of pedagogies, teaching, learning, the sharing of community-based interests as is evidenced by the way that we take a stand, enact our protest politics, write, speak, think, imagine, produce knowledge(s) that come from our histories of struggle and/ or our histories of engagement with the world.

As a means to address the interrelated question: 'what is decolonisa-

tion and what are we decolonising from?' I now offer a short segment on South Africa's history of colonisation, which is embedded in its history of enslavement, much like the rest of the African continent, as well as across the Americas, Asia, particularly the Indian subcontinent. It is not only as a consequence of the kind of work undertaken by the authors who come from the above-named regions of the world and their relationship to South Africa, which extend beyond the UNISA Decolonial Summer School but be-cause any commitment that seeks to actively dismantle *how and what* colonisation took from the colonised as a means to dispossess us, disown us, dehumanise us, subjugate and enslave us, has to lay bare the methodical processes through which they were undertaken ... on a world scale. There are, undoubtedly limitations in a text of this kind – it is a short introduction that seeks to lay a foundation but also to actively engage with the context. Despite limitations, one must steer beyond them to offer, if only briefly, some of the historical events that allow us to understand who and what we are indeed decolonising from.

For Europeans, colonisation was an escape from poverty, warfare, famine and disease and the 'voyage' to Africa, the Americas, the East, especially India and China, offered them the promise of wealth through the acquisition of raw minerals, spices, land rich in agriculture to grow food for export, the acquisition of silver and gold – all of the above were deemed crucial as a means to acquire wealth which Europeans did not have, and planned to increase upon acquisition. Richard Jobson, in *The Golden Trade,* writes of his 1620 trip to West Africa. 'Gold was the principal for which we came ... no part of the world abounds with gold and silver in a greater degree than Africa', he revealed. The wealth of natural resources were the key indicators of how European countries usurped, colonised, exploited and under-developed the African continent, which as Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* systematically reveals, until it was evident that African flesh, once enslaved, could ensure the Europeans their wealth.

Before the Dutch, the Portuguese circumvented the Cape and landed in its waters on the 3 February 1488, guided by Bartholomeu Dias, and named the region, Cabo da Boa Esperança which, as per its English translation, is still today referred to as the Cape of Good Hope. The Portuguese had previously sailed down the west African coastline, and by 1482, under the leadership of Sao Jorge da Mina entered the shores of Ghana, uninvited, and erected Elmina castle, which served as one of their main trafficking centres in the sixteenth century for enslaved Africans they took as cargo to North, South and Central

America. On 12 October, 1492, after a 2-month journey, Christopher Columbus (referred to by his Italian birth name, Cristoforo Colombo and often by his Spanish name, Cristóbal Colón), sponsored by Ferdinand the II, the King of Aragón (known by his Spanish name as Fernando) and Isabella I, Queen of Castile (the husband and wife team known as the Catholic Monarchs), landed on one of the many islands in the Bahamas, although his intended destination was India. Rodrigo de Triana upon seeing a glimmer of land exclaimed, 'Tierra! Tierra!' (Land! Land!). Columbus immediately proclaimed the land and the people as 'San Salvador', which with his Catholic sensibilities, was in honour of Jesus Christ and the salvation that the 'discovery' of the land implied, with a restless crew on the brink of mutiny. Not only was the accidental arrival in the Americas treated as an act of God but one which brought the Europeans into the Americas as saviours, filled with Catholic piety, commissioned by Spanish royalty. Columbus took four transatlantic voyages to the Americas between 1492 and 1502, primarily to the Caribbean, including the Bahamas, Cuba, Santo Domingo and Jamaica – the third largest island in the Caribbean.

Much to the dismay of Columbus, it was Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese usurper known as the first European 'explorer' to reach India by sea, who entered South African waters on the 4 November 1497 in the southwestern coastal waters, which he named Saint Helena Bay, making it the second Portuguese entrance on South African land and sea. Da Gama named this place where he took his first steps on the shores of South Africa, Saint Helena – after the mother of the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great. The religiosity of colonialism and enslavement, as we see throughout history, was central to the moral consciousness of the coloniser as a usurper and enslaver. Somehow, when met with resistance, the Indigenous peoples were considered the savages and murderers, in fighting back. One such case is when the Khoi attacked the audacious 'explorers' in November of 1497 and wounded Vasco Da Gama in the thigh. Thirteen years later, Francisco de Almeida, the Portuguese Viceroy to the state of India (1505 - 1509) entered South Africa. A series of recurring events set in motion a relationship between South Africa and India, as is evidenced for three centuries among the Dutch, English and Portuguese colonisers of the two countries. In February of 1510 Almeida was met with fierce opposition by the Goringhaicona, an Indigenous Khoi people, who resisted his intrusion, after an exchange of iron for cattle was negotiated and an agreement reached. Instead of returning to their ship Almeida and 12

men thought their thievery would go unnoticed as they took cattle from a village belonging to the Goringhaicona. The Goringhaicona apprehended then attacked them, and they fled to their ship and returned with 150 of their men. Thievery and arrogance cost 64 of these intruders their lives, including that of Almeida and 11 of his captains. And whilst Almeida's defeat is scantily mentioned in history books former president Mbeki, noted the role played by the Goringhaicona in fighting usurpers when addressing the National Assembly on the 26 March 1999, as he bid former president Nelson Mandela well into his retirement.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to engage in the Atlantic slave trade; they completed their first transatlantic slave voyage to Brazil with enslaved Africans as their cargo in 1526. North-west of its unmarked border sits the country we now know as Colombia, where slavery was practised from the beginning of the sixteenth century when the Spanish usurped Santa Marta in 1525, Cartagena in 1533, and Santiago de Cali in 1536. Indigenous people were the first to be trafficked and enslaved in Colombia, which was soon followed by enslaved Africans. Whilst it is important to note that the cities noted above was not towns or settlements at the time of usurpation, one cannot credit the Spanish (or other European colonisers) as 'founders' when civilisations already existed before they established settlements. Spain usurped and colonised the Philippines for more than 300 years, from 1565 - 1898 firstly under the Mexico-based Viceroyalty of New Spain then directly governed by Spain. When Spain was defeated in the Spanish-American war of 1898 the Philippines became a territory of the United States. Spain was considered the largest empire in history, from the 15th to the 19th century, and was often called, 'the empire on which the sun never sets'[1]. The expression 'Spanish West Africa' is not only a contradiction but an indication of the Spanish conquest of North Morocco, Ifni, the Tarfaya region, Western Sahara, and the territories of early 21st century Equatorial Guinea. Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Belize, were among the 35 colonies it once had control of.

Colonialism in South Africa is often dated as beginning in the year

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[1] '... [T]he empire on which the sun never sets' (Spanish trans: *el imperio donde nunca se pone el sol*) indicated how vast its empire was and that at any given time of the day or night a territory in their possession was in daylight. See also, 'The British Empire', *Caledonian Mercury* (15619; 15 October 1821. p. 4; and, 'Empire Sunset? Not Just Yet'. *The New York Times* 1 July 1997.

1652 under the command of the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) also known as the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, which initially registered itself as a silk company. The year 1652 also marks the history of enslavement and forced labour at the Cape, the first and main port of usurpation and colonisation by the Dutch. Of note, and as an indication of the history of colonialism and enslavement in South Africa, it is important to note that the Dutch usurped and colonised Indonesia in 1595, Mauritius in 1598, Bengal in 1605 and Malaysia in 1641; it is from these regions, proclaimed as Dutch colonies, that the DEIC returned and gathered their strength to continue enslavement and derive greater wealth as they forged the process of enslaved cargo, transporting the enslaved to and from different colonies – Bengal to Java, then from Java to the Cape – in the middle and latter part of the 1650s to set up their planned half-way station from Europe to India, at the Cape. These acts of enslavement, deemed as necessary acts of enforced labour by the Dutch, were envisioned before the usurpation of South Africa, thus preme-ditated, and as such seen as crucial to the success of DEIC colonialism. With-out slave labour, the DEIC could not have established the proposed halfway station to India at the Cape, which included enslaving people from Bengal, Indonesia (mainly Java), Malaysia, and later trading enslaved as cargo with the Portuguese in Mozambique and Angola. Walter Rodney, in his 'European Activity and African Reaction in Angola' notes that 'it was in Angola that the slave trade was conducted with the greatest violence' (Ranger 1968: 51).

The palate of the coloniser, who slowly became accustomed to food from places they usurped and colonised such as Bengal, Malaysia, Java, among others, were of concern for the DEIC who ensured that whilst the process of usurpation and colonisation was in process, the enslaved peoples from the colonies lived under strict conditions of servitude whilst cooking their meals and flavouring their palate as they plundered, usurped and continued to destroy the livelihood of Indigenous peoples of South Africa. Walter Rodney, in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, makes the point about what a culture is, and what colonisation did to African culture by robbing it of all aspects of its way of life. 'A culture is a total way of life. It embraces what people ate and what they wore; the way they walked and the way they talked; the manner in which they treated death and greeted the newborn' (Rodney 1968: 53). And whilst Italians are eager to boast of their cuisine, especially their many varieties of pasta, it was none other than Marco Polo, not the first Italian to travel to China, who arrived in China in 1275 and stayed for 17 years. He took noodles from

China to Italy – a cuisine that the Chinese had cultivated as far back as 3000 B.C. It is no secret that with the spread of Italian conquest in East Africa, the seizing of territories by a massacre in Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia, that pasta made its home wherever the Italians usurped and sought to seize land.

The population that the Dutch found at the Cape (before it was divided into the four regions) were the Khoi, San, Griqua (a Khoi Khoi group), Nama (a Khoi Khoi group), the Goringhaicona, many of whom were also part of the *Strandlopers* group (a derogatory term used by the Dutch, which is taken up later in this collection), the Xhosa people a Nguni group primarily from the Eastern Cape. The Zulu peoples, also a Nguni group has lived mainly in the eastern coastal province, which we now call, KwaZulu-Natal, whose livelihoods were affected by colonialism throughout but where we see the effects mainly during the period of British occupation, post-1843.

What we learn from the early history of colonialism in South Africa, is how language played a role in the negotiations between the Dutch coloniser, the enslaved who spoke a Dutch infused language whilst retaining many Javanese, Malay and Bengali words, and the Indigenous Goringhaicona inhabitants, who for a very short period were able to speak all three languages. It is omportant to note that apartheid education did not introduce learners to Autshumato but referred to this leader of the Goringhaicona as 'Harry the *strandloper*' (the term beachcomber, is the closest English translation), which situates the Goringhaicona as a people with no purpose in their life other than combing the beaches of the Cape and enacting various forms of pleasure along the coastal beaches, which is still held against Indigenous people today. Krotoa, his niece, worked in the Van Riebeeck household as a child and could speak the Khoi language, Dutch and the language of the enslaved (later known as *Kaaps*), which is what the enslaved population spoke who were forcibly brought from the Dutch colonies to the Cape (Kaap, as per the Dutch translation and later Afrikaans translation). Krotoa married Danish 'explorer' Pieter Meerhof, under her Christianised name Eva, which was given to her once it became clear that she was able to read the bible in Dutch. This was the measure of being human, and the measure that allowed her colonisers to assert their stamp of approval upon her. Krotoa and Pieter lived on Robben Island, as he was in charge of cargo ships of enslaved people between the DEIC and the Portuguese, negotiating the exchange, and on one expedition he was killed leaving Krotoa a widower with several children. Krotoa made her way back to the mainland, where she continued to work, but was later banished to

Robben Island for immoral behaviour and died there. Of note here also is that records show that she is the ancestral mother of Paul Kruger, Jan Smuts and the last apartheid president, F.W. de Klerk (Brand South Africa Reporter 2017). Marike de Klerk, F.W. de Klerk's first wife, once noted that there is no such thing as Coloured identity, and referred to Coloured people as 'oor-skepsels', a term that references the remains of the food that one gives to dogs or four-legged animals, which journalists translated to English as 'leftovers' (McGreal 2021). This is how deep the former first lady and many Afrikaners in South Africa hate Coloured people, most of whom have KhoiSan ancestry, like her husband, children and grandchildren, and a large percentage of the Afrikaners in South Africa. I return to this point later. Christianisation was a key element of colonisation; in this case, the Dutch colonisers fancied themselves as the middle-man between God and the people they colonised and named Krotoa 'Eve' as a means to indicate that she was a 'first', that she reproduced in the image of God (with a European man), thus giving their colonialism a biblical significance. Not only did this act of renaming erase her Indigenous name and attempt to erase her history, but she was also awarded a responsibility to uphold a code of conduct regarding her sexual practice – tied to marriage and relations with Europeans and therefore European culture – that was imposed upon her and for which she was severely punished.

Allow me here to shift the focus to a phenomenon less spoken of among decolonial scholars in South Africa and furnish it with a personal anecdote. In December 2017, I was invited to participate in a roundtable at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal as part of a two-day programme to commemorate the work of Souleymane Bachir Diagne. After the closing panel, where I was a presenter, a participant from the audience raised himself from his chair and delivered a speech on how he had listened to presenters talk about colonialism but had not heard them talk about Senegal's Arab colonisers. The participant had not asked to speak via the chair, and as we listened, it was clear to me that in addressing questions of decoloniality, many today cut corners, not out of ignorance but because it is easier to address European colonialism than talk about the Arab slave trade. The speaker addressed us with fervour and rigour, and whilst he did not use the kind of discourse in English or French that we are familiar with, and under which lay the hidden and forbidden of that which we claim to be against, most of us saw the error of our selective amnesia. The speaker called us out, so to speak, for participating in a process of selection, and avoiding discussions of

the Anti-Black racism exerted by Arabic nations. The Arab slave trade refers to periods in which a slave trade was carried out under the auspices of Arab peoples or Arab countries. The Arab slave trade lasted more than 13 centuries and was a huge component of African history; it began in the early seventh century and lasted in various forms until the middle of the 1960s. Slavery was only officially outlawed in Mauritania in August of 2007. The lands of Islam were considered an important destination, especially the coast of East Africa towards the Middle East; it was characterised by violence, castration and rape and African women and girls were targeted as sex slaves. Abdulazizi Lodhi, a Zanzibari by birth, and Emeritus Professor of Swahili and African Linguistics at the University of Uppsala in Sweden is the author of *The Institution of Slavery in Zanzibar and* Pemba and gives a full account of East African slavery. Lodhi asserts, 'In many African societies, there were no prisons, so people who were captured were sold' (Fröhlich 2019). Palestinian writer, Susan Abulhawa (2013) writing in the twenty-first century, notes that 'the Arab slave trade is a fact of history, and anti-black racism in the region is something that must be addressed'. She continues by stating: '… In a world order that peddles notions of entire continents or regions as irreducible monoliths, the conversation among Arabs becomes a dichotomous "Arab" versus "African", ignoring millennia of shared histories ranging from extensive trade and commerce to the horrors of the Arab slave trade, to the solidarity of African – Arab anti-colonial unity, to the current state of ignorance that does not know the history and cannot connect the dots when it comes to national liberation struggles'. Abulhawa continues: 'And yet when Palestine went to the UN for recognition of statehood, the vast majority of nations who voted yes were southern nations. The same is true when Palestine asked for admission to UNESCO. In fact, when the US cut off funding to UNESCO in response to its members' democratic vote to admit Palestine, it was the African nation of Gabon that immediately stepped up with a $2m donation to UNESCO to help offset the loss of income. It was not Saudi Arabia, or Kuwait, or Qatar, or Lebanon, or Sweden, or France. It was Gabon. How many Palestinians know that, much less expressed gratitude for it' (see Abulhawa 2013).

The late Muammar Gaddafi, apologised at length for the Arab slave trade at the second Africa - Arab summit held in Sirte, Libya on October 10th, 2010, noting:

On behalf of the Arabs, I'll like to condemn, apologize, and express

deep sorrow for the conduct of some Arabs – especially the wealthy among them – towards their African brothers. The wealthy Arabs treated their African brothers in a disgraceful way in the past. They brought children and took them to North Africa, to the Arabian Peninsula, and to other Arab regions. They subjugated and traded in them. They engaged in slavery and human trafficking in a most abominable fashion, to tell you the truth. We are ashamed, along with our African brothers, when we recall this. We are ashamed of those who behaved in this manner, and especially the wealthy Arabs, who viewed their African brothers as inferior slaves. This is no different from the way the West – America, and Europe – behaved towards the Africans. They would hunt them like animals, treat them like slaves, and act like colonialists. They engaged in colonialism and exploited them, and this continues to this day. We extend our apology and express our sorrow (Chiwanza 2020).

In the past five years, I have encountered several South African academics who have made disparaging remarks about the inconvenience of decolonial teaching and learning practices. Mostly, when confronted, one would hear them make disgruntled remarks such as:

- What is decolonisation anyway?
- Why are we concerned with decolonisation?
- Are we not fine as we are?

In unpacking the terms employed in the title of this collection, our task is as clear as daylight:

de·col·o·nise
verb (used with object), de·col·o·nised, de·col·o·nis·ing.
1. to release from the status of a colony.
2. to allow (a colony) to become self-governing or independent.
verb (used without object), de·col·o·nised, de col·o·nis·ing.
3. to free a colony to become self-governing or independent.

It is not difficult to comprehend that the word 'colonial' sits within the word 'decolonial'. The *de* in decolonial is a prefix, and its dictionary meaning suggests: 'removal, to do away with' (Collins English Dictionary). Thus, to employ the word decolonial is to understand that it means to remove the colo-

nial. The bigger question is, what are we removing the colonial from? Ourselves? Our thinking? Our Being? And what does such a process include: a series of acts that involve an untying from colonial practices? If so, what do these entail as 400 years of colonialism in South Africa covers a broad spectrum of day-to-day activities that starkly reminds us of our history of colonisation every single day. Within the S.A. context of post-apartheid existence, our existential beings are constructed alongside our colonisers. As such, we cannot do away with the colonial – get the settler-colonial to leave or repatriate the settler-colonial to their place of origin – their place in South Africa as a place of their belonging is secured by the South African constitution, the wording of this unreasonable reason is borrowed from the 1955 *Freedom Charter*, which ensures the coloniser a place in the afterlife of apartheid. We, who understand that decolonisation, when employed by the colonised, is first and foremost an inward-looking process, an act of recognition: you have to see yourself, to have self-consciousness before you develop consciousness of your history as part of the colonised. Upon recognition, the colonised moves to the realisation: a process that develops into a practice, an ongoing state of continued interrogation of the many facets of colonisation. The process from recognition to realisation is an accumulation of thoughts and actions that are directed at all of how the criteria for being in the world – thought, speech, writing, the imagination – are examined for the relationship(s) they hold to the coloniser, in the language of the coloniser, and of which the colonised's acceptance of these relations of being, through no fault of our own, have been rewarded.

Decoloniality is the product, embedded in the production of thinking and acts that drives the colonised who have done the recognition, the realisation, and expressed the willingness to detach, to cut, sever, remove all ties that link the colonised to the coloniser. Through the English language, one may know that your body has a colon: a long intestine, an organ that regulates and controls your body. It is therefore not difficult to understand the relationship that the word 'colon', holds to 'coloniser' – the person(s) who regulates and controls its conquest, that is, the colonised. The derivation of the concept colony can be traced to the ancient Roman concept of *colonia*, from the Greek *apoikia*, which means 'home away from home, with reference to territories that settled by ancient Greek city-states[2].

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[2] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colony. Colony also referees to species of insects, etc. See https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/colony

Yet, what is also apt here, is *colon* from the words 'colon-isation' and 'de-colon-isation' as referencing a body part – how a fleshed body with body parts that have particular functions, is acted upon; how the psychosocial trauma of colonialism, some of which are not always diagnosed or understood as such, impacts the colonised and the coloniser. Likewise, psychosomatic symptoms of colonisation are not easily detected as directly related to the process of subjugation and control. All bodies experience the social construction of race, gender, class, sexuality and coloniality, among others. Cardinal's book, *The Words to Say It*, is an autobiographical account of her history of bleeding and seeking out psychoanalysis as a means of addressing the underlying conditions of her symptoms that extended beyond the bleeding. I met Marie Cardinal in July of 1992 at a public event in Ottawa and there was a thorough engagement of colonisation and the body between her and I. Not only was her position as part of the French colonisers in Algeria evident in her history of psychosomatic 'illnesses' her relationship with the colonised, 'the Arabs' as per her expression, was very clear, as many of her 'attacks' were triggered by anti-French protests. Whilst I will not go into detail on the full exchange between us, a close reading of the above-named book situates her realisation of her bodily experience as a coloniser integral to both her symptoms and her recovery.

Decolonisation is a series of acts aimed at undoing colonisation; decoloniality speaks to the process, the in-progress aspect of decolonisation. As such, to decolonise is to take your independence from the coloniser – and to take charge of the process. The coloniser is not afraid of uninformed Black people desperate for their attention. As such, any act of self-governance that the colonised takes as a person guided by the knowledge, conviction and identity as someone who works from a Black consciousness position, usually comes with consequences. There will be shunning, ostracization, shock, dismay, impudence, belittling, your position scoffed at, your actions treated as violence because you've called out your coloniser, you've named her – you've called her a beneficiary and she dislikes it. When you take up Biko's teaching by connecting the act and the actor, in other words, connecting the act (usurpation) to the actor (the usurper), the act of colonisation to the actor (coloniser) and examine the features that mark these acts of cruelty, such as the actor who benefits from colonialism (the beneficiary), who benefits from racism and colonialism, you as the colonised who leaves little room for the coloniser to undermine the level of understanding you have attained of their acts of colonisation ... you will be the person who 'has a chip on her shoulder'.

To decolonise is to unpeel and examine each layer of colonialism, each segment that is layered with historical events wherein the history of your people lies buried and forgotten, lodged in, hooked, entrenched, in words, sounds, blood, dreams, gestures, memory, some resurfacing within your body as part of your intergenerational trauma;

To decolonise is to exhale what you have inhaled through repression and coercion within the colony; to release your body from silence is to release your body and take it from silence to speech, to action. It is to remove the layers of inaction, complicity, obedience to the law of racism and coloniality under which your body lived during colonialism and in its afterlife;

To decolonise – the is to open the wounds of the word; the word that has gone flesh from its moment of announcement. To colonise ... the word exists because it has happened, and its cruelty is everywhere: derived from the English word of the colony.

Often what the coloniser fears is the death of coloniality within the colonised, the extinction of the performance of civility for which the applause will always be better than the resistance the colonised who adopts Black consciousness forges. Everywhere around us as the colonised, complicity comes with the reward of likeability, a performance of a fraudulent understanding of uniqueness, that falsely places you into the exclusive position of false comfort, the shower of praise that you are different and not like the other colonised – you are sophisticated, and they are not ... you are more like the coloniser and they can never be. Desperate to believe your coloniser, you smile, adopt a certain degree of security among them, gleeful in the manner in which you have been singled out, then slowly drawn in. There, in an instant, after 400 years of colonialism, you believe you alone can enter the special place created for exclusive Black people who know how to behave (your behaviour, in this case, the many ways in which you've taught yourself to acquiesce) is always a test and this is how you befriend the coloniser, because you have 'moved on', and the rest of the colonised have not. You hint at how different you are, how you have always had White friends, and you wait for their glances of approval, as you arrive to their dinner parties wearing your African dress – the kind that keeps your puppeteering position securely lodged in their anthropological gaze, and your problematic anti-Black sentiment in the master - slave relationship, sustained. This process of exceptionalism is the desperate quest for denial on the part of the coloniser – a denial that pleads, begs, that not all of the colonised have turned against their coloniser for there must be some Black

people, who like Helen Zille, see the benefits of colonialism.

To remove the colonial means to remove the agents, complicit in the colonial exercise who are engaged, engrossed in the empire; it means to remove both the beneficiaries who regret the events that catapulted them to prosperity through the benefits of enslavement, apartheid, racism and those who reap the benefits yet claim to be opposed to coloniality. The liberal colonial has a ready-made and handy list of verbal protestations, but it is never accompanied by a plan of political action, as Albert Memmi warns, in *The Coloniser and the Colonised*. The colonial enjoys every privilege and verbalising it as a guilt trip does not mean she will give it up. There is no nice colonial – there is only the colonial who benefits.

Decolonisation has been on the table for discussion of the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of South Africa [HELTASA] since 2016. Between November 27th until November 30th HELTASA held its 2019 annual conference at the University formerly known as Rhodes, in Makhanda, named after the Xhosa warrior and prophet, Mkhanda ka Nxele, a name to which it reverted in 2018, after being called Grahamstown, after Colelen John Graham, a British colonial. The HELTASA organising committee invited me as a keynote speaker and I was listed as the last speaker on the programme. The first speaker, Ahmad Bawa, in line with the title, 'Pedagogies in Context', delivered his keynote with a PowerPoint, which was titled, 'Pedagogies for tomorrow'. His keynote slides were in point form and he elaborated on them as generously as time permitted. Suddenly, as he was talking about the curriculum, he made a remark reflecting on what the country was engaged in and began to talk about the concern with decolonisation. 'I do not even know what decolonisation means', he said. Given South Africa's drive to transformation and decolonisation that came from our government, and certainly the Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], this struck me as rather peculiar for someone who occupies the position of Chief Executive Officer of Universities of South Africa.

It is not the semantics of the word that is not understood nor the action that the word demands, it is rather what the word insists on. The word – decolonisation – evokes immediate implications for addressing the coloniser, the settler-colonial, the White liberal whose smile fades seconds after you open your mouth to address the meeting because she realises her comments on how nice you look had little bearing on the content of your speech. It is the agency of the colonised, that becomes 'the problem' and because your agency is a

problem because you have problematised the actions of the settler-colonial, you are a problem!

In HE in South Africa, the colonial is present, always, everywhere, in every meeting to discuss decoloniality and in every event purporting to further the aims of decolonisation. Many scholars in the academy are not bold enough to ask their White settler-colonial colleagues, 'What are you decolonising from? Yourself? Your European thinking on African soil, and if so how? Let's discuss this'. At HELTASA, not only did I see White women's faces drop as I delivered my keynote throughout which I was cheerful, I saw them holding their tissue paper (a handkerchief substitute for modern-day White women who overidentify with the main character in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*) over their mouths. In the corridors of the main building, Black women looked over their shoulder before pulling me aside to thank me for my keynote; as soon as the White woman line manager made her appearance, the affinity to my words, and me as the speaker of those words, was severed ... with a smile. The emotionally, socially and psychologically attached colonised had to return to her master, which I understood; I had to recognise that being seen with me publicly, especially in a manner that showed delight or appreciation of my analysis of coloniality and the candour with which I spoke with a room full of entitled settler colonials wearing African garments or African hand and neck jewellery meant that their future in the academy, tied to the White madam who made their 'position' possible through her thoughtful benevolence on the hiring committee, would be at risk.

The coloniser - colonised relationship is complicated by the attachments of a master - slave relationship that has spanned over four centuries and three decades, produced conditions for complicity, where freedom and democracy are talked about as a proud moment linked to the release of Nelson Mandela but where the conversation quickly turns towards 'but our students have to be trained the same way students are trained overseas', which means that the comparison to Europe and the United States of America is sought as a means to declare the universal when in fact that so-called universal is knowledge from two or three European countries, which the settler - colonial educator refuses to acknowledge. The settler - colonial would be the uneducated if they acknowledged this, and this prospect is too daunting.

Decolonisation in South Africa is not a new phenomenon; it is a progression of political resistance over 400 years grounded in the political thought and activism of the ANC, the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, and

the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania. Irrespective of one's political affiliation, one has no choice but to credit the activism that has come before one even when the ANC-led charterist position maintained its hegemonic power, as the party who went into negotiations with the apartheid regime's National Party and therefore the party who claimed victory over apartheid for the masses of South Africa. The post-1994 narrative of post-charterist, negotiationist politics, with its celebration of non-racialism has been at the deliberate exclusion of the Black Consciousness and Pan Africanist position and continues to this day. The South Africa of post-1994, is a South Africa with a vibrant student body, much like in the 1960s and 1970s, and as much as the ANC led Ministry of Education has attempted to ignore issues within the Freedom Charter that make direct mention of free education, the student bodies across the country have articulated their needs and their interest in a South Africa way beyond that of the ANC led government's vision.

Today, especially post 2014, as universities in South Africa have seen a generation of students emerge with demands about their education, fees, radical curriculum change as well as the need to remove remnants of colonialism such as statues like the one in the image of Cecil John Rhodes that marked the cruelty of colonisation, for which an upward glance, with tilted heads, against the backdrop of table mountain expected a historical recognition of past bondage and subordination by students climbing the hill of former Whites-only University of Cape Town to a statue of a man who robbed them of their land and dignity, was simply not tolerated. The fact that the statue stood there since 1934 is an indication of what Rhodes meant to the colonials studying at UCT; Afrikaner students requested the removal of the statue in the early 1950s noting that it offended them to study amid a statue of a British imperialist who thought Afrikaners were inferior. Black students have for many years refused to study amid the statue of this glutenous colonial perched on a stone demanding a glorious glance against a postcard-perfect silhouette of blue skies, a mountain, the abundance of crisp air, faeces-free, a good 26 kilometres from children being potty trained on a bucket in Khayelitsha, but which the thoughtful Chumani Maxwele, sought to rectify on March 9th, 2015. Rhodes was not the only figure that young learners found offensive; King George V at UKZN, the statue of Gandhi in Johannesburg and various places in India were met with vehement opposition. In April 2015, several months before Ashwin Desai and GoolamVahed released their book *The South African Gandhi*, Gandhi's statue was vandalised in Johannesburg

by chanting protestors with placards reading 'Racist Gandhi must fall' and the hashtag #GandhiMustFall followed soon thereafter to the next step, which is social media. Ela Gandhi, the Durban born former ANC member has refuted the allegations of those who call her grandfather out for his anti-Black racism and his casteism (cf. for instance Desai 2019).

Much as decolonisation seems to have gained a reputation as a university-based intellectual movement, as soon as student protest politics hit the tarmac of South African universities, students were depicted as either hooligans or ungrateful freedom children who do not appreciate what their predecessors had rewarded them with – a Freedom Charter but no freedom. The politics of decolonisation is not only about the transformation of former apartheid education and curriculum changes that reflect on South Africa's history and culture but about our nation's poverty, our Black population who continue to live below the poverty line, forced removal, shanty towns as a result of forced migration, the accumulation of historical wealth that continues to buy first-class tickets to the sons and daughters of settler-colonials into previously Whites-only universities. It is, first and foremost about the usurpation of the land and the return of the land to the inhabitants from which the land was taken. Fanon makes his position very clear in *The Wretched of the Earth*. He notes, '... For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity' (*Wretched of the Earth* [1963] 2004: 42)[3]. 'Africa for the Africans' was a term coined by Martin Delaney[4]. This issue of the return of the land has been echoed by Lembede, Sobukwe and Biko and can also be found in the writing of Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, Martin Delaney, Patrice Lumumba, some of which are evidenced in writings from the early 19th century. Indigenous Unangax̂ scholar Eve Tuck and Chinese American scholar K. Wayne Yang, assert in their paper with an unmistakable title, 'Decolonization is not a Metaphor' that decolonisation is about the repatriation of the land, '... it is about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools'. They are asserting the fundamental objective of

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[3] In this edition of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Homi Bhabha shows his criticism of Jean-Paul Sartre.

[4] https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/asia-and-africa/african-history/pan-africanism

decolonisation: to demand the return of the land[5].

Biko was enormously influenced by Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe, who in turn was influenced by KwaZulu born, Anton Lembede. Muziwakhe Anton Lembede, known as Lembs to his friends, among whom were Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, spearheaded African nationalism. Lembede was the founding president of the ANC Youth League, and he had a strong influence on Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and others. Lembede's ideas, especially those considered more radical by the ANC were taken up by Sobukwe and later by Biko. Lembede's writing on the land, agriculture, economics, language, trees and their value to human beings, not only precedes the analysis and writing of decolonial scholars of the twenty-first century but demonstrates the richness of his thought, the diverse and systematic way in which he thought of decolonisation – which he termed 'Africanisation', a process of thinking and being in the world, on the continent, in South Africa, on African terms. Isn't this what decolonisation in South Africa is all about? Are we not striving in our decoloniality to exist in our country on South African terms, fully cognizant of our history of struggle, without the regulation and control of the coloniser? For Lembede it was about Africanisation, in the form of what he expressed as African nationalism – although it has to be said that his African nationalism came at a time that is considered very early on in his life. Lembede drew on the life and work of Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), who is considered the last of the African American leaders born into slavery in the United States, and whose legacy stirs mixed feelings among Black scholars in the United States today. Lembede was attracted to Washington's self-help approach and his ability to conscientise the descendants of the enslaved to stand up and build their own communities.

Bantu Stephen Biko, in *I Write What I Like*, ([1978] 2005) was clear when citing his reliance on Fanon; he formulated his response to *Black Skin White Masks* – 'Black Souls in White Skins', a paper in the collection where he addresses the South African White community of liberals whose main aim, he noted, was to relish in their privilege. In 'White Racism and Black Consciousness', in a subheading, 'The Totality of White Power in South Africa' Biko (2005:69) shows his reliance on Fanon when he notes: 'As Fanon puts it: 'Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the Native's brain of all form and content; by a kind of perverted

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[5] Quote on page 1 of 'Decolonization is not a Metaphor'.

(sic) logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it'. Biko also referred to Césaire as one of the founder members of the Négritude movement, along with co-founders Léon Demas and Leopold Senghor, as instrumental to his formulation of Black Consciousness not only as a philosophy but a politics, and so to were Hegel, Marx, and certainly, German psychiatrist and philosopher Karl Jaspers, who wrote so eloquently on 'Metaphysical Guilt' when addressing the German population and pointing to their being-in-the-world amid, and participating in, the atrocities of the holocaust. It is important to bear in mind, as we travel this journey of decoloniality, that we address African history, come to the realisation of the Namibian holocaust, which some insist should be called a genocide, which took place between 1904 and 1907 under Germany's Second Reich, and killed thousands of Nama and Herero peoples as a means to acquire African land during their colonial conquest but also to test their massacre and extermination methods on Africans, before inflicting them on Jewish peoples in Europe.

The language that students utilise in the #FeesMustFall movement and the many acts of insurgence we have witnessed toward decolonisation, come directly from Fanon, Biko, Sobukwe, Lembede and the interrelationships of their thought throughout the African diaspora. It was not only Biko's assertion that 'The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed' (*I Write What I Like*: 68), that the youth of 1976 rallied around but also the call to Black Consciousness – a call, unlike that of Sobukwe who made a point of drawing our attention to the fallacy of race, which does not, he argued, exist as a biological construct, but which, much to the chagrin of those who embraced Sobukwe in his lifetime and following his death, would have liked to see the intellectual giant grapple with when addressing the materiality of race, which Biko was very clear about and adamant in critiquing the role played by race in the struggle for freedom in South Africa. Mangoliso Robert Sobukwe walked out of the *Freedom Charter* meeting when it was decided that a document of core principles would within its preamble state: ' We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white ...' (cf. History of the Freedom Charter). Sobukwe was clear in his understanding of the role of usurpation and colonialism and could not fathom how a document purporting to stand as testimony to the need for a liberation struggle would include its colonisers and speak of colonisers at the dawn of liberation as equals. Sobukwe always insisted that the land be returned to the Indigenous people, which is

precisely why he could no longer be part of the ANC. The ANC formed their military wing, uMkhonto we Sizwe, in 1961, and the PAC formed a military organisation Poqo, based on the Xhosa word, meaning Pure, in the early 1960s and set up an underground base in Tanzania.

Our forefathers and foremothers did not sit on their hands, nor did they wait for decolonisation to happen within the university institution – they fought the apartheid regime with every fibre of their bodies and wanted to be liberated from their coloniser before decolonisation was the kind of movement it is known as today: waiting with baited breath for the university leadership to approve a programme of apologetic manoeuvres that does not offend the settler - colonials of South Africa. But I return to Pan Africanism once again: Pan Africanism in South Africa was influenced by Pan Africanism globally, especially from the United States, as shaped by African Americans in the 19th century like Martin Delany and Alexander Crummel, and Caribbean-born Edward Wilmot Blyden, who is often considered the father of Pan Africanism. The previously enslaved in the Caribbean produced many revolutionaries and a great many scholars, some of whom include Black Panther Stokely Carmichael, CLR James, Eduoard Glissant, and Queen Nanny of the Maroons in Jamaica, whose likeness is featured on the Jamaican $500 banknote. South Africa's young generation of scholars and revolutionaries are likewise inspired by the work of Anta Diop, Lumumba, Nasser, Ngugi, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Senghor, Van Sertima, and others; the work of African scholars that have been denied a presence in our African history studies under apartheid, and even thereafter, when White men at UCT decide that African history, of the calibre taught by esteemed and internationally renowned scholar, Mahmood Mamdani, would not be suitable for South African students. When settler -colonials enjoy the legalised subjugation the apartheid laws secured, they fear an uprising of the truth, and the best way to ensure that the truth does not surface is to forbid the teaching of African history – the kind of history where the Black person is not merely, 'slave', oppressed, downtrodden, massacred, murdered, dispossessed. Biko quotes Fanon to make a larger point about the perverted logic of the study of history: 'Hence the history of the black man in this country is most disappointing to read. It is presented merely as a long succession of defeats' (*I Write What I Like*: 95).

The emergence of the Economic Freedom Fighters [EFF] in 2013, and Black First, Land First [BLF] founded in 2015, has fostered open discussion of their Black Consciousness and Pan-Africanist affiliation along with an

assertion that the return of land should not come with compensation. Both the EFF and the BLF assert the basics, without apology: that the land has to be returned to its owners and the economy should serve the masses. Millions of university students in South Africa have joined the EFF and BLF, and if they are not members, they walk about chanting the ideologies of both.

Guyanese born Walter Rodney played an enormous role in the way that African scholar-cum-activists began to see 'underdevelopment'. After completing his doctoral degree at the School of Oriental and African Studies, with the working title, 'A History of the Upper Guinea Coast', he took his first teaching appointment in Tanzania. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Rodney's seminal text is considered compulsory reading in many Southern African universities. Rodney was a Pan Africanist, and his critique of how Europe drained Africa of its wealth, is an understanding well entrenched in the work of many Pan Africanists. Fully aware of his transatlantic slave history, Rodney was part of the Tanzanian contingent at the 1974 Pan Africanist Congress held in Tanzania, of which he remained particularly proud.

A matter warranting concern, and which needs mentioning is that of the decolonial tourist to South Africa. Decolonial tourist-cum-scholars have been flooding South Africa, especially after #FeesMustFall, citing their country of birth as part of their biography when introduced to South African scholars, as a means to draw an allegiance to the Fanonian 'Third World' whilst drawing on their 'American' imperial cultural capital to open doors for meeting with South African student leaders, posing on photos with their freshly acquired poor people – images that I call, without hesitation, pornography of the poor. This photographic evidence of conquest is to indicate that they have rubbed shoulders with the 'real' oppressed of the country, much like the colonials did, where they fool themselves into believing that they are needed like a priest needs a sinner ... or as Shanghai native, Irina Patsi Dunn, who grew up in Australia would say when mocking relationships where men believe they are irreplaceble, 'like a fish needs a bicycle'. For some of the tourist-cum-scholars, a meeting with a handful of South African academics at the Deco-lonial Summer School in Barcelona in 2012 opened the door to greater narcis-sistic promises to which a pinch of religiosity sealed the deal of bringing the gospel of decoloniality, as stipulated by an unwritten script of 'Thou shall Not', which soon surfaced as a code of conduct as it was later taken up by their South African disciples – the one, resembling the Nicene creed in Christian churches.

The decolonial apostles, created in the image of their narcissism, and

decolonial disciples, have asserted a particular route for decoloniality, steeped in semiotics, European philosophy and mundane poststructuralist arguments, and an unending need to reproduce the very European thinking they claim to be against; for others, it has been about 'preaching' the work of Fanon, as though we don't read Fanon and incapable of interpreting his translated words (French to English) ourselves. Cast in the image of Moses who receives the Ten Commandments, with the promise of leading the previously enslaved to the Promised Land, we have been witness to this performance of discipledom that smacks of anti-Black racism of the worst kind. But scholars of decolonial scholarship, many of whom are not South African, are partly to blame for this phenomenon: many among South African university management use the term 'African' as a means to guarantee a university job to Africans and yet do not demand that the claim is accompanied by the knowledge of South African history. Many foreign African nationals, as the legal term notes, working within South African universities as part of the 'Academic managerial class' take the route of benefitting from the 'I'm-African-and-I-am-eligible-for-the-South African-job-market' without familiarising themselves with South African history. It is no surprise that many still think that District Six, the old slave quarter at the Cape, is called District Nine, as was gleefully asserted to me to indicate knowledge of my history of forced removal from District Six, which I immediately rectified by drawing out its Hollywoodised vulgarity.

An internet search for information on decolonial thinking brings readers to a Wikipedia page that notes the following, '... the work as a school of thought used principally by an emerging Latin American movement which focuses on untangling the production of knowledge from what they claim is a primary Eurocentric episteme'[6]. Shortly after, readers are taken to segments that offer them a list of decolonial scholars. Among these, at the top of the list appear those of Walter Mignolo, born in Argentina in 1941, just after the start of the second world war, of Italian parents. Anyone who reads Mignolo's work soon discovers that he has done little to no engagement with the work of Black scholars, let alone African scholars. A face-to-face meeting with Mignolo in 2011 at the 'Decolonising Gender' symposium, at the University of Bremen, in Germany, made the latter very clear. He seemed aghast at the possibility that one could cite Africans other than simply when referencing murder, killing, massacres or protest marches. The following year, at a meeting organised by

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[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decoloniality

the INPUTS group for scholars working towards setting up a soon-to-be-established Decolonial Summer School, a small group gathered together in the June - July period to offer our respective contributions as a means to ascertain what such a programme would look like. Sabine Broeck as the Director of INPUTS opened the session, and upon her fifteen-minute delivery of the history of the programme and the need to think about a Decolonial Summer School, Mignolo declared himself as the chair of the session. This was a surprise to many. There was an exchange of awkward glances, and of course, silence: the tense, White, middle-class moment I speak so fondly of stages itself with clockwork regularity. There was a raised hand: a woman considered older than any of us in the room, sitting by herself, who looked visibly as though she could fall into a group of retirees asked a question. Her question was met with silence. In my experience, many scholars speak of 'the community' and yet when a member of 'the community' is in an environment with learners, there is a certain measure of discomfort when the person asks a question no one is expecting. The silence bore evidence of not wanting to answer a woman who appeared too old to be asking a question about why we were studying the lives of Black people. I, none the less, not recognising the self-appointed chair, offered a reply to the question that was posed. There was a short silence. The same woman asked another question. There was silence again. Considering that there was no speaker's list among a group of twenty people in a room with ample space, I did not think it out of place to respond the second time again. Mignolo, the self-appointed chair, remarked quite hastily that I could not speak twice. I looked around the room and noted that if I left the room it would not be a decolonial room since I was surrounded by Europeans, who in my view had no place telling me when I could speak or answer questions they were too awkward to answer as neither the person nor her question mattered to them. In both 2011 and 2012, it was clear that Mignolo had not read the work of African scholars or revolutionaries; if and when they were mentioned, for example, such as Bantu Stephen Biko, it was concerning his death. It does not take a meticulous reading of Mignolo's work to grasp the overwhelming restaging of European thought, which he claims to be untangling from, to realise how the work of Fanon, has of late become useful to him and only because if he must play the game of how important he is among the male posse sitting at his feet, he has to ward off climbers on the ladder and thus position himself as knowledgeable of at least one Black scholar.

In 2013 and 2014 I worked with a group of select philosophers who

were recruited by UNESCO to work on a SOUTH – SOUTH PHILOSOPHY textbook. Enrique Dussel, another Wikipedia listed decolonial scholar, was among them. Any search on Dussel shows scant information on his birth in Argentina's La Paz in 1934, of German parents, with a greater focus on his studies in places such as France, Germany and Spain, and later in Israel/ Palestine where he learnt Arabic and Hebrew. Greater emphasis is placed on the content of his work, the vast range of scholarly contributions he is known for, most of which are in theology of liberation, ethics and decolonial scholarship. The UNESCO project noted above also had a scientific committee that formed part of the larger group whose expertise was relied upon to ensure that the collection would be a solid reflection of historical and contemporary philosophy from the four regions. There were two representatives for each region: Africa, the Arab Region, Asia Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Enrique Dussel and Magali Mendes de Menezes were the represen tatives for Latin America and the Caribbean. I can offer further details as to our gathering but I would like to share one particular experience that marks the ethics of a decolonial scholar like Dussel. Magali Mendes de Menezes, came to the meeting exasperated and noted that she was tired of arguing with Dussel as he had refused to include any philosopher she suggested, including those from Brazil, except of course for the work of Paolo Freire. As a member of the group, I raised my hand and asked how he made decisions for his compilation? Discussion among the representatives was encouraged so that there was shared knowledge among all of us. There was silence, the kind I grew accustomed to each time Dussel made a demand with the full knowledge that he would not be challenged – that as scholars schooled in a particular etiquette that showed regard for our elders we would simply not address him in a manner that he might consider challenging. His immediate response to my question was, '[citing my name], *?estás enojada conmigo porque no hay negros en esta sección?* Translation: [Citing my name], are you angry with me because there are no Blacks in my section? I formulated my response very carefully as the outpour of despair by my Brazilian colleague had given me enough time to consider how I wanted to address Dussel and the matter at hand. I asked him whether he was content with a collection that erased Black people like the conquistadores erased Indigenous knowledge in the Americas, making sure that there was no trace of Black knowledge for South and Central America. 'How can you live with yourself knowing that you have not even considered the Caribbean, to be more precise, the Black Caribbean?' He then addressed

me more personally: '... [citing my name], are you upset with me because I did not include the work of ... [citing world-renowned scholar of Africana philosophy, born in Jamaica]. I stared at him in disbelief and shook my head. Dussel did not reply. Not only did he allow the newly appointed UNESCO head of the philosophy division (who has now left), to make racist comments, he played right into their hands, and the members of that team allowed him to exclude Black philosophers from the Caribbean. It is interesting to observe how revolutionary thinkers practice silence when racism rears its ugly head. I raise these matters here for not only do they inform how we need to question the anti-Black racism of these 'esteemed' decolonial scholars, but we also need to be mindful and vigilant of the pedestals we create for scholars who continue to show disregard towards Black people.

I turn now to another form of Anti-Black racism, and that is, anti-Coloured attitudes in South Africa. In the past two years (2019 - 2020) as the collection took shape, Coloured people(s) in South Africa became the object of ridicule by White university professors once again, who sought to make Coloured people the subject of their lethal arrogance, disguised as research. The term Coloured, is used in very particular ways in South Africa and speaks to apartheid classification and as such a legal definition of a racialised identity and status under the law.[7] The continued material conditions under which the Coloured population lives, in the afterlife of apartheid, around the country, speaks to the horrific consequences of the dispossession of land, forced removal, overcrowding and continued racial segregation. The term 'Coloured' in the South African context cannot be compared to the term 'Colored', in United States as they each have distinct histories of origin and continue to hold social and political currency, some of which are considered derogatory both in South Africa and in the United States. On the 26 of April in 2019, a few select telephone calls from colleagues got me on the internet in search of an article, which the Cape Times ran with the heading: 'Academics want Study on Coloured Women's Intelligence Removed' (Adriaanse 2019). The article began by informing its readers that 'a number of academics have called on the study by Stellenbosch University researchers on cognitive function of "coloured" women to be removed from UK-based academic journal publishing site'. In reading the article then coming to terms with the full scope of the study, I was shocked but not surprised to see what the study was concerned

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[7] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_groups_in_South_Africa

with. Sixty women between the age of 18 - 64, who the researchers identified as Coloured, were sought, separated into four age groups and two education groups, as subjects of a study. What the researchers deduced was that Coloured women presented with low cognitive development due to the lack of education. On April 30th, the Stellenbosch university leadership issued an apology noting that the study would be investigated for allegations of breaches of research norms. A campaign to have the article retracted was started by South African professors Boswell and Ratele, which received more than 2000 signatures by May 1st, 2019. One has to ask how a research study of this kind received ethical clearance? Did the research ethics office at the University of Stellenbosch not read the ethical clearance application, or did they consider the application a necessary gesture to engage with the Coloured community and not expect the publication of the findings to be accessible to South Africans since the intended place of publication was a UK-based journal? On the 22nd of May 2019, it was reported that Stellenbosch University's Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Wim de Villiers, was 'appalled' after learning of the findings of the study and its publication. What is troubling is the outrage expressed by the Stellenbosch Vice-Chancellor and the university's leadership, each account filled with moral indignation but not one comment on the ethics of treating Coloured and Black peoples (I use the general politicised term Black but make a distinction here for the purpose of the research that focused on Coloured people) as subjects of studies that determine the cognition and education level when: (a) there is widespread knowledge among the Black masses that the material conditions under which we live were created through usurpation and colonialism then furthered by apartheid and continues today in the afterlife of apartheid for the sole benefit of the settler-colonial; and (b) when we speak of the materiality of race, we understand this to mean how racialisation was established by first setting down the grounds for materiality, such as, through usurpation creating dispossession, landlessness, migration, forced migration, forced removal, etc., thus setting the groundwork for the lived experience, which includes all of the ways in which the regime ensured that housing, schooling, medical health, psychological health and every aspect of our being would be contained, and life for Black people would be that of servitude.

How could any White scholar in South Africa research Black people(s) without the slightest understanding that their lived experience was created, crafted, sculpted from the continued and perpetual dehumanisation, mas-

sacre, murder, killing and abuse of Black people, which they participated in so that they could live the 'Whites-only', 'Slegs Blankes' life they grew so accustomed to? Would ethical clearance be given to a group of researchers, let's say, White men, who identify as rapists seeking to study White women in the afterlife of their 342 years of patriarchal power which included repeated rape, verbal and psychological abuse, sexual assault, serial killing, massacres, murders, forced removal, dispossession, displacement and expect an outcome other than the one they were instrumental in creating? The blasé manner with which racism is treated, bandaged by a written word to express outrage – a word that is in the moral objective of showing, not in the ethical principle of the living. The written apology does not point to the criminal act of racism nor how serial offenders of racism commit their crimes. 'We deeply regret the hurt [this article] has caused', was front and central in the Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch's words (Somdyala 2019). How deep is your regret? Deeper than the wells on farms that were taken unlawfully from Indigenous peoples of South Africa? How deep exactly is the hurt? I was not hurt by the article. There is very little hurt that racism can inflict upon me that has not been done already. There is nothing left of the racism of the agents of White domination who inflict, engrave, stamp, and enact that I have not encountered already. I have over the past four decades allowed myself a continued process of learning of the operation and functioning of White domination so that I can see when it is coming; I have even tried to understand the vulnerability of its agents in clamouring for apartheid-style living because the ushering in of the post-1994 style democracy came at a huge loss to White South Africans because they have not been able to bury apartheid. There was no funeral, there was simply a transition of power by negotiators.

There is, at times, nothing more telling than observing the desperation with which White men and White women will come at Coloured women who dare, by our very presence in this world where we stand firmly, unphased, as living emblems of apartheid's failure because we are still here, they cannot erase us, and we are still forces to be reckoned with. When one knows why racism is the go-to place for the beneficiaries of colonialism and apartheid who have to descend, climb down, lower themselves into the dire-straights of democracy that the seas of protest cannot send back into the ocean one knows that for the unwilling White man and unwilling White woman, democracy is a lowering, a coming down from. It is a bigger shame, when Black women who have little to no Black Consciousness, act in accordance with what a

liberation struggle paved, claim kinship, which means claim Blackness, and ask for it to be bestowed upon them, selectively. This is how their Blackness comes alive in the convenient aftermath of a realisation that there are rewards to be claimed by entering the door as Black then siding with the coloniser against Black people. The White colonial knows this: all she has to do, is compliment the Black woman and tell her she is wearing a nice dress, invite her home for tea, introduce her to her paid subordinate who she allows to call her by her name, make sure she understands that she's different from Blacks, the plural identity used with intent to suggest that she has been measured against her entire group, and in a small heartbeat, the White woman has won over the convenient Black woman – her lack of Black Consciousness accompanied by a lack of a politicised Black identity, has secured it.

By late May of 2020, an article published in the *South African Journal of Science*, by Nicoli Nattrass with the title, 'Why are Black South African Students Less Likely to Consider Studying Biological Sciences?', made the news. The keywords for the paper were: 'socio-economics, conservation, materialist, values, colonial evolution'. The research, noted in the article, suggests (according to Nattrass) that Black South African students are less likely to consider studying biological sciences than other students (note: we are not told who the 'other students' are), and that 'this stance was linked primarily with career aspirations (supporting conservation but not wanting a career in it) – and these were associated with materialist values and attitudes to local wildlife'. The summary of the research findings by Nattrass notes that Black students, while not opposed to conservation, are not keen on a career in conservation and that 'materialist values' play a role. Nat-trass continues by saying: 'black South Africans may be interested in careers other than in conservation in part because of their relatively disadvantaged backgrounds which could prime them towards considering primarily the higher paying occupations (accountancy, law)'. What we are facing in the country is a lack of an ethical approach when it comes to addressing the matter of researching people that researchers have usurped, colonised and dehumanised. Therefore, in situating the history of your subject, which you have no qualms identifying as Coloured, situate your history with this person and your racialised group – name it, claim it, own it like you own everything else in the world. Every researcher has a history; we walk into every research environment with our racialised identity, sexuality, sexual practice, class background, cultural and linguistic history.

The Council of the Academy of Science of South Africa posted three note worthy points as part of their 'respect the author' position when respect has little to do with it. If, as it were, the researcher seeks to ascertain the reasons why Black people are not enrolled in a course on conservation, how can an ethical clearance certificate be issued for any researcher to conduct any work that speaks directly to the history of conservation as the history of usurpation? Conservation speaks to the care and protection of physical resources, including land, animals, what is generally referred to as nature – in other words where Black people have been forcibly removed from, and where a garden of Eden has been created to preserve Whites-only spaces. Whether one considers Natrass' position a combination of ignorance or arrogance, is of little significance if one does not see the bigger picture, and that is, the ethical and moral implications of knowledge production that does not recognise that the history of colonialism in South Africa, covers all of the land, flora, fauna, animals, trees, rivers, sea, sand, oceans, mountains, air that envelopes the land that was taken away, and which should be returned to their rightful owners.

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Critical Reflections on UNISA's Decolonial Summer School: In Conversation with Rozena Maart

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Abstract
The call to decolonise the university more broadly, and the curricula in particular, has sparked the need to interrogate what it means to decolonise. In this article I discuss the Decolonial Summer School held at the University of South Africa and offer existential reflections on my role as an educator within the team responsible for its organisation. The methodology employed in this article utilises a question-and-answer format to provide reflections on key questions that were posed to me by Rozena Maart in an attempt to engage me on the purpose, objectives, plans, and my pedagogical stance of the Decolonial Summer School. It is hoped that these reflections will offer insights into the reasons for hosting the Decolonial Summer School, the accomplishments, challenges encountered, and the possibilities for the future. At a time in the world where seeking answers to the question of what it means to be human has become more urgent than ever, a Decolonial Summer School offers the opportunity for those involved to be 'armed' and to sharpen their tools to respond to everyday challenges. The conversational approach in this article focuses on the overall aim of the Decolonial Summer School, which is to highlight its significance in forging ahead with decolonial thinking, not only in terms of thought production or curriculum adjustment and mindset, but rather in developing a language that one can use to challenge the very systems of thought, for example the very Eurocentric language and discourse, that one is against, and which leaves one outside of the process of knowledge production.

Keywords: Decolonial Summer School, decoloniality project, colonialism, coloniality, higher education, University of South Africa

Puleng Segalo

Introduction

The call to decolonise the university more broadly, and the curricula in particular, has sparked the need to interrogate what it means to decolonise. In this article I discuss the Decolonial Summer School (hereafter referred to as the school, except in direct quotations) held at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and offer existential reflections on my role as an educator organising of the school. The methodology employed in this article utilises a question-and-answer format to provide reflections on key questions that were posed to me by Rozena Maart, a professor in the School of Social Sciences at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in an attempt to engage me on the purpose, objectives, plans, and my pedagogical stance of the school. It is hoped that these reflections will offer insights into the reasons for hosting the school, the accomplishments, challenges encountered, and the possibilities for the future. At a time in the world where questions of what it means to be human have become more urgent than ever, the school offers the opportunity for those involved to be 'armed' and to sharpen their tools to respond to everyday challenges. The conversational approach in this article focuses on the overall aim of the school which is to highlight its significance in forging ahead with decolonial thinking, not only in terms of thought production or curriculum adjustment and mindset, but rather in developing a language that one can use to challenge the very systems of thought – for example the very Eurocentric language and discourse – that one is against, and which leaves one outside of the process of knowledge production.

Creating the Platform by which to Carry out a Decolonial Summer School

ROZENA MAART: How did the Decolonial Summer School fit into your portfolio, in terms of your academic experience and expertise, your own work, as well as your position within management as the Head of Research and Graduate Studies?

PULENG SEGALO: The Decolonial Summer School was a project that was started by the College of Human Sciences, at UNISA, in 2014. The project came about as a result of a number of scholars coming together to engage on the ways that academia continues to perpetuate the colonial project through which teaching happens, and how it happens. These were questions that we

needed to address. The decolonial project aims to serve as a platform that offers a space for speaking back to, questioning, challenging and critiquing what we inherited under apartheid and colonialism, and as such is an attempt to interrupt the status quo. The space that was created initially started as a reading group, followed by a select number of academics from UNISA who attended the Decolonial Summer School in Barcelona in 2012. This particular Summer School idea was brought to South Africa, with the hope of it serving as a platform that offers the chance to engage with what it means to decolonise, to ask the crucial question: 'What is decolonisation?' Housed in the College of Human Sciences, the project was assigned to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies, and as the then head of the Office (2016 - 2019), I coordinated and oversaw the successful running of the project. I immediately immersed myself in the work and the task at hand. It became easy to lead the project, as I believed in it and because it spoke to my own work, the questions I had been grappling with in my own discipline and the challenges I have with the whole notion of 'the University' as it currently stands. The Office of Research and Graduate Studies is mandated to offer support to all research-related and postgraduate activities. The Office is further tasked with ensuring a smooth journey for all registered postgraduate students in the Human Sciences. As a result of the mandate of the Office, the hosting of the decoloniality project was a great fit, as it is in line with the importance of conducting research and producing knowledge, while also focusing on postgraduate studies as a stage that affords the opportunity for thinking differently and critically. Thinking from a decolonial perspective is in line with the College's transformation agenda. It is also pertinent to highlight that the School is not limited to the Human Sciences as we have participants from other disciplines such as Law, Education, Economics, and the Natural Sciences more broadly.

The Conceptual Understanding of Decolonial and Decoloniality

ROZENA MAART: What kind of conceptual understanding of 'decolonial' and 'decoloniality' did you enter the project with?

PULENG SEGALO: My work is at the intersection of Psychology, and Gender Studies with a specific focus on gender and trauma. My research interest is also in African Psychology, where I focus on what it means to engage

the discipline from an African perspective. The following scholars offered me the theoretical tools to approach African Psychology: Frantz Fanon (1986), Paulo Freire (2007), Chabani Manganyi (2013), Augustine Nwoye (2015; 2017), and Kopano Ratele (2016). The following authors equipped me with a lens to approach decoloniality: Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), Ramon Grosfoguel (2007), Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2011), Sabelo Ndlovu (2013), and Walter Mignolo (2013) among others; and Oyeronke Oyewumi (1997) and Maria Lugones (2010) assisted with engaging feminism through a decolonial and Africanist lens. I became part of the decoloniality project with [a] minimal understanding of the various ways in which decoloniality had been defined, understood and used to challenge the notion of colonialism and coloniality. Attending the first Decolonial Summer School in Europe, in Spain actually, exposed me to various decolonial scholars who mainly came from South America, although based in North America, and it is through their framing of the key concepts that I started grappling with possible ways to apply what I had grasped in my own context, South Africa.

The Direction of the UNISA Decolonial Summer School, Language and Cultural Identity

ROZENA MAART: Why a School?

PULENG SEGALO: Since its independence in 1994, South Africa has been on a journey to redefine itself and tackle everyday challenges that perpetually confront it. This redefining required reflections from all sectors of society. Coming from a history where black people were subjected to an inferior system of education called 'Bantu Education', it became pertinent to zoom in on the education sector. Education remains one of the pillars of society that provides tools to engage social injustices and inequalities that affect how communities function. Many people continue to suffer from the historical traumas of colonialism and apartheid and as a result there remains a need to find a vocabulary that can assist with articulating the impact of this past and the possible future that could be envisaged. To this end, a School on decoloniality was critical as it was hoped that it could provide a platform for the needed reimagination, reflection, remembering, and rethinking of where we come from and the implications thereof for the present. In his 2009 book *Re-membering Africa*, wa Thiong'o reminds us that we cannot put the pieces

together of who we once were if we do not reclaim our languages, our rituals, poems, and cultural symbols. We need to re-learn what these meant to us as Africans before the colonial interruption.

As indicated earlier, hosting the Decolonial Summer School at UNISA, in South Africa, is aimed at allowing a cohort of emerging and established scholars an opportunity to engage with what it means to decolonise. The School aims at affording participants the opportunity to learn, question, critique, learn, un-learn and, hopefully, re-learn. Over the seven years that the school has been in existence, it moved from being one week-long, then two weeks [in length] and, in 2019, it went back to one week. The duration of the school has been determined by the feedback received from participants. The intensive engagements are meant to bring together a diverse group of people, who are at different levels of their academic journeys and careers; to learn from each other, to un-learn some of the toxic 'untruths' that the Euro-Western education system has offered them, as truth and fact. Overall, the School aims at providing the space to breathe outside of the limitations of an academy that still chokes us with European scholarship as many people walk around with immense suffocation.

Education and Training and the Move towards Criticality: Producing Critical Thinkers

ROZENA MAART: Is the focus on education and training or is it broader than that? Is it also about a community of scholars, from across the country, collaborating on a platform in order to establish, develop and produce knowledge?

PULENG SEGALO: The focus of the Summer School, specifically, and the decolonial project, more broadly, is on training and education, but also to produce critical thinkers, who are able to critique their respective disciplines and start rethinking some of the ways they have been taught, and how they, themselves, teach and understand knowledge production. The aim is further to produce a cohort of scholars, not only nationally across institutions but also internationally, with a focus on geographical locations that have suffered colonialism and its remnants through coloniality. The interdisciplinary nature of the school allows the participants to cross-pollinate, see common challenges, collectively think of alternative ways to approach teaching and learning, and

to refute the notion of universality. The School allows for a community of scholars from across the country to contribute to the production and development of knowledge, and to collaborate with scholars through publishing together. To this end, the school has a specific focus and anticipated outcomes which I outline below, in random order:

1. Modernity, Eurocentrism and coloniality: Whilst theoretical shifts in modernity have addressed notions of Eurocentrism and coloniality, the importance of the Summer School where invited presenters grapple with this particular trajectory and share their knowledge with scholars in attendance within the context of South Africa, was an important way to see how this would play out. One of the issues highlighted at the Summer School is the importance of trans-modernity, which aims to create multi-epistemic spaces, and the need to acknowledge multiple ways of knowing and being in the world. Trans-modernity is a notion of epistemic diversity which allows for inter-epistemic dialogue.

2. Epistemic racism/patriarchy/sexism: In the past few years, South Africa has experienced an increase in individual encounters of racism. One either has to page through newspaper articles or watch the news to see just how prevalent reports of racism have been in the country. The fight against racism has been a long overdue struggle, that did not just disappear because of [changes to] formal legislation. It is therefore critical to engage in discussions to better understand the ways in which racism continues to show itself in the everyday experiences of people, in their interaction, in the workplace, within schools and in the streets. There are multiple markers of racism: for example, religion, ethnicity, and language, among others. The Decolonial Summer School aims at showing ways in which colonialists racialised their colonial subjects in many different ways, on many different levels, to achieve their goal of 'divide and rule'. A further highlight is how racialised groups that were given privileges by the colonialists continue to perpetuate injustices along religion, ethnicity, gender, and even class lines. To this end, we draw from feminist scholars such as Oyewumi (1997) who has shown in her work that patriarchy has not always been the norm in some parts of Africa. We also draw from scholars such as Angela Davis (1983) who problematises the category of gender and makes a claim that this category is not universal. Davis further argues that gender is the privilege

of white women since black women were perceived as 'female', almost equated to the status of animals, for the longest time.

3. Zone of being/ zone of non-being: Drawing from scholars such as Fanon (1961) and Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2016), the school engages with what it means to be considered sub-human and the role which coloniality plays in creating these confined lines wherein humanity is defined. The school highlights the material effects of existence at various levels of humanity. Racism plays out violently within these zones of being, where one sees for example, the denial of recognition of an ethical code for those deemed to belong to the zone of non-being. The school further engages the ways in which the dialectic of I and 'Other' collapses in the zone of non-being.

4. Coloniality of being and subjectivity: The school engages with and shows the ways in which the modern world continues to be colonial in nature. We have coloniality at the level of being and knowledge. In modernity, our existence is described in ways that highlight how groups and communities of people are dominated and exploited, which are maintained through power. We further highlight the ways in which coloniality of being, knowledge, and power are equally fundamental and interrelated. The school further provides conceptual tools that attempt to assist us in understanding how coloniality operates. We look at the role of political activism, intellectual work, and artistic creation; we also engage with forms of activity that offer possibilities for concrete change toward decoloniality.

5. Africa and the modern world: Here we focus on the historical perspectives of resistance and nationalism and their legacies on the African continent. It is critical to note the erosion of history and to see the problematic nature in which history is represented. For example, the convention in Berlin where Africa was divided, does not form part of formal conversations or history texts, and this exclusion we see as intentional, so as to obscure the past. We draw from some of the architects of Africa's international relations such as W. E.B. du Bois whose work focused on showing how the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the colour line; secondly, we have C. L. R. James who insisted that in order to understand Africa one needs to understand Europe. We also look at African leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah who reminded us that the independence of his country Ghana,

which was the first country on the continent to gain its independence, is meaningless unless it links with the total liberation of the African continent.

6. Decolonising the university: With regard to decolonising the university, the focus has not only been on curriculum change, the school has also tried to address notions of a mindset change with regards to concepts, theories, pedagogies, and epistemologies, as has been demonstrated by the work delivered by the annual speakers. One of the critical issues the school focuses on is the need to shift from what Lewis Gordon calls 'disciplinary decadence' where one is preoccupied with the discipline without paying attention to or acknowledging the challenges faced by communities. To this end, the school also highlights the importance of trans-disciplinarity.

One of the outputs that resulted directly from the school, linked to decolonising the university, was an edited book: *Decolonizing the University, Knowledge Systems and Disciplines in Africa* (2016) edited by Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Siphamandla Zondi, both of whom participated in the Summer School.

Teaching and Learning: Building a Curriculum around Decolonial Scholarship

ROZENA MAART: What kind of work did the presenters send for reading? How did this assist in the further conceptualisation of the project, specifically with regard to the development of the project, the pushing back of barriers, the landscaping and mapping of the project, and the extension of the concept, 'decolonial', that you first worked with when the Decolonial Summer School started?

PULENG SEGALO: We sought to invite a diverse group of scholars to facilitate and be presenters at the school. Apart from the South African presenters, several presenters came from various parts of the world, for example, Mexico, the United States of America (USA) and India. Most of the colleagues invited from the USA are all originally from other parts of the world (e.g. West Africa, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, etc.) and they brought that experience and wealth of knowledge with them. While we had a goal in terms of what we would like to achieve, we decided to be non-prescriptive in terms of what the presenters chose to present and prescribe for reading. This worked well as it

allowed presenters the freedom to shape their allocated session, in other words what they deemed useful and relevant to the overall project. This led to various approaches of [to] the notion of what decolonial means being accommodated, and a creative licence with which to approach the seminars being offered. We were hoping for a thinking that is [was] 'outside the box' and one that zooms in on highlighting the multiple-perspectives and the usefulness thereof. A good example of this was Lewis Gordon's seminar on the importance of 'shifting the geography of reason' and creating the possibility by which to establish new forms of reason. His work focuses on ways in which we need to be critical of disciplinary canons and embrace multiple sites of knowledge production. On the other hand, previous speakers such as Oyeronke Oyewumi, Pumla Dineo Gqola and Linda Alcoff reminded us of the complexities of the notion of gender and the problematic ways in which it is often theorised.

From one year to the next, we engage with both presenters and participants on what works and what does not, to continuously reshape the space and allow it to speak to the needs of those who are in attendance. This works well as it allows and shows the importance of multiple voices and perspectives in the shaping and reshaping of the school. Due to time limitations and the set-up of the physical spaces we use, not all recommendations and suggestions could be accommodated all the time. The participants' feedback always plays a critical role in determining and deciding on the relevant speakers to invite. Following the first few Summer Schools hosted, it became clear that participants were yearning for engagements that focused on African experiences. The first few Summer Schools were helpful in laying down the theoretical foundations of what decoloniality means and what it would mean to decolonise. The School offered conceptual and theoretical tools that participants could take back to their studies and the relevant academic departments with which they are affiliated. The School also attracted participants from non-governmental organisations and the corporate environment. It was mostly at this point that voices requesting a more practical focus became audible. While several academics and students called for praxis, to colleagues from outside academia this request seemed more urgent. This led to looking back at how the School is structured and finding ways in which we could engage practical possibilities of how to move decoloniality forward. The project grew to include additional aspects that function independently, but with the same goal. For example, The College of Human Sciences has developed a module in decoloniality, which is offered at honours level and, since it started, the uptake has been

high, to the point that some students are requesting that there should be a full programme in decoloniality. Secondly, the College hosts a biennial international decoloniality conference and, so far, two conferences have been held. The conference offers an opportunity for delegates to share information on their work in progress, the challenges and frustrations they experience within their various institutions, and supervision issues that postgraduate students are confronted with when they use decoloniality as an epistemological framework. These additional parts of the project have opened opportunities to take the work forward in interesting ways.

The Decolonial Academic Agenda in South Africa

MAART: How do you see yourself contributing to the overall agenda of the country?

PULENG SEGALO: From my home department, Psychology, which aims at contributing towards the emotional well-being of people, to the College that puts transformation, decolonisation and re-Africanisation at the core of its mission, to the University that aims to play a pivotal role in being a contributor towards servicing humanity, and a country that has developmental goals that aim at centring social justice through the various individual aspects it highlights, it is my belief that our decoloniality project contributes towards the realisation of the aforementioned objectives. It is also my contention that the UNISA decoloniality project contributed to fuelling the #FeesMustFall movement, a movement that was aimed at highlighting the plight of South African students. While the focus, at least in public, seemed to have been on the unaffordability of fees, the students had also made it clear that there is a need to decolonise the curriculum, linking it to exorbitant fees they have to pay for an education that alienates them from themselves, their histories and knowledge of their people. The decoloniality project contributed towards many universities in South Africa embarking on transformation, decolonisation and re-curriculation processes. Since the project started, I have been invited to speak on decolonisation issues at several local universities, e.g., Rhodes University, Nelson Mandela University and North-West University – both the Potchefstroom and the Vaal campuses. The relevant education agenda continues to be critical for the effective functioning of the country and, through our project, we have carved pathways towards the realisation of an education

system that speaks to and contributes to finding responses to the challenges faced by society.

Decoloniality and Pedagogy

ROZENA MAART: What are some of the pedagogical issues you entered the project with and how has this extended or exceeded what you first had in mind?

PULENG SEGALO: My entry into the decolonial project came about because of several questions I had regarding the academic project more broadly, and knowledge production within my discipline of Psychology in particular. Reflecting on the challenges faced by society due to the oppressive past many of the citizens faced, I felt we needed pedagogical tools to enable us to make sense of what our role is as creators and facilitators of knowledge. Many of our disciplines have not offered us the skills or tools to make sense of our past, our histories, and ways in which we can re-imagine and re-member our fractured existence. For a long time, there seemed to be an over-reliance on imported theories that were imposed and assumed to be universal and, as a result, applicable regardless of context. Some of the epistemological underpinnings and theoretical frameworks we draw from are not applicable to the contexts to which they end up being applied. To give an example of one of the modules I teach, community psychology; in this module we engage extensively with communities around us and, for a long time, there seemed to be a disconnect between the theories that were imposed on both students and communities – theories that were drawn upon to make sense of people's lived experiences. Entering the space of decoloniality and extensively engaging with what it means to decolonise, opened avenues for me; it was as if the oxygen tank was opened and finally, I could breathe.

Trends and Difficulties

ROZENA MAART: What were/ are some of the trends you noticed among the scholars who came to the Decolonial Summer School?

PULENG SEGALO: As I indicated earlier, the School invited a diverse group of scholars whose work, it was hoped, would contribute toward assisting the participants with the conceptual and theoretical grounding of what decoloni-

sation is and what it means to decolonise. The scholars came from various schools of thought and with varied expertise. What I noticed was that they all brought their experiences based on their contexts and understanding of decolonisation from those spaces. They provided a wider view of how they engage the colonialism lineages and ways in which backward tracing assists in working towards decolonial possibilities. The scholars did not necessarily subscribe to the same way of understanding decoloniality and these, sometimes, diverse views allowed for robust debates, critiques, disagreements and heated engagements. Some scholars were more open to critiques from participants, while others were not.

ROZENA MAART: What are some of the unforeseen difficulties that you encountered and that you think or believe the school faced, whether you anticipated these or not?

PULENG SEGALO: The School is open to anyone interested in engaging with issues relating to decolonisation and, as a result, it attracts participants from various contexts such as academics, students, people from non-governmental organisations and people from the private sector. Many participants come with expectations and hopes of what they will gain from the School and sometimes these are unfortunately not met. Several participants, especially those from 'non-academic' sectors, highlighted the absence of a focus on communities and indicated that this is a shortcoming that requires attention. At the same time, participants from various spheres have enriched the content that the School has to offer, as they brought their experiences with them and grappled with ways in which decoloniality is relevant for the work they do. Because the School takes place in January, at the beginning of the academic year, it sometimes coincides with the period during which the University is engaged in the collective bargaining process with labour organisations and this means the possibility of being caught in the middle of protests. This happened on a few occasions, leading to the need for immediate measures to be taken and a venue had to be sought, outside of the University campus, to host the School.

In addition to the above, we have experienced challenges linked to the actual organising of the School, where, on a number of occasions, a committee would be put in place to assist with the planning and organising of the School, but the committee would end up not functioning properly. Lastly, by its nature,

the School 'forces' both participants and scholars who lead the discussions to engage with uncomfortable but necessary issues linked to notions of race, class, gender, to name a few, and how these are linked to colonialism. The discussions lend themselves to many people revisiting and being open about their experiences of oppression, discrimination, exclusion, and suffering. Questions such as 'Whose pain matters?' and 'Who decides what gets privileged in the space?' becomes very contested at times. It is these slippery slopes that one can never anticipate but need a cushion for people to land softly on as they journey into this decolonisation process.

The Way Forward

ROZENA MAART: What is the way forward for the Decolonial Summer School and what has been learnt in the process?

PULENG SEGALO: It is our hope that the School will continue until we have reached as many people – students, academics, and colleagues from outside academia – as possible. Additionally, we would like to see that what people have learnt at the School has been translated into actions in the various spaces they occupy, for instance in their teaching practices, and in the work that they do within communities and in private organisations, where issues of coloniality continue being a challenge. Some of the lessons we have learnt, which are mostly based on the feedback received from participants, is the importance of having facilitators who are familiar with the history of Africa in general and South Africa in particular. There has also been a call to create more space at the school for the role and need for Africanisation. The School will continue to be a space that allows people to reflect, confront and question, where they feel free to 'burp' out the traumas that so many of them carry. We have also learnt that more support and follow up might be needed, where people could go back, as it were, to the engagements that took place at the School. For us, the space and process regarding the decoloniality project is a continuous opportunity to learn, re-learn, re-shape and be humble, as we miss steps along the way. Finally, we envisage the School contributing to the overall national agenda of creating a South Africa that nurtures its people and respects the humanity of all through recognising for example, the need for good, [high] quality and relevant education that prepares and inculcates citizens that are geared towards social justice.

Conclusion

This article offered personal reflections of my involvement and participation in the UNISA Decolonial Summer School. The dialogue structure afforded me the opportunity to offer scholarly reflection on the successes, challenges, and possibilities the School has in pushing forward the decolonial agenda. I conclude by drawing from the Ghanaian concept of *Sankofa* which speaks of the importance of looking back in order to move forward; to assert that this reflective article allowed for 'taking stock' of where the School comes from, how it came into being, and the way in which it could be taken forward. As South Africa and the world continue to grapple with issues of social justice that have their genesis in colonialism, the decolonisation project offers possibilities of rethinking and re-imagining a future that highlights above all, the importance of all humanity.

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Some Thoughts on Decolonisation, Decoloniality, Racism, and Challenges of Citizenship in Communities of Learning

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Abstract

This article is an examination of challenges posed by decolonial theory for communities of learning in societies in which racism is pervasive. As racism is also an inheritance of colonialism, it draws sustenance from institutions developed for the efficiency and flourishing of colonial practices of disempowerment. Universities are among those institutions. Decolonial responses are dedicated to decolonising everything from curricula to interactions between universities and the wider community and across staff, students, faculty, and administrators. The author explores, critically, some of the metatheoretical debates that distinguish decoloniality from decolonisation in this process that often their ironic impact on expanding the norms of academic norms, in market forms, to the wider society through academic publishing and varieties of social media.

Keywords: decolonisation, decoloniality, epistemic closure, pedagogical imperative, political responsibility, racism, university

Introduction

This discussion examines the challenges that decolonial theory poses for communities of learning and the impact of racism as a political phenomenon of disempowerment. Many universities have become battlefields, so to speak, in which discourses and struggles for decolonisation occur. These efforts are often marked by the avowed practice – or praxis, if we will – of decolonising

everything from curricula to interactions with one another in an order of hierarchies. The roles and structures under contestation range from administrations and faculty to both and students, faculty and students, all the above and staff, and the relationship of the entire constellation to the downtrodden in the rest of society. Amid all this is also the set of metatheoretical debates in which some theorists differentiate decoloniality from decolonisation. These conflicts lead to a form of battle before the battle or struggle onto the struggle in locations of contestation outside of the university but whose consequence is part of academic markets – namely, journals, publishing houses, online forums, and varieties of media[1]. For those confused at this point, decolonialists distinguish themselves from agents of decolonisation through the question of the *object* of their practice. Whereas many against decolonisation focus on dismantling vestiges of colonialism, decolonialists argue that more is needed to be done because colonialism produced modes of colonial ways of being in the world. They call this 'coloniality'.

One could formally dismantle colonial states through practices of decolonisation but then find oneself living in what today is called the 'after life' of colonialism in the form of continued coloniality, which some call 'the coloniality of being'. The practices and theorising that are antidotes to such problematic modes of being are, they argue, *decoloniality*[2]. Curiously, a result of both decolonising and decoloniality is a search for practices of disentanglement similar in form to poststructuralist arguments of the late 1980s

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[1] Studies are many. See A. Kayum Ahmed's dissertation, *The Rise of Fallism: #RhodesMustFall and the Movement to Decolonize the University,* Columbia University Dissertation (2019), which offers a fairly comprehensive bibliography through discussion of the South African and United Kingdom contexts and the inspiration they also drew from African American and Latin American thought.

[2] In addition to Ahmed's *The Rise of Fallism* (2019), see also his, 'On Black Pain/Black Liberation and the Rise of Fallism' in *Black Issues in Philosophy* (March 19, 2019). https://blog.apaonline.org/2019/03/19/on-black-pain-black-liberation-and-the-rise-of-fallism/; as well as Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh's *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (2018); and Sayan Dey's edited, *Different Spaces, Different Voices: A Rendezvous with Decoloniality* (2018).

into the end of the 20th century about persisting orders of knowledge and practices that produce subjugated subjectivities or subjects. As Judith Butler (1990) had argued against discourses premised upon attachments to subjects, exorcisms of discourses through which coloniality fosters and festers must strike many theorists who went through those old debates with a sense of eternal return.

There are, however, differences as decolonial forms of arguments point, at least, to the Global South as the origins of their reflections, primarily through the critical thought of initial dependency and then anti-Eurocentric thought from Samir Amin (1988) to Aníbal Quijano (1995; 2000) and then, through varieties of mediations from Enrique Dussel (1996; 2013) to Walter Mignolo (2018), Ramón Grosfoguel (2013; 2012), Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2016; 2008; 2007), Maria Lugones (2010; 2008), Catherine Walsh (2018), and varieties of recent proponents such as Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) in South Africa[3]. Each of these thinkers come to this discussion from very different disciplines – for example, Economics, Philosophy, Literature, Sociology, Religion, Philosophy, Critical Pedagogy and Education, and more, which makes at least the discourse of decoloniality a transdisciplinary one. Yet my observation of at least the poststructural form raises the question of which *kind* of poststructuralism, structuralism, or other kind of theory is manifested here. After all, decolonial theorists could legitimately argue, for the sake of consistency, that poststructuralism is an exemplification of coloniality, which would make at least any effort to subsume their thought under such a rubric an example of coloniality. I would like to stress in responses that I am not arguing here that poststructuralism or any other kind of Euro-animated theory would in any way *legitimate* decolonial theory. My claim here is simply that the *form* decolonial arguments take maps neatly onto poststructuralist thought.

Poststructuralist thought took many forms in the second half of the 20th century as its proponents responded to varieties of structuralism and other forms of knowledge in the Euromodern academy[4]. I will not get into the details

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[3] As many of the others are included in the texts in the preceding notes, I here add Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni's work in this note: *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization* (2013).

[4] For a historical philosophical overview of structuralism, poststructuralism, and the implications and misunderstandings of both, see Peter Caws, *Structuralism: A Philosophy for the Human Sciences* (1997). For critical

here of the distinction between structuralism and poststructuralism, since unfortunately many poststructuralists are often unaware of their arguments either being poststructural or structural. Many often simply assert their thought as 'theory'. What structuralism and poststructuralism share is an understanding of the importance of 'discourse'. This activity – which one could also call 'performance' and 'performativity' – is enacted through the production of rules and of rules about rules through which whatever is under critique acquires 'intelligibility'. The structuralists are often unwilling to say in advance what may become manifested from such critique, whereas poststructuralists are often willing to declare in advance their rejection of essence, essentialism, grand narratives, subjects, binaries, and a plethora of other intellectual commitments through which oppressive practices are sustained. Along the way, poststructuralism takes form in varieties of theoretical movements ranging from semiological psychoanalysis to textual critiques, of which Deconstruction is the most famous exemplar, archaeologies of *epistemes* (sciences) and other forms of *gnosis* (knowledges) practices, and genealogical unveiling of relations of power at the heart of discourses in the form of power/knowledge or knowledge/power.

At the level of metatheory – that is, theory about theory – however, important conundrums do arise. Critics have shown, for instance, that there is not only poststructuralist essentialist anti-essentialism but also poststructuralist Eurocentrism at the heart of how poststructuralist critique of Eurocentrism tends to equate theory itself with European thought[5]. In other words, it does

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discussions connected to the context of the Global South, see Lewis R. Gordon, *Her Majesty's Other Children: Sketches of Racism in a Neocolonial Age* (1997), Chapter 5; Lewis R. Gordon, *Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times* (2006); and also by Lewis R. Gordon, *Freedom, Justice, and Decolonization* (2021).

[5] See Paget Henry, *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy* (2000) and Paget Henry, 'C.L.R. James and the Orthodoxies of John McClendon and David Scott: A Review Essay' (2007: 185–186); Eric Nelson, *Chinese and Buddhist Philosophy in Early Twentieth-Century German Thought* (2017); Lewis R. Gordon, *Her Majesty's Other Children* (1997); *Disciplinary Decadence* (2006); and the discussion of such debates along the concerns of interpellation in *An Introduction to Africana Philosophy* (2008), and 'Essentialist Anti-Essentialism, with Considerations from Other Sides of

not take much to realise that almost exclusively arguing against Eurocentrism through discussing European thinkers results in maintaining European thought at the centre of thought. There is, as well, the political critique, where some proponents, in seeing poststructuralism as liberatory – as in fact *the emancipatory exemplification of theory's potential* – had to account for the flourishing of influence and professional rewards of such forms of thought in hegemonic centres of the dreaded neoliberal academy. It is not only Marxists but also Black liberationists who evoke the spirit of Malcolm X, who would raise the special relationship poststructuralist stars have with wealthy foundations of the establishment as a cause for proverbial pause[6].

As the unfortunate damned of the earth wallow in more radicalised inequalities, the distance between them and the theorists who focused on discourse has increased. Yet the market commodification of knowledge did not rest, and as others hoped to transform their thought into capital from that model, rebranding became the order of the day. Thus, textual poststructuralism is now 'critical theory'. This is distinct from the Frankfurt School critical theory, which examined problems raised from Kant through to Hegel with social-theoretical analysis from Marx, Weber, and Freud. Genealogical poststructuralism, in contrast, sought more fertile soil along the so-called periphery. A combination of textual poststructuralism and genealogical poststructuralism, with some of the ideas from Black feminist thought and Black existentialism, is now offered under the brand of 'Afropessimism'. The genealogical turn was already there in the analysis of coloniality and the move to decoloniality, and elements from varieties of Indigenous and Black thought also came to the fore in what is now often offered as decolonial thought[7]. Now, my interest here is not to reject or support these movements. It is already clear to me, for instance, that a clear distinction between what is now called 'critical theory' on the one hand and what are called 'Afropessimism' and 'decolonial theory' on the other is easily seen in their audiences. The former speaks almost exclusively to a white, elite academy with at times tokenistic representations of colour. The latter are attractive to varieties of academics and activists in the

Modernity' (2012).

[6] I discussed some of these back in 1997 in *Her Majesty's Other Children*. See also Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, and Literatures* (1992).

[7] For elaboration, see Lewis R. Gordon, *Freedom, Justice, and Decolonization* (2021).

Global South[8]. Thus, whether one disagrees with the latter on theoretical grounds, something is at work with such clear demographical difference, even where for the most part the practitioners of all three may be distanced from those suffering material forces of inequality in an age of information receiving more priority than experiences (also a contested term) and degradations of esteem and flesh. As most of the action inevitably coalesces around institutions of learning, I will now offer some thoughts about the virtues of education and schools that may be worth considering as additions to these debates. The focus on these institutions makes sense, after all, since many of their functionaries act under the assumption of their independence even during times of declared colonialism. If independent, why should educational institutions change in postcolonial times or postcolonies?

A Community of Learners

We have already touched on the answer to that question in the ideas of neocolonial institutions and coloniality. So, let us instead move to the idea of these institutions, imagined or otherwise, before at least Euromodern colonisation of much of the planet. In English we speak of the 'university', which is very different from how many ancient peoples and those in other languages and cultures today understand places of learning. As the English-speaking institutions are heavily influenced by a Greco-Latin past, let us begin with those, although I by no means want to affirm the fallacy of claiming that

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[8] Readers for whom this may not seem evident should consult A. Kyum Ahmed's dissertation and 'On Black Pain/Black Liberation and the Rise of Fallism', which documents the audiences across social media in Africa and Europe; and Catherine Walsh's analysis of the role of indigenous activists in articulating more recent exemplifications of decolonial thought, brings those audiences to the fore. See her, 'The Decolonial *For*: Resurgences, Shifts, and Movements', in Walter Mignolo and Catherine Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (2018: 15–32). And, for a discussion of concerns of textualism from perspectives of black thought, outside of the framework of Afropessimism, see Rozena Maart, 'Exordium: Writing and the Relation: From Textual Coloniality to South African Black Consciousness', in Monica Michlin and Jean-Paul Rocchi (eds.): *Black Intersectionalities: A Critique for the 21st Century* (2013: 21–33).

all roads of thought lead back to the Greek and Latin languages. Oddly enough, as my colleague Mogobe Ramose reflected in the 2019 Decolonial Summer School at the University of South Africa, if one were to go to Athens today and head to what we would consider its universities, we would have to look for the *Το Πανεπιστήμιο* ('*Panepistemio*'), which literally means 'pan-sciences', though some might interpret it as 'pan-knowledges'. We already see here a model that is very different from the understanding of places of learning we have acquired from histories of colonisation and imperialism. Such a history demands only one prevailing, whereas the notion of pan-knowledges and pan-sciences suggests a meeting of different ways of thinking and doing thinking. It requires a commitment not only to co-existence but also communicating – in other words, learning from each other. We could call this a community of learners. Thought of as a community of learners, this means that places of learning must think of students, professors, staff, visitors – anyone in its community – as interconnected and part of something ultimately greater than themselves. For instance, I begin my classes by asking students to define a professor. The students often offer hierarchical models that make professors seem like Moses at Mount Sinai with the sacred tablets. I then offer my two cents. A professor, as I see it, is someone who fell in love with learning and continued to learn. The learning over the years takes the form of research, but it is not limited to that. In short, a professor is an advanced student who has continued learning. A student, then, is simply a beginner or a person earlier in her educational journey. Some professors become jaded and forget what sparked their intellectual pursuits, but this does not change their status of being advanced students. And still there are others who may have entered the profession without any concern for learning but instead the narcissistic pursuit of 'prestige'. Even so, to get where they are required some kind of learning, which makes their advanced student status also evident. It does not follow that all students are good students in the sense of commitment to the pursuit of learning.

The crucial point is that this understanding of professors and students requires the virtue of humility. The reason is that no one comes to learning without different experiences to bring to the subject. Thus, an advanced learner could learn from the experiences of a student at a beginner stage. As well, a beginner student can learn not only from the advanced accumulation of knowledge of the advanced learner but also from the different experiences that the learner or professor bring to the subject. We could call this the relational and functional model of learning. From this point of view, learning is not

something one carries as one would water in a vessel. It requires understanding even ourselves as open possibilities through which, in relationships with others, we discover – through active engagement – new things about ourselves, others, and the world in which we live[9].

Some people discourage other people from changing when they seek an education. This is a silly path to take. Education, after all, requires growth, and how can one grow without changing? This brings us to an important element of places of learning. We have many names for them, but the one that prevails in the English language is 'schools'. As with the discussion of what is a professor, I begin courses with a conversation as well on what is a school, even during my years as a secondary school teacher in the mid-1980s.

Readers could imagine what my adolescent students' responses to that question were. Among them was, simply, "School sucks!" Others would say it's a place they were *forced* to attend. I would then offer some input. The origin of the word 'school' is the Greek word σχολή ('*skholē*'). It means leisure time. You could imagine their response. I would explain that it was not only Greek-speaking people but also many others from all over the world who realised the unusual circumstance of what is achieved in not having to spend all of one's waking life searching for food, water, shelter, and in addition, to avoid becoming other creatures' next meal. Freed now and then from exigency, our ancestors discovered they could devote their time to uniquely human things. Among those activities was the pursuit of knowledge. And this was acquired through the 'lecture', which is another word for σχολή, and which would lead to our English word 'school'. In the ancient African language Mtw Ntr ('divine speech', spoken by the ancient peoples of Kmt/Egypt), for instance, the word for what we now call 'school' is *sbA*. That word also means 'student'. Relatedly what occurs in a *sbA* is *sbAyt*, which means 'written teaching or instruction'. A connection here is also to the quality of instruction one hopes

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[9] These are ideas argued for, in one form or another, in the thought of many theorists. They are in Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la terre*(1961) and Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1981). The specific forms offered here are what Jane Anna Gordon and I call 'the pedagogical imperative'. For related discussion also at work here, see Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South* (2018); Catherine Walsh, 'The Decolonial *For:* Resurgences, Shifts and Movements' (2018); Lewis R. Gordon, *Freedom, Justice, and Decolonization* (2021).

will be manifested. *SbAyt* also means 'wise teachings'. It is an idea later transformed among Greek speaking students, who eventually changed the '*b*' to '*ph*', as they pronounced it with what was close to the English '*f*', to give us *sophia* – namely, 'wisdom'.

In a way, understanding that school enables us to devote our time to uniquely human things makes the current divisions of learning institutions into the humanities, sciences, and professional schools both artificial and misleading. After all, every one of these is a uniquely human activity. Institutions of learning *are*, ultimately, the humanities. This is because everything that takes place in them – including activities such as sports, fraternities and sororities, political and other forms of clubs – are not only human but also what is involved in helping us learn to become more so. In other words, what many people discovered is that with leisure time, we can devote ourselves to *becoming human*. This idea of becoming human is paradoxical, since it requires many of us being human beings and actively becoming human beings. We could expand this idea beyond the mechanical understandings of learning to the larger one of cultivation and communication and the power that brings us together in what is called *citizenship*. In citizenship, we develop our ability to make things happen, which is what 'power' actually means. The growth occasioned by education, is also empowerment[10].

Of course, this is not to say that these ideas are without need of critique. After all, who is afforded leisure time depends on the organisation of the society in which it is proffered. Many of the Greek-speaking people were organised into polities in which at times four-fifths of the population were enslaved for the luxury of others' leisure. In others, such as in ancient Axum, Kush and various periods of Kemet, either there was sufficient collective labour to facilitate shared leisure or at least smaller numbers of those on whose labours others depend. We need not romanticise the past to realise that human beings, as opposed to other animals, generally found time to do uniquely human things emerging from the cultivation of culture. I have been focusing on Greek etymologies because the context in which these reflections have come to print is a primarily English-speaking audience. We should remember, however, that Greek is actually a fairly recent language in the life of a species that is about 220 000 years old. There are African language origins of many

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[10] For elaboration, especially with regard to citizenship, see Lewis R. Gordon, 'Cities and Citizenship' (2017: 36–43).

Greek and Latin words because of the obvious fact that African languages are older and the continent's northern shores are primarily of the Mediterranean[11].

I have already shown a more ancient African origin of the word *sophia.* Another is the word 'power', whose etymological accounts often point to the Latin '*potis*'. Yet if one were to dig deeper into the past, one would discover that that word in turn is from the Mtw Ntr word *pHty,* which refers to godlike or divine strength. Think of how today we perceived ultimate divinity as omnipotent. I could imagine the many insights on this idea that could be offered by many readers whose indigenous language is one other than English or any other European language. Indigenous Africans may find connections in their various languages connected to such insights[12]. Indigenous peoples of Abya Yala (the Kuna-Tule people's name for what is now called 'the Americas') may offer other elaborations as their diversion from communication with peoples of Africa, Asia, and Europe may be more ancient. Still, the commitment to keep learning to learn is, we should remember, an endless task, as those who have taken up those other elaborations attest[13].

Decolonising and the Decolonial Foci on Institutions of Learning: Racism

Let us now turn to another critical consideration of decolonising and decolonial foci on institutions of learning: racism. It is not only that institutions of learning during colonial times drew sustenance from practices of colonisation but that

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[11] See Cheikh Anta Diop's *Parenté Génétique de L'Égyptien Pharaonique et des Langues Negro-Africaines* (1977) and *Cheikh Anta Diop: L'homme et l'oeuvres* (2003); Charles Finch, III, *Echoes of the Old Darkland* (1991); Gerald Massey, *The Natural Genesis* ([1883] 1998, and Anténor Firmin, *De l'égalité des races humaines: anthropologie positive* (1885).

[12] See, for instance, Nkiru Uwechia Nzegwu, *Family Matters: Feminist Concepts in African Philosophy of Culture* (2006); *His Majesty Nnaemeka Alfred Ugochukwu Achebe: A Ten-Year Milestone* (2013); Oyèrónké Oyewùmí, *What Gender is Motherhood? Changing Yorùbá Ideals of Power, Procreation, and Identity in the Age of Modernity* (2015).

[13] See, for example, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide* (2014) and Julia Suàrez-Krabbe, *Race, Rights and Rebels: Alternatives beyond Human Rights and Development* (2015).

Lewis R. Gordon

they also produced an understanding of who could learn and who supposedly could not that was blatantly racist. A difficulty with talking about racism is that we are taught, in racist societies, from birth to grave, to pretend it either does not exist or is always irrelevant. It would take too much time here to address the details of why this is so. Among the many reasons is the focus on racists instead of racism. In other words, more people are worried these days about being called or identified as racists than about the ongoing effects of racial inequality and the institutions that foster it. Worried about being accused of being racist, the easiest path for them is to deny racism, as though racists and racism must be identical. This may seem counter-intuitive, but the logic of being racist and that of racism are not the same.

Look at it this way: a racist is an individual with racist beliefs; that person could believe that her race is superior to other races, or she may consider her race inferior to other races and thus support the other races. Now, imagine that person has very limited power. In other words, her racist beliefs will have no impact on the world beyond the insult she may directly unleash upon groups she dislikes. For the most part, her being a racist is irrelevant to the lives of the people she hates – unless, of course, she has the power of a goddess. Now, consider a society in which no individual people believe in the superiority or inferiority of their race but all the institutions are designed to assure that a specific group's race is placed at an advantage over others or that a particular race or group of races is at a disadvantage. Let us imagine that the society does not question its legitimacy. This would affect how evidence is interpreted in that society. What could their advantages be but evidence of one group's supposed excellence and others' limitations?

Racism is the institutional investment of power in one race of people over others. This requires, as well, the institutional *divestment* of power from certain groups. In other words, racism depends on empowering one race and disempowering others. To support racism, rationalisations of how such institutions function becomes necessary. I call these 'pleasing falsehoods'[14]. Of course, where there are pleasing falsehoods (such as the non-humanity of black and indigenous peoples), there are also displeasing truths (such as black and indigenous peoples *are human beings* living under institutional conditions

[14] See, for example, Lewis R. Gordon, *Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism* [1995)] (1999); *Existentia Africana: Understanding Africana Existential Thought* (2000); and, more recently, *Freedom, Justice, and Decolonization* (2021).

of human degradation). Racism thus requires avoiding or hiding from the truth, which is the set of falsehoods on which racist societies rest. This is one of the reasons why disciplines whose purpose is to unveil such lies are often attacked in racist societies. I recall a debate I had with a black conservative nearly two decades ago in which my opponent argued that Black Studies should not be taught in American universities because it supposedly makes students 'angry'. (I am sure similar objections are made in other countries across the globe.) My response was at first cheeky: "And what's wrong with that?" But then I got to the central point. Many people think disciplines such as African Studies, Black Studies, Ethnic Studies, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Indigenous Studies exist for people to see themselves in the curriculum. This is partially true; but there is an additional element. Without these disciplines, students often receive a very lopsided version of the world in which they live.

So much is kept out that what is left is, as dominant groups would have it, pretty cosy and sterile. That offers little, if any, room for critique of past governors, epistemological or otherwise, who persist and thus continue to rule. For example, whenever I teach Contemporary African Philosophy, students often notice something peculiar. Because that area of philosophy is not hegemonic, I must explain why it is philosophical, which means explaining what understanding philosophy is, with which the class would be working. This involves being accountable for everything that is taught. It is similar to what I have already mentioned about education, schooling, and what it means to be a professor. The students learn not only about philosophical movements outside of the European traditions of analytical and Eurocontinental practitioners but also about elements of the European tradition often taken for granted and thus offered without accountability. The students tend to get appropriately angry at the realisation of how miseducated they are in so-called generic or 'pure' philosophy classes. Their anger is not against what is called 'Western philosophy'. Their anger is against not being offered a fuller picture of what philosophy proposes. They become upset *because they seek education* instead of being spoon-fed a particular worldview cloaks of avowed universality. Now, an excuse often given when they return to their other professors is that African, Native American, Asian, and many other philosophical offerings are not those instructors' areas of specialisation. The problem there is that the students are not asking for their professors to be experts in those areas but instead – and at least – for them to exemplify the virtue of a commitment to continued learning. Gaining some competence could

go a long way. Jane Anna Gordon and I call this *the pedagogical imperative*[15]. It means to continue learning while one teaches. When I teach Contemporary African Philosophy, I do not only place that subject in conversation with European philosophy but also put it in conversation with what is offered across the globe. It is clear to the students that the incarnation of the course they encounter is but one and that it will change over time as I continue to learn. Why not receive something similar in their other classes?

When I teach existentialism, I examine problems of existence as posed and addressed across the globe – among African, Asian, Australasian, and Indigenous thinkers of Abya Yala and existential thinkers to their north. Students leave such courses realising that all people think and offer ideas for our common humanity's effort to grow. Anger, where it comes from a desire to learn, is actually, as Frantz Fanon showed in some of his psychiatric and political writings, healthy[16]. It is different from the anger premised upon rage against others. Put differently, the first kind of anger is ironically an expression of virtue. It is the same kind that is animated from being moved against injustice. The second kind is a vice. It is vicious because it is motivated against the dignity and empowerment of others. Racism is connected to the second kind. Now, although I am talking about racism, for the sake of time and space, I am going to shift to some critical remarks about how we engage in such talk. Many of us – I say 'us' because racism is a global phenomenon – are accustomed to talking about concepts and ideas in ways that separate their connection to what makes them possible. Yet, if human beings are creatures born of relationships, then it follows that efforts to disempower us are connected to blocking our capacity for growth through such relationships.

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[15] See Lewis R. Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon, 'On Working through a Most Difficult Terrain: Introducing A Companion to African-American Studies', in *A Companion to African-American Studies* (2006: xx - xxxv); Jane Anna Gordon, 'Beyond Anti-Elitism: Black Studies and the Pedagogical Imperative' (2010:1 - 16); Lewis R. Gordon, 'A Pedagogical Imperative of Pedagogical Imperatives' (2010: 27 - 35). For related discussion of critical pedagogy in the context of critical thought in contemporary feminist theory, see Rozena Maart, 'Race and Pedagogical Practices: When Race Takes Center Stage in Philosophy' (2014:205 - 220).

[16] See Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom,* edited and compiled by Jean Khalfa and Robert J. C. Young (2018).

This is one of the harms of racism, but racism never manifests this by itself.

I have over the years taught a semester-long seminar called 'Race in the Formation of the Human Sciences'. Our readings during the third week of that course focus on writings from François Bernier in the 17th century through to Immanuel Kant in the 18th century and then all the way through to Francis Galton, the eugenicist, in the 19th century. The students are often shocked at the racism they see at work in how many of the human sciences were formed. Much of this is because they are used to studying their intellectual heroes as gods instead of as human beings, with all the imperfections of such. It is a form of theodicy that permeates much thinking, not only in the academy but also in most people's relationship to society.

Theodicy is the kind of rationalisation in which one attempts to preserve the goodness of an omnipotent and omniscient being in a world marked by injustice. If such a being or Being is good and just, why does it not intervene? Why does it let terrible things happen? There are many classic responses from antiquity through to the Middle Ages to recent times – see the African philosopher St. Augustine for some examples, the German 17th century philosopher (and many things else) Gottfried Leibniz and the recently late Ghanaian philosopher Kwame Gyekye for other critiques – in which two responses dominate: (1) human finitude limits understanding the omnipotent and omniscient being or Being's ultimate plan; and (2) the love from such a being or Being entailing not standing in the way of human freedom which messes things up[17].

I won't address the fallacies of (1) and (2) here[18]. What is crucial for the purposes of this discussion is the observation that theodicean

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[17] See, for example, St. Augustine, *The City of God* (1950); Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy* (1952); and Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme* (1987). John Hicks's *Evil and the God of Love* (1978); William R. Jones's, *Is God a White Racist: A Preamble to Black Theology* (1997); Sherman A. Jackson, *Islam and Black Suffering* (2009); and Anthony B. Pinn, *Why, Lord? Suffering and Evil in Black Theology* (1999). See also Lewis R. Gordon, *An Introduction to Africana Philosophy* (2008) and *Freedom, Justice, and Decolonization* (2021).

[18] Gyekye offers an excellent critique in *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought* (1987). See also Hicks's *Evil and the God of Love* (1978). I offer critical discussion in many contexts, including *Freedom, Justice, and*

rationalisations take the prized being/Being off the hook. If we secularise it, we would see the same kinds of rationalisation at work in the defence of, say, South Africa, the United States of America (USA), and their Constitutions to models of knowledge through which the degradations of excluded peoples are cultivated[19]. When it comes to the study of the writings of canonical thinkers, I call this *theodicy of the text*, where they are treated like gods who have produced perfect works. Yes, it is a form of idolatry. We should bear in mind that this theodicy is also at work in the contrary position, where such authors are demonised.

In both cases, the result is the erasure of their humanity. This is not to excuse those canonical European thinkers. It is to point out that it is our responsibility to address the imperfections of thought – in a word, to really read what any author has written – and offer better alternatives. When we move to the seemingly nonracist elements of their thought, we do find some elements on which ironically their racist elements depend. Here are some examples. First, there is an obsession with the 'origins' of humankind in a way that leads to considering other groups of human beings as 'deviations' from those origins. Second, there is the presumption that the 'original' must be 'pure'. Third, there is concern with reproduction – or repetition – as law. All this is abstract, but much of it is familiar. The first often presumes that the person doing the theorising belongs to the original group. Thus, Kant argued that human beings must have evolved in geographical and climactic conditions similar to the German/Prussian world of his day. Second, many of those thinkers presumed that diversity was deviation and origins were pure. As many of us know today, it turns out that at least biological origins point to places of maximum genetic diversity. And the obsession with reproduction for those thinkers was premised on the idea of male sources of progeny. Thus, control of female reproductive behaviour was central, and this led to an obsession with blocking certain males,

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Decolonization (2021) and, with Jane Anna Gordon, *Of Divine Warning: Reading Disaster in the Modern Age* (2009).

[19] In South Africa and the USA, constitutionalism has become forms of idolatry through which the larger picture of their constitutions often stopping short, where the lives of the damned of the earth are concerned, are often ignored. I discuss this problem in *Freedom, Justice, and Decolonization* (2021); see also Rozena Maart, 'Philosophy Born of Massacres. Marikana, the Theatre of Cruelty: The Killing of the "kaffir"' (2014).

now racialised, from sexual reproduction[20].

Much of this comes along with a long history that, again, I cannot spell out here for sake of space but have done so elsewhere in my books and articles. The short of it is the long history of how Christianity is linked to those ways of thinking about origins and purity and how the rise of global capitalism during the period of such reflections required a group of people who were linked to it as its benefactors[21]. Placing all these things together, one not only has the notion of white supremacy but also the psychological and sociological elements that support it. All this means, as I hope the readers will be realising, that addressing racism is complicated because it is connected to so many elements of the world in which we now live.

There are scholars and theorists today who call this 'intersectional'[22]. I prefer to call it 'multidimensional'. Both are connected to a basic insight. No human being is one-dimensional. In fact, one-dimensionality is one of the goals of racism. It is the oversimplification of what people are and how people live. Has anyone ever seen a 'race' walking? How about a 'gender'? A 'sexuality'? A 'class'? The list goes on. These abstractions eliminate other elements of people to achieve a 'pure essence' of what is sought. That is why so many make the mistake of looking for pure origins. They don't realise that the emergence of human beings is so profoundly existential that there is always 'other-than' added to any appeal to a singular element to which human beings supposedly conform or belong. Realising this, we should instead move from elimination to

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[20] For a compilation of the relevant literature, from Bernier through to Galton, see Robert Bernasconi and Tommy Lott (eds.), *The Idea of Race* (2000).

[21] Among the books in which I discuss the formation of white supremacy and anti-black racism is *Fear of Black Consciousness* (2021).

[22] See, for example, Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Colour' (1991: 1241 - 1299) and, interviewed by Bim Adewunmi, 'Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality: 'I wanted to come up with an everyday metaphor that anyone could use' (2014); and Evelyn Simien and Ange-Marie Hancock, 'Intersectionality Research' (2011: 185 - 243). For elaboration in ways connecting to my point about multidimensionality, see Rozena Maart, 'Exordium: Writing and the Relation: From Textual Coloniality to South African Black Consciousness' and Lewis R. Gordon, *Fear of Black Consciousness* (2021).

connections. This is another way of using the grand term 'relationality'. So, let us do that. Let us look at various ways in which human beings attempt to force other human beings outside of relationality with the consequence of disempowerment[23].

Disempowerment and Invisibility

For now, for the purpose of brevity, I will call this disempowerment 'oppression' and place 'invisibility' into the long list of its many consequences. The first disconnection is to reject the right to exist *numerically* or *quantitatively*. This one tags onto race immediately. Where there is racism, there is always the claim that there are too many members of the rejected group around. Although any group could be made into such – as we see happening right now with the hatred being fomented against immigrants in many countries across the globe – the historic signifier of this one is black people. There are supposedly always too many black people around, even in countries where black people are actually a near-negligible number of the population. This is why many institutions think they achieve diversity by having one black person in any given context. *One.* This might be understandable in some Scandinavian countries, but, as many know, such an attitude develops in professional institutions in countries such as Brazil and South Africa where the black population far exceeds their representation in institutions of power. To make the inclusion of *one* count as diversification is absurd. That makes blackness potent stuff. It makes such people exponential. The second is *temporal*. This is a tricky one. It is linked to how we think of what it means to be 'modern'. The word 'modern' is from the Latin *modo* (which means 'just now'). How do you know 'now' except through anticipation of the future? If one does not enter the future, then one's 'now' belongs to a past. But which past? If it is not that one that immediately precedes us – because of being linked to where we are going – then it must be to one that ceased to go anywhere. Thus, in effect, to be modern is to belong to where humanity is going, which means to be linked to the future, which retroactively legitimates one's now and, through that, one's past. Here, disempowerment becomes linked to land. In settler colonial societies, the settlers conclude that indigenous peoples belong

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[23] I offer here a summary of the discussion of these features elaborated in *Fear of Black Consciousness* (2022).

to the past since the future is supposedly 'settled' for the settlers whose relationship to land is premised on its transformation into 'property'.

Most (if not all) Indigenous people's conceptions of land are as many Indigenous scholars across the globe have argued, based on understanding at least its relationship to life in which people are more like custodians instead of property owners. The idea that those linked to land in this way leads to the construction of 'primitives' and other notions of people who supposedly do not belong to the future. This is what many Indigenous people fight against across the globe. From the perspective of settlers, such people are not legitimate, even 'now'. What do we call someone who belongs to the past but stands before us in the present? The word in English is 'ghost'. Such people are thus treated as 'haunting' the present. Think here of the tendency many non-indigenous people have of leaping quickly to spiritual concepts and metaphors whenever Indigenous people are mentioned. In Africa and Australia, where Indigenous people are also black, one notices oscillation between quantity (race) and temporality (haunting) depending on the focus. When many non-Africans discuss Africans as 'indigenous', spiritual language is soon to follow.

The third regards *speech*. This one is peculiarly gendered in European and Asian societies. It is there in ancient myths of mute women. If one were to peruse women's writings, one would notice the large presence of titles with the word 'voice' in them. Here is a short list: Anna Julia Cooper (1892), *A Voice from the South*; Carol Gilligan (1982), *In a Different Voice*; Michelle Walker (1993), 'Silence and Reason: Woman's Voice in Philosophy'; Kathryn Lasky's (2005) biography of African American poet Phillis Wheatley, *A Voice of Her Own*; Mike River's (2005) *Listen to Her Voice: Women in the Hebrew Bible*; Judy Yung's (1999) documentary history of Chinese American women, *Unbound Voices*; Emily Honig and Gail Hershatter's (1988) book on Chinese women in the 1980s, *Personal Voices*; the subtitle of Xinran's (2003), *The Good Women of China* is *Hidden Voices*.

I refer to these authors because they are in the European and Asian contexts and their extension in their colonies. The crucial point here is that speech is a required element for political participation. To appear politically – to have power – is to have a voice. But what this means is not simply that one speaks but also that one is either not *heard* or heard without being listened to. If one is not heard, then one's mouth is moving but the effect is silence. These are expressions of a basic fact. Disempowerment demands being politically mute. The final one is *epistemological.* Epistemology refers to theories of

knowledge. I will not belabour this one since it is clearly a consequence of the other three: If one should not exist, if one does not belong to the future, and if one is voiceless, then what one offers epistemologically becomes void. The consequence is what I call *epistemic closure*[24]. This means that there is a form of invisibility that occurs ironically when one is 'seen' because one's appearance is illicit. This means that to see people in these groups is to see all that needs to be seen; there is supposedly nothing more to know. Learning is shut down. There is no question. There is no inquiry. The door is epistemologically closed.

It should be clear that any group could be placed into these four categories depending upon the conditions placed on them. And this is the point. All of these are *human-created forms of disempowerment*. It is thus the responsibility of the human world to fix them. It is also crucial to bear in mind that this typography is not exhaustive. For instance, I did not mention here how disability is often equated with inability. 'Disabled' and 'unable' are different considerations, and there are many forms of epistemic closure that elide lived reality and the range of what is at work in the lives of those labelled 'disabled'. We come, then, to my concluding – and I must stress *non-exhaustive* – remarks. There is much more that I can say on what is at work with all of these, but the main consideration I would like to make connects to the idea of political responsibility.

These are all human manifestations of power. Power, I should like to reiterate, is the ability to make things happen. We could use that ability to enable others to make things happen. Or we can use our ability to block others from being able to do the same. This is what disempowerment means.

Towards a Conclusion

Too many of us want to restrict our analyses of racism, sexism, homophobia, class inequalities, and settler colonisation to moral forms of discourse. In doing so, we individualise what are in fact political issues. Why does this pose a problem? If such problems really depend on individuals *as individuals*, such individuals would have to be gods if they held such power to change the world. With morality, one can point to who is responsible and who is not. Political

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[24] For elaboration, see, for example, Lewis R. Gordon, *Existentia Africana* (2000: 65, 88–90, 151–158, 162).

responsibility, however, is very different. First, it is always about *us*. This is because the jurisdiction of political power is over all within its jurisdiction. Second, because it applies to all within its domain, it pertains to those who are no longer here and those to come into its ambit. This means, then, that it applies as well to the anonymous. Third, unlike moral responsibility, where one could be innocent or guilty, such a notion is irrelevant when it comes to political responsibility. What matters is that one is a member of the polity. This is why it does not work to protest that one did not vote for those in power.

Everyone will bear the burden of the actions of their government and those entrusted with its function. It also explains why language of purging oneself of coloniality, while commendable, achieves very little, if anything, politically[25]. Take, for example, debates on reparations. When people discuss this in the USA as what white people owe black people, they miss the point. Black people are, after all, members of that society. This means those historically and presently harmed and everyone else will share its obligations – including its penalties. Whose tax revenue and other resources would such compensation come from? This is why white people who go to the USA and reject reparations on the grounds of not being the historical white people involved in the enslavement of African people miss the point. They share with recent immigrant black people the same burden. Becoming a member of a society entails also taking on its debts. This applies as well to the responsibility for the unfortunate, dehumanising activities happening at borders and other areas of the USA and similar countries across the globe. No society lasts forever; no government is 'on top' forever. At some point, its people will be held accountable.

The German philosopher Karl Jaspers, who lived through Nazi Germany and courageously fought against the machinations of that government and his fellow citizens, had a chilling observation on what follows their being vanquished: Has such a society behaved in a way deserving of mercy?[26] 'But what can *I* do?' each reader may be tempted to ask. Or worse, 'There is nothing I can do'. On this score, there is much to be learned from so many who faced what in their times seemed impossible. The ancestors of

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[25] For elaboration, see *Freedom, Justice, and Decolonization* (2021); and *Fear of Black Consciousness* (2021). And for similar discussion, see Iris Marion Young, 'Responsibility and Global Labor Justice' (2004: 365–88).

[26] Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt* (2000).

Indigenous people faced an eliminated future. So, too, did many enslaved people. The list can go on. All the circumstances around them offered one message: any effort to alleviate their condition will fail. So, we should ask, why did they act? We know they acted, because if they had not, many of us – their descendants among the damned of the earth – would not be here. They acted without forecast. They acted without guarantee. They acted, however, out of commitment. This many of them were able to do because they understood the importance of the relationship of ancestors to descendants; they knew, in other words, that their actions were not about *them* but about *us* as understood as generations over all time, of the witnesses gone and those to come. We have an opportunity, then, in places of learning, and the broader 'here' beyond them. This involves examining the vices of degradation and anti-truths or pleasing falsehoods that challenge communication and our imaginative capacity to build institutions of integrity and human flourishing. It also involves thinking anew about questions of what it means to be human, free, and reasonable in an age in which proverbially all is at stake. Eradicating the 'what's in it for *me*' mentality would open the door to what is to be done to build better places of learning and, by extension, better societies. These debates on decolonisation and decoloniality may not be original in form, but in content they do expand the scope of what all of us should consider. A question we could ask ourselves, through such action, is whether, politically considered, our descendants' response would be, upon looking back upon us, 'We are so fortunate they acted' instead of, 'Why, O why, did they not act?'

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Decoloniality and Enslavism

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Abstract
In this article, I propose an overdue connection between the critical concept of decoloniality, and the framework of what I call *enslavism*, as a term for the human abjective practices of enslavement of Black life during the hundreds of years of the transatlantic slave trade, New World slavery and its ongoing afterlives. It seems to me that much of recent decolonial theory has – beyond making nods to the event of transatlantic slavery – not extensively addressed the specific history and present of enslavist anti-Black violence in its connection to the history of imperial coloniality.

Keywords: slavery, imperial coloniality, settler colonialism, enslavism, human abjective practices

Introduction
In this article, I propose an overdue connection between the critical concept of decoloniality, and the framework of what I call enslavism, as a term for the human abjective practices of enslavement of Black life during the hundreds of years of the transatlantic slave trade, New World slavery and its ongoing afterlives. It seems to me that much of recent decolonial theory has – beyond making nods to the event of transatlantic slavery – not extensively addressed the specific history and present of enslavist anti-Black violence in its connection to the history of imperial coloniality. There seem to be quite separate strands of debates about settler colonialism, as well as strands about post-slavery racism against Black diasporic life. I agree with the current afro-pessimist approach (Wilderson 2010; Sexton 2008; Hartman 2007, if in a different register) to see different structures of violence employed against, respectively, indigenous populations and Black people, a difference not in scale but in quality as one between white human practices of contingent violence occasioned by

theft of land and sovereignty, on the one hand, and gratuitous violence against Black life which keeps re-producing 'social death' (Patterson's by now well-established term from 2000), on the other. I see the production of Black social death as one of the mainstays of ongoing coloniality – in that it overlaps with white (post)imperial domination, as in the case of South Africa (Maart 2014b). In addition, the embeddedness of gratuitous anti-Black violence at the center of post-Enlightenment Western formations of *humanity* has to be seen more clearly. I suggest, as the mainstay of ongoing metropolitan regimes of coloniality which critics like Wynter (2005); James (2017); Dussel (1996); Mignolo (2009; 2018); Lewis Gordon (2000; 2007a; 2007b), Jane Gordon (2014) and Trouillot (1995) foreground. Others, who represent a spatially and temporally wide decolonial project, one could say, with respectively different interests and foci – too many to reference here –, have introduced and disseminated important work around the millennial turn, such as de Sousa Santos, Vasquez, Shilliam, Tlostanova, Lugones, Spivak, Tuhiwahi Smith, Bogues, Maldonado-Torres, Bhambra, Randeria, Mbembe, and Martineau.

And recent collections, monographs, and websites exploring the current state of decolonial studies, extensive bibliographies that may be fruitfully explored, include, Broeck & Junker (2014); Jackson, Manthalu & Waghid (2017); Tamdgigi *et al.* (2015); Stingl, Mignolo & Walsh (2015); Dey (2019); Rivas-Triana *et al.* (2017); and Franzki & Aikins (2010).

At this point, one cannot address this rich cluster of contributions as homogeneously, let alone harmoniously assembled intervention; the field at large has been exploding, and has expanded its reach exponentially over the last few years, as a quick search on *academia.edu* or other platforms will amply demonstrate. This proliferation is being met with massive ultra-right resistance by actors like the AFD (an extreme-right party now present in the German Bundestag and on regional and local levels, known for intense connections to the fascist militant organisations) as was made manifest by a recent debate in the German parliament where the political right intervened to stop or undermine even those most harmless attempts in German politics to address the history of German colonialism[1].

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[1] Cf. https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2020/kw47-de-koloniales-sammlungsgut-804236?fbclid=IwAR0S_hNG1zge0DbRk5zZ5p_kfE7aykwvayrk71FXc2Uq dhYGHVpHVQBCjE4

The debate has developed in the context, most recently, of attempts by the German government – in response to the pressure generated nationally by the restitution of 'human remains' – campaigns and the public debates around the restauration of the *Humboldt-Forum* in Berlin, and internationally by the legal claims against genocide and for reparations of the Herero and Nama – to change their public tune and to fund decolonising events, research activities, and changes in public space like city locations, streets and museums. One also assumes that these current activities to top-down decolonise in the discursive realm have something to do with a kind of renewed scramble for the African continent, given the rapidly growing influence of China, and the USA, but also of countries like Turkey, in African countries. For a radically anti-colonial reading of this more than problematic context I urgently recommend watching the recorded video of Kenyan writer Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor's keynote address at the controversial conference *Colonialism As Shared History: Past and Present,* organised by the German government and the German Research Foundation (DFG), in which she scathingly destructs these benevolent ways to re-monopolise the discourse for white Western readings of coloniality's 'entangled' histories.

Cf. https://lisa.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/sharedhistory_keynote_owuor,

Note on Methodology and Location

This piece of work, like my most recent publications, comes out of a sustained effort to let myself be addressed by Black epistemology, to become a 'spoken-to', as it were. It is possible because of the work of contemporary thinkers. Most important among them for my work are the following:

Sylvia Wynter (2003); Orlando Patterson (1985); Toni Morrison (1993); Paul Gilroy (1995): Hortense Spillers (1987); Saidiya Hartman (1997; 2007); Lewis Gordon again (2000; 2007a; 2007b); Charles Mills (1999); Rinaldo Walcott (2014); Fred Moten (2013); Frank Wilderson (2000); Rozena Maart (2014a; 2014b); Kwame Nimako (2011); Katherine Mc Kittrick (2013); Egbert Martina (2014); Grada Kilomba (2008); Françoise Vergès (2004); Nell Painter (1995); Jared Sexton (2008); Brand (2020); Christina Sharpe (2010; 2016); and as earlier presences, Fanon (1970) and Césaire (2001).

Sabine Broeck

My scholarly work could not be articulated without engagement with decades of Black intellectual and epistemic labour antecedent to it, and generative of it. In keeping with this trajectory, my article proposes a meta-critical look at current discourses and practices of decoloniality that have been activated in the last few years, specifically in the German context which has been, of course connected to and impacted by, the international rise of *decoloniality* as a critical paradigm to read the global modern world. For reasons of space and time constraints, this article cannot deliver an exhaustive investigation of those discourses; it works by way of an assemblage of notes addressing what I consider paradigmatic discursive instances of my present moment. I conclude with some suggestions as to the urgency of an anti-enslavist pedagogy for the Humanities. My position is that of a white senior scholar at a North-Western German university, the academic and scientific prerogatives of which have remained anchored in the largely unexamined framework of post-Enlightenment Humanities, and the Natural and Technical Sciences with their inherently white and racist premises unimpeded, even though in the last years, as in other German institutions, post and decolonial interventions have begun to erode the silent understood-ness of Enlightenment conceptions of the world.

As a scholar of the crucial role transatlantic enslavement played for the constitution of contemporary European societies, not just for the USA, the Caribbean region and the African continent, with my work, I wanted to contribute to an overdue critique of the systemic agnotology which has kept anti-Black enslavement safely ensconced in subfields of historiography, instead of acknowledging the political, cultural and social function transat-lantic enslavement, inseparable from modernity's coloniality, assumed for European societies. We live globally, to paraphrase Hartman (2007), in the future slavery has made.

Bottom-up Struggle versus Top-down 'Decolonisation'

Decolonial initiatives, Black German and Black migrant intellectuals, scholars and activists, as well as white supporters in universities, museums, and political environments) have as of late speedily gained traction in German mainstream media and politics, and have managed to overcome the obscurity to which they used to be relegated, in a society keeping itself over-determined by the historic responsibility of coming to terms with the Shoah, at the expense

of taking any account of the history and culture of German coloniality. They have thus managed to draw attention – if aggressively contested by conservatives and the new right-wing populist extremist, to hitherto almost completely suppressed parts of German history, most prominently the German genocidal war in Namibia, and the political campaigns for financial reparations to its victims and their descendants, but also the cultural activism around the repatriation of so-called 'human remains' from German ethnological collections, or the overdue critique of the coloniality of artefact collections in German museums and art institutions. This wider context has been created by political and intellectual pressure generated in Germany by Afro-European and international Black diaspora communities' critical rearticulations of European post-Enlightenment hubris.

Much of this work has begun to circulate on websites (cf. the excellent critical contributions by Martina 2014) as well as in a number of recent publications in German[2]. For texts on Black Europe published in English, readers may consult Opitz *et al.* (1992), also Hesse, Pitts, Wekker (2009) as well as Florvil and Plumly (2018).

I also refer readers to a number of online interventions:

https://advocate-europe.eu/stories/when-will-eu-put-black-europeans-political-agenda/,https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/de/press-room/20190321IPR32133/end-racist-discrimination-against-afro-european-people-in-the-eu;

http://isdonline.de/projekte/;

www.berlin-postkolonial.de;

www.hamburg-postkolonial.de/willkommen.html;

https://www.eoto-archiv.de/leadership-und-advocacy/#netzwerk-schwarzer-forschender; https://decolonizationinaction.com/2019/10/11/episode-1-part-2-decolonizing-berlin/;

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[2] See Florvil (2018) for a more extensive bibliography.

https://www.institut-fuer-menschenrechte.de/themen/schutz-vor-rassismus/int-dekade-fuer-menschen-afrikanischer-abstammung/.

Thus, the white German liberal public, backed by recent decolonial historiography appearing in leaps and bounds, has begun to take notice of, and steps against the silencing of German colonial history and colonialist culture in the metropolis.

Cf. https://zeitgeschichte-online.de/thema/dekolonisierung-und-postkoloniale-gesellschaften-afrika; http://www.kulturrat-shop.de/Kolonialismus-Debatte-Aus-Politik-Kultur-17.

Not all of this work has appeared in English. Cf. Zantop *et al.* (1998); Osterhammel (2000); Hund (2011); as well as Naranch & Eley (2014), and most prominently in the German contemporary context, the recent work and activism of German historian Jürgen Zimmerer (2014).

https://www.geschichte.unihamburg.de/arbeitsbereiche/globalgeschichte/forschung/forschungsstelle-hamburgs-postkoloniales-erbe.html

In Bremen, the town where I live and work, this accelerating discourse has led to a number of exhibitions, events, public workshops and political interventions, which has been initiated and supported by Black-led grass roots activist groups like. See for instance, https://www.decolonizebremen.com/;

and,

https://www.rosalux.de/stiftung/projektfoerderung/projekte/projekt/info/7183/decolonize-bremen-politische-bildung-zu-kolonialen-spuren-rassismus-und-widerstand/.

At the same time, it has taken the shape of a top-down discursive process which functions largely to contain post, de- and anti-colonial resistance, energy and intellectual input within the prerogatives of white political control. This political process, organised by the City of Bremen's senate as a series of open forum debates with stakeholders interested in working through, as the media speak has it, the 'legacy' of colonialism, has resulted in an extensive

proposal to frame future decolonial activities of the city, the university, grassroots groups and other actors.

Cf. https://www.kultur.bremen.de/service/kolonialismus-13508.

Some years ago, I also used the word 'legacy', which I have come to reject, having realised the transgression involved in appointing violent anti-Black history to a 'legacy' for the Humanities. Euphemistically calling a century-long practice of anti-Black abjection 'our Erbe' (legacy, or inheritance) has moved the public from a ground zero of utterly silencing the history and presence of German colonialism to enthusiastic, high-speed and upbeat confessions of 'our' responsibility for the past as if that would not require any material, social and political cost and a revolutionary end to present day extractive policies vis-à-vis African countries.

This critique, it bears repeating, should not at all be taken as a comment on Black and allied grassroot activist, and intellectual struggles for decolonisation. Quite the contrary, it wants to claim some reservations vis-à-vis all too facile practices of decolonisation in a declarative mode of white benevolence. It is striking, if not surprising, to see the wide array of immigrant communities from the African continent largely absented from this discursive overhaul project to re-invent the City of Bremen as a host and motor of decoloniality. This, as one may safely assume, has reasons not only in language difficulties, which isolate those communities, and in their insecure legal status as refugees, or as paper-holders of only temporarily granted staying permits, which prevents them from participation in civic action, but also in anti-Black racism of a mainstream white community who cannot even see them as agents of change in their own right. What these injunctions infer is the challenge to theoretically think through critical decoloniality in the tension between the eventual arrival of white mainstream interest in 'the issue' of the colonial German past and the growing, if rarely acknowledged pressure on the liberal mainstream by African, Afro-European and Black diasporic agents and discourses. Even though there are a handful of exceptions, as in the recent massive interest in Felwine Sarr's (2016) intervention against *Beutekunst* (looted artefacts) in European institutions, the default option is still and again to re-create and disseminate decolonial consciousness as somewhat of a white virgin birth (cf. Sarr's recent contribution to the decoloniality debate).

Thus, as another recent addition to these discourses, the highly regard-

ed and visible German weekly *DIE ZEIT* produced a special feature issue on German Colonialism (cf. Werner 2019) which assembles state-of-the art German scholarship in the field. Except for a one-page contribution, aptly subtitled 'Zwischenruf' (interjection) by an Afro-European journalist and curator, Arlette-Louise Ndakoze (2019) in this 40-page dossier about the history of German colonialism, and for an article by a Chinese author, all the contributions are by German historians. Ndakoze angrily protests against ongoing European racism in the guise of mythically employed European 'Humanität' (the ideal of lived and shared humanness). With the above exceptions, the magazine consists of white-authored scholarly articles on various facets of German colonial involvements and their present afterlives which altogether manage to create the impression of white discovery of these issues. This issue seems to be one of the visible results of the pressure campaign which German historian Zimmerer and his research cluster at the University of Hamburg has mounted within academic circles, and beyond, in liberal media. However, there is not a single mention of Black diasporic scholarship and activism dating back to the early days of transatlantic enslavement which has laboured and struggled for anti-enslavist and decolonial epistemologies for centuries, from the freedom narratives (traditionally called 'slave'- narratives) to the 20th century thinkers ranging from James to Wynter, from Williams through Rodney to Biko and recently to contemporary academic interventions like the present collection.

Thus, the issue creates a bitter aftertaste in the mouth of this reader at least: are we to believe that decolonialism is, with a guilty twist, no longer the white man's (and white woman's) burden but their self-owned achievement? In the same vein, and reminding at least this reader of self-congratulatory British events and publications that, in 2007, celebrated 200 years of the abolition of slavery as a white achievement, the hundreds of years of the transatlantic enslavement trade and economy appear in *Europa zwischen Kolonialismus und Dekolonisierung,* the official publication of the German Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, compressed into the 'transnational event' of the trade's legal abolition, and focused on abolition campaigns as proof, that 'the debate about participation, equality and human rights had achieved global dimensions in the 19th century' (Metzler 2018:11).

Paraphrasing Rosalind Morris, Black life here becomes 'the site of primal conflicts and violence *and of* radical social justice', due to a white 'desire for the possibility of a forgiveness of colonial violence' (Morris 2019).

Black life, in the similar approach of Nsabimana (2019), excluded 'from the category of the human for so long and whose exclusion legitimated the institutions of slavery, now come back as the bearers of the human, as the shining representatives of its most exemplary promise: forgiveness' (Nsabimana). She names this 'moral racialised extractivism' (Nsabimana). This is an apt phrasing for many of the white impulses driving the current wave of decolonisation debates, which seem to dream of coloniality as a legacy transcendable by way of benevolent discursive relations. The question I am thinking through is: how are these practices of framing decolonial discourse as an issue of a white recreation of self-consciousness connected to the anti-Black violence of what I call enslavism?

There is epistemic anti-Black violence at work in the extensive denial of discursive leadership and authority which has muted Black diasporic interventions other than as ethnographic spectacles of suffering, which Hartman (1997) has named 'scenes of subjection' in the continuation of slavery's accumulation and fungibility of Black life for human societies. How endemic these processes of epistemic appropriation are for white scholars is something I myself had to realise by way of a sharp critique by Afro-German scholars and activists who rightfully criticised our work at Bremen, in INPUTS and in *CAAR* (Collegium for African American Research). They objected massively to us illegitimately calling our research group – composed of white PhD and post-doctoral students – 'Black Studies', and bolstering white academics' careers in research of the Black diaspora, instead of pushing for anti-white supremacist change by way of strategic hiring/supporting of Black people in the academic body. The group was disbanded. At this point in time, there is still not a single Black Studies degree programme nor a department in any German university. At the point of writing this, the Berlin-based organisation EOTO has begun a campaign for massive changes in the German system of higher education, calling for substantial structural interventions into universities' agendas and for the implementation of Black Studies, and Black knowledges – focused on anti-racist teaching, research, and funding practices.

Methodologically, what follows therefore is a series of notes which represent a work-in-progress combination of previous writing with some observations of decolonial constellations in my local and national environment. These notes are meant to suggest an ensemble of questions much in need of further debate.

Sabine Broeck

Decoloniality in Process

Decoloniality has become the new social media buzz, and it seems as if – from one day to the next – European institutions are eager to admit to their colonial past (if not to their neo-colonial present, necessarily) and to decolonise from the top down. As an overdue response (often not acknowledged as such) to years of widely ignored work of Afro-German individuals and collectives, as well as white and Black postcolonial diasporic initiatives inside and beyond the academy, this version of 'decolonise!' appears to be a kind of white cultural imperative to become better citizens by looking at the legacy of colonialism, as it is being framed now in mainstream media. As such, whilst one need not doubt the emphatically righteous motivation of at least some of those white discourse movers and participants, the driving premise of these top-down decolonisation efforts seems to suggest a form of damage control: to limit the potential threat of resistance and demands by Black people in the here and now for a change in the costly realm of the social and the political. It is the creation of a broad liberal, open discourse on all possible venues, a so-called 'civil forum' policy as in Bremen which creates the illusion of participation and impact, and of a bottom-up surge, because everybody, such is the mantra, will be 'heard'.

'Everybody' involved, in most cases, agents of white civil society have been spurred to action (in the first place) by grassroots communities of Afro-German activism, and some white post-colonial engagement. They then assumed leadership positions within those campaigns almost immediately. As a result of the semi-public debates, there now exists an extensive proposal:

https://www.kultur.bremen.de/service/kolonialismus-13508)%20%20%20%20%20%20.e

Such documents are telling in that they predominantly list cultural issues, which may be addressed *without* allotting much additional financial and/or manpower resources to the so-called decolonisation process. The recommend-dations for action include alternative renaming of streets against the colonialist public memory embedded in names like Lüderitz-Strasse, in keeping with Black led campaigns in other German cities

https://www.kolonialismus.uni-hamburg.de/2016/12/01/6-nachwort-joshua-kwesi-aikins-diedekolonisierung-des-stadtbildes-strassennamen-zwischen-kolonialnostalgie-und-perspektivumkehr/.

They also suggest a revamping of museum artefacts and expositions. In keeping with the spirit of this state-moderated process the mode of this endeavour is rather upbeat, and connects this recent development, which started in 2016, with an idealised history of responsibility that Bremen has supposedly performed ever since the 1970s. What goes unnoticed in this optimistic narrative of doable top-down decolonisation is the fact that the first wave of anticolonial activity in Bremen in the 1970s, which led to an anti-colonial commemorative plaque on the city's colonialist *Elephant memorial* was the result of a fierce struggle of leftist, anti-imperialist activists, students, leftist university actors and grassroots activists.

Cf. https://www.bremen-sehenswert.de/anti-kolonial-denkmal-elefant.htm

This local battle supported an international solidarity campaign with the liberation struggle in Namibia, and it was won against the powers that were: a struggle that was shunned and pushed to archival silence by the city's and the university's more recent collective memory.

What also goes unnoticed in this current decolonisation programme is Bremen's long-lasting involvement in slavery and its extensive role in it as an early beneficiary and profiteer of the enslavist plantation economy via their international finance connections, their trade in sugar, in linen for slave clothing, cotton, cocoa and tobacco, and as one of the major enslavist port cities. Thirdly, the process is almost always focused on the past as past. On the part of state-loyal white actors in these campaigns there is no connection made between a critical examination of the so-called colonial 'legacy' and the enslavist racism in discourses, practices and policies of our present.

Effective changes in the racist composition of state systems of discursive and material power and control, as in immigrant legal status, as in schools, universities, museums, media have not been adequately forthcoming, even though a series of proactive measures modelled on the Equal Rights Amendment in the USA might be easily imaginable. Instead everyday anti-blackness prevails and different forms of racist violence against non-white Germans, migrants and refugees, including state policing and fascist attacks accelerate. In this context of white benevolence and its flipside, anti-black agnotology and violence, I see the surge of sudden interest in decolonisation – as laudable as it might be compared to its non-existence in mainstream liberal German consciousness until about five years ago – as a massive effort

to co-opt actors into a discourse that frames actions like the change of street names from colonial slaughterers to activists/scholars/thinkers or potentates of the Black diaspora as a kind of end result of decolonisation instead of a useful reformist step in the realm of everyday, mundane lives of Black life in Germany, however urgent. Bringing 'everybody' into an open forum, except in rare instances, does not include Black migrants and refugees in a city like Bremen.

As such, this top-down decolonisation stands in a jarring, and quite astounding disconnect to grassroots activities with their demands for better living conditions, health care and immigration status of Black people in Germany as the survivors of the ravages of ongoing colonialist policies of arms' deals, climate destruction, wealth extraction and support of politically degenerated elites. There is now a deluge of discourse, after decades of silence on German colonialism and the massive refusal to accept what many white Germans have seen as a second shaming about the past, mobilised beyond the Shoah, but the problem remains that white breast-beating cannot be a substitute for anti-colonialist politics against anti-Black violence in the present. The current discursive decolonisation push into the mainstream works to the same effect the white women's feminism, gay and queer struggles and other white liberation efforts have achieved in the last few decades, which have successfully 'civilised' the western European white human's image of themselves for some factions of the white populace. The already mentioned Yvonne Owuor succinctly and radically critiqued these discourses in her fierce keynote, culminating in the call to the younger generation of scholars and activists, to destruct the white imperial canon and its manifold reincarnations, reminding us of Césaire`s dictum that white Europe is (and remains) rotten to the core. (cf. Césaire's essay 'Discourse on Colonialism' originally written in 1950).

At present, we witness a struggle between populist right and fascist forces who want unchecked violence and white power back, and the liberals who are willing to accept – on the level of cultural politics – the 'legacy' of colonialism. While this kind of basic acknowledgment of European ravages is of course a step forward from the previously dominant agnotological denial of the past, it remains a limited and also overall bad-faith response because it assigns coloniality to a moral guilt, the acceptance of which will create improved white citizenship in the present and therefore heal the wounds of history in a kind retro-active promise. This approach, however, is at best a

kind of helpless '*ersatz*'-move: it shies away from an acceptance of Black knowledge and authority, calling for an end of the world as we know it. If we follow Fanon, Wynter, Césaire and recent post-Fanonian philosophers and intellectuals, like Wilderson, Gordon, Maart and many others, the human is because the Black is not. That insight requires an analysis of ongoing anti-Black colonialist-capitalist white power *in the present tense.* It will require white support of struggles against white human politics, economies and military systems that aim far beyond white civil acceptance of ethical guilt for the past. I suggest also to think against ethnography: part of the problem with this 'new' white decoloniality is that – while its theoretical impulses could be and have been mobilised for a critique of modernity as a system of white power, as a critique of humanism, and the state apparatus – such kind of radical mode of critique has all but disappeared from interventions bespeaking an attitude that amounts to a white ethnography of suffering.

The most prominent example of this can be seen in the recent white self-satisfaction widely spread in the 'human remains' campaigns, in which bones are being looked at to clear their former belonging, atrocities are being gauged by numbers of objects in museum collections, and ownership has to be forensically attached to individual sufferers of colonialist interventions because otherwise a recognition of that suffering in material terms is considered impossible. The currency here is white outrage; the collateral benefits of this outrage flow back in forms of kudos to white humanist liberal players (quite comparable to 18th and 19th century white abolition's pornotroping that Wood, Spillers and Hartman, among others, have stridently destructed), thus resulting in a kind of narcissistic ownership of the cruelties of past regimes of knowledge and power.

I am not claiming an easy way out of the conundrum of white re-coloniality and constant incorporation into enslavism, at all. However, any posture of white innocence in benefaction, as our Bremen group have learned, needs to be given up. A turn is necessary, away from a documentation of Black suffering (which has become the standard currency in much postcolonial and decolonial practices in higher education) from the point of view of benevolent, proto-abolitionist feeling for the victims of such violence, towards a Black-authorised, and led critique of the white subject's position whose well-being has been conditioned, and for some people, staked on just such practices of abjection. We need to learn how to go beyond ethnographic benevolence, as well as beyond modish buzz as white European teachers, students, intellect-

tuals, and how to practice disloyalty to white abjectorship and its ongoing power. Beyond suggesting this theoretical perspective, I also offer some thoughts on the urgency of decolonial, anti-enslavist transdisciplinary research and institutional pedagogy, because the abjection of Blackness is closely tied – in political, cultural, social, and philosophical terms – to the European politics of white identity, of which the European academic landscape is one of the remaining bastions. In our institutions which regularly draw rather uneven numbers of eager Black European students to instruction, but mostly attract more or less naïve white European students, a research-oriented pedagogy needs to be put in place that, in order to counter anti-Blackness, will have to teach white humans to live with the unaccustomed and unexpected urgency of loss, or surrender, of European white entitlement – beginning with their ownership of history, culture, and philosophy – which needs to be the prerequisite for anti-racist, and decolonial discourses that respect Black knowledges, on and in Europe, and its academies.

Why Enslavism?

Black Diaspora Studies have produced a wealth of historiography of Euro-American modernity with respect to the productive function the transatlantic enslavement trade and New World slavery took on in its constitution, development, and constant economic, social, cultural, and philosophical (re)articulation. This relatively recent critical discourse has only of late slowly trickled into adjacent humanities' disciplines and – to a surprisingly hesitant degree – into European philosophy, and critical theory. Thus, even though New World enslavement as an object of historiography has become one of among the best-researched phenomena of the Western world, other disciplines have been largely resistant to engage the connection between enslavement, modernity's Enlightenment, and its transatlantic history. By way of carefully maintained disciplinary boundaries, an examination of this connection has hardly reached beyond scattered admissions of modernity's so-called paradox. A transdisciplinary field able to address the manifold political, cultural, and epistemic questions arising from an observation of this intricate interdependency, beyond national canons and boundaries marked by Area Studies and their linguistic limitations, still awaits its realisation. Moreover, in order to critique the durable nexus of transatlantic enslavement practices and discourses, and not keep 'slavery' safely entombed in the Humanities'

archives as deplorable events in the past, we need a term; a term that puts theoretical-critical thinking about modernity as a regime of slavery (to turn Hartman upside down, who amply discusses slavery as a regime of modernity in *Lose Your Mother*) on an 'equal footing' with established generalising critical terms as anti-semitism, racism, colonialism that allow us to see structures, patterns, and power systems, instead of singular and isolated events.

That kind of term, and I suggest here to say *enslavism*, will make it possible to criticise a structure and a set of discourses and practices embedded in the 'afterlife' of slavery, to say it with Hartman, again. It is a telling fact that humanist education, including recent so-called avant-garde theory, has so utterly abjected modern transatlantic enslavement from its purview to not even have a generalisable term for it. Slavery, as a term descriptive of a limited temporal and spatial sequence, at best, relegates the practice of enslavement to the realm of a phenomenological particular which may or may not be included in versions of history. If retrievable at all, then it functions again only as event, as having come and gone, not as a structure-generative systematic practice, including its genealogical function; as object of historiography that is, which is by definition, as a string of particulars, not able to generate meta-critical, epistemic potential. We have the concept of militarism, so we can theorise wars. Without that frame which then points research to generalisable insight into patterns of imperial designs, capital investments, technological destruction, psychology of war, and other components of war-making, particular instances of war, say, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, would not be theorisable. We have been able to theorise colonialism as a practice of subjecttion, exploitation, and dominance in the modern arsenal of European power, beyond its various particular instantiations in and by respective countries, because we have a term, even though it had to be re-appropriated from imperial historiography critically and agonistically. *Slavery*, by contrast, exists in the Western intellectual critical imaginary only as an isolated event, since our very language has axed it from our inner and outer worlds of critical thought.

The 'event' can be described, and historiography, at this point, fills libraries, but it does not translate into a cause for and lever of theorisation, and that is not happenstance, but has method, and purpose. The humanist white subject has been moved to remember, address, articulate, empathise with, rejoice in, question the brutality of, and elicit other particularly emotional responses to the specific situation, to the imagined 'event' of being a slave in *slavery*. Thus, the image of *slavery* as traumatic occurrence, situated often

beyond the frame of human rational understanding, that limit event – in an act of perverse theft – has given metaphorical heft to modern and postmodern protest against white human suffering and bondage. The idea of *slavery* as 'event,' and of *the slave* as a generic, naturalised term for a being held in slavery, however, has never put the white subject's practice of forcing Black being into enslavement and/or of parasitically profiting on any conceivable level from Black abjection, sustained for centuries, on the agenda. On the contrary, the enlightened outrage at the event of *slavery* has served to screen perpetual white practices of enslavement off from view.

There is a second severe problem with non-generalisability: the event may elicit only affect vis-à-vis the victimised – as ad hoc white pity, terror, or revulsion – meaning white responses to *slavery* are all still in the realm of Christian emotions, have never passed beyond the abolitionist empathy Marcus Wood has so adroitly deconstructed (Wood). Moreover, the event of *slavery*, as such, always remains the isolated disembodied entity *apart* from, outside the white subject's abjectivising agency on and against Black being, that which does not and cannot speak about the white subject's active role in the very production of abjection. In Western white modes of thinking, the making of *slavery* into an event has thus successfully pre-empted theoretical cognition, as well as epistemic leverage.

Enslavism as a term, as a horizon of common reference from disciplines as varied as History, Philosophy, Modern Literatures, Cultural Anthropology, Law, and Social and Political Sciences, could also facilitate the necessary transdisciplinary research and pedagogy we urgently have to put in place. This is particularly urgent for the European academy, still a bastion of white subjectivity, where the humanities have been drained towards remaining atoms of individual de-colonial, de-enslavist scholars working away in isolation at their institutes, never commanding enough critical mass to garner attention and possible support of the national and supranational research funding apparatuses, and not willing to dilute their own research to the point of non-recognisability in research networks with positivist, presentist, philological, or other idealist multi-, inter-, and even some decolonial agendas, which disconnect their critique of Western subjugation of Indigenous populations and the ravages of their lands and resources from a systemic critique of white power, the mechanics of which were forged, tested, written and rewritten, mobilised and legitimised by and in enslavism's historically founding practice of Black enslavement.

Beyond Disciplines: Toward a Hermeneutics of Absence and a Pedagogy of the Trace

Such necessary transdisciplinarity would require a *hermeneutic of absence* and a *pedagogy of the trace* (Broeck 2013). In my own work I have addressed the impact of modern enslavism in those areas that more classical transatlantic 'slave'-trade and New World slavery historiography has either not extensively addressed, or which has been silenced. Beginning with my very first questions, for example, of John Locke's philosophy, the history of gardening, the implication of gender in enslavism, or the overall denial of interracial contact in Europe, going through the regimes of modern enslavism suppressed in 19th and 20th century theories of liberation, and ending up, literally, in the German hinterland of enslavism, in a project to assess the impact of enslavement and the 'slave'-trade on the city of Bremen this *hermeneutic of absence* has brought me up against the confines of established methodologies, research, and dissemination.

Cf. https://urbanpolitical.podigee.io/39-hinterlands_slavery),

Ongoing constraints of disciplinarity within the academy's subdivided humanities serve to prevent the creation and pursuit of research questions and teaching curricula which lie outside the realms of national, and/or disciplinary purviews. This is particularly true with respect to producing an overdue durable epistemology of enslavism even though in very recent years individual scholars have, as renegades to their disciplines, made advances towards more interdisciplinary and transnational methodologies. However, the results of research on modern enslavement in (cultural) his-toriography, metropolitan ethnography, historical sociology, philosophy, or other pertinent disciplines oftentimes fall entirely outside the teachable agendas and remain all too marginal to the canons the academy has created. This, then, becomes a massive problem for the dissemination of knowledge, and thus for a necessary generalisation and pedagogical availability of this epistemology of enslavism. Heavily indebted to Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark*, I argue therefore for practices of reading and argumentation, which necessarily run counter to the canonical positivism of the disciplinary archive. I want to think about early modern enslavism as that which if one could do something like a socio-psycho-gram of white capitalist empowerment – needs to be analysed as the major propeller of modern capitalist mental and psychic

constituencies. If commodification and propertisation, the learning, grasping, and materialising of the world as ownable have been generally acknowledged as the characteristics of (post)modern capitalist society, then the white abjection of Blackness, the violent making of 'thing beings,' of package-able, shippable, transportable, and possess-able and as such usable, itemisable, and fungible bodily entities was its constitutive practice.

As the primary site of financial networking, crediting, speculation, insuring, of profit and calculation – as we know most graphically from Ian Baucom's *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital , Slavery and the Philosophy of History* – the practice of enslavism must also be considered as the primary psychosocial and cultural, collective, and individual training site for capitalist white human sociability. To learn – directly and indirectly – how to commodify an always already resistant being needs to be considered the primary threshold exercise for the modern human to become, to empower him/herself as subject. If human society could achieve that kind of transport and handling (in the physical and metaphorical sense) of more than ten million sentient beings as things, and then could manage to abject this practice successfully from a collective memory of the history of human freedom, it must have passed the test of its own emerging system's demands in the most generic way, and nothing could stop that sociability from further world commodification. This must be considered as the founding practice of the European human subject: the global transactioning of a shippable sentient species consisting of Black people. This insight begs to be much more consistently incorporated into many of the local decolonial campaigns that have developed over the last decade, including the one in Bremen I have discussed above. There is a history of Bremen's massive involvement in and profiteering – in economic, political and social terms – from the Black transatlantic enslavement in the late 17th and 18th century waiting to be written, which obviously predates, and over determines the colonialist structures and policies of the 19th century, and which have shaped Bremen's might and wealth as a city, as well as that of individual families still among the powers-that-be (Beckert 2014). Recent activities against the shamelessly anti-black public self-representation of the *Bremer Baumwollbörse* to promote the international cotton industry have put this history on the agenda, once more, and initiatives like *Decolonize Bremen*, and the newly founded *Black Community Foundation* will not let Bremen's political and economic elites off the hook.

Cf. https://taz.de/Bloss-keine-Geschichte/!5716162/ ; and
https://www.facebook.com/blackcommunityfoundationbremen/

Enslavement differs fundamentally from other traditions of human bondage; it entailed not only Black death, it also created the globally negotiable, transferable and competitive profitability, for the human, of Black *social death* in a generative way. The crucial difference between, say, warlords that kept prisoners as slaves on their grounds, and the transatlantic modern production of social death was the achievement of an abstraction of non-personalised property, item mobility and thus global marketisation, and the capitalist inheritability of social death. One could, as a human, inherit social death as capital – financially and otherwise, directly and indirectly – as one could inherit other forms of wealth, which of course entailed a constant and structural reproduce-ability of Black socially dead sentient beings. I am interested in finding out what capacities the human, as a group, trained him/herself to exert, to be able to carry out such a historically crucial endeavour. What needs to be stressed in this context is the structural impasse of comparison, the impossibility of analogy, between modern enslavement and forms of colonial, and/ or patriarchal and classist subjugation, domination, or conquest of 'the Other' by which a prior humanity of population groups was called into question, and suppressed (Wilderson 2010). That impasse lies in the purposeful and concerted production of accumulation and fungibility to use Hartman's (1997) terms again, of Blackness as something which categorically lies outside the realm of the human, without land, without gender, without a position within the nexus of free labour and capital, an enforced state of sentience next to the human world without a relation to and within it. It lies in practices of abstract and concrete marketable creation of Black serviceable flesh, as Spillers has argued. That impasse worked in enslavement, as well as it has been working in its afterlife. Thingification and the itemisation of Black life as fungible for whatever only seemingly contradictory purposes suits the human world as we know it, is not a thing of the past; it lives on as enslavism.

If one acknowledges enslavism as a white supra-individual practice, what has it meant for white European empowerment, not just in the economic, political, or social sense, but also in the psycho-cultural, and psycho-historical sense? The problem is how to figure that out in retrospect, particularly, if it has functioned as one of the best kept inner sanctums of white (postmodern)

consciousness. What we need is a psychoanalysis of the meaning of abjectification (in the sense of the race-fiction based itemisation, and the absenting of human relationality for Black sentient beings) for *the white European subject* who has used the very results of those practices of abjectification, perversely, as the threatening border of their own entitlement to self-possession. Thus, the most ubiquitous European post-Enlightenment liberation metaphors: 'We shall never, never, be slaves!' or 'I am not your n----!' mark that white horizon precisely. What I mean to get at is the challenge to think about white self-possession as trained and (ac)knowledged not only in a process of defense and advance against feudal interpellation by the powers of the aristocracy and church rule, that is as a cluster of ideologies emblematising the European subject's liberation from overwhelming and restrictive powers—which translates in the 19th and 20th century into further rebellions against subjectivation by the state, the factory, patriarchal power, and the tyranny of the symbolic. Instead, from an anti-enslavist perspective, these discourses and practices become visible as acquired, and trained and drilled into collective memory as the collective direct and indirect production of Black social death.

Suggestion: Protocols of White Abjectorship

From here one can move back to the contemporary Black social and civil death that has been produced by the European subject as a late consequence of this kind of abjectorship. Active mainstream ideology these days, ranging in its proclamations from leftists and liberal perspectives through many factions in European white feminism way over to the advocates of the political right, hinges on the imperative to defend Europeanness – culturally, socially, economically, politically, and for some, by various means of warfare – against the perceived threats of Blackness. My point, on the contrary, requires learning to read Europe as the afterlife of enslavism, and thus its internal fictions and practices as always already rotten to the core. The production of movable thingness re-occurs in the Mediterranean today: a new, necro-political entity has been put, in the most literal sense, into circulation: crucially not a recognised Other to the European self, the 'it,' the drowned Black, is entirely abjected by the categories of European white subjectivity: a transportable, politically and economically usable, but also dispose-able self-generative item.

The Black migrant, both in the metropolises and in the hinterlands, has been denied any dwelling in the realm of 'difference,' and 'otherness' (postcolonialism's key signifiers) but has become registered only as abandon-able item-ness. We need a language to talk about the material, political, and cultural interests of the postmodern European subject in this white production and circulation of the Black migrant's social and civil death: to interrupt the white gaze on pitiful suffering, even to disturb the waves of spectacular white media empathy, washing up when things get all too obviously horrible for Black so-called illegal fugitives as in the shock and surprise registered in German media at the time of this writing, geared towards the gratuitous brutalisation of homeless Black migrants by the state apparatus in German cities. Instead, it will be necessary to listen to the radical critique of white abjectorship that political representatives of Black diasporic communities have articulated in various venues, yet without substantial echo in the critical academy. The various Black manifestos and catalogues of demands, and reports of struggles like *Lampedusa in Hamburg* (see Lampedusa 2014), the work of the ISD and EOTO, the wide range of Black feminist interventions (Florvil 2018; 2020) and the *Catalogue of Demands by People of African Descent and Black Europeans* are not only responses to particular constraints, violent abuses and discrimination. They all rally against the fundamental momentum of white anti-Blackness: the un-humanisation of Black being. Hearing that critique could, as Spillers has phrased it, lead to the production of *protocols* of white self-disruption within the academic world. This process has been unconditionally demanded by Black critique: to submit to a Black gaze on the white European practices of re-abjection of Black life which have been mechanised, propelled, and organised by state apparatuses, institutions like the university, and the mainstream media. Attention needs to be directed to anti-racist, anti-fascist investigations into the discourses and practices of a white enslavist continuum, which connects seemingly far extreme ends of the political spectrum.

That attention needs to address the dangerous political mainstream populism raging across European metropolitan cities, and the only seemingly random mob and state violence, oftentimes lethal, against dark-skinned migrants all across Europe, including lynch murders in Southern Italian villages, street violence in Moscow, no-go areas for Black Europeans in European cities, and fascist successes in national and regional elections all over Europe. Moreover, FRONTEX policies of Fortress Europe carried out

with high and prioritised budgets reaching far into African countries, for military cooperation arrangements on the highest level of command need to be battled against. The white media savvy to promote Europe's sanctity against the so-called 'waves of intrusion' from overexploited Black countries needs to be loudly rejected and undermined. In my reading of the situation, without an analysis of white abjectorship and enslavism the structural European violence against Black being cannot become fully cognitive, and decolonisation remains an impaired analytical frame.

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The Spirit of Seriousness and Decolonisation

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Abstract
This article seeks to examine 'the spirit of seriousness', as articulated by Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, as a problem for decolonial theory and philosophy. It gives an account of the spirit of seriousness from the vantage of existential phenomenology in general and then works through its relevance, by way of W.E.B. Du Bois, Lewis Gordon, and Sylvia Wynter, for a diagnosis of the colonial condition and Euromodern man. Thus, it argues that decolonisation is necessarily opposed to *a* spirit of seriousness, the one manifest in the attitude of the coloniser which various colonial forms seek to impose upon the colonised. It then explores the seeming paradox that decolonisation calls for *taking seriously* commitments that might amount to a form of decolonisation that adopts the spirit of seriousness. Through a discussion of Frantz Fanon, this article argues that the project of decolonisation requires serious commitments that nonetheless reject the spirit of seriousness.

Keywords: Philosophical problems, existential attitude, Euromodern colonisation, racism

The Spirit of Seriousness
This article seeks to examine philosophical problems both descriptive and normative in nature regarding decolonisation. In order to do so, it examines a concept with both descriptive and normative significance in the existential phenomenology of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir: namely, the spirit of seriousness. I will give an account of the spirit of seriousness in order to try to spell out why an understanding of this existential attitude is significant for projects of decolonisation. The spirit of seriousness is an orientation toward values that treats them as ready-made, external impositions, rather than as

productions of human freedom. Hence, the spirit of seriousness is a form of bad faith (in the Sartrean sense of *mauvaise foi*) about one's responsibility for what one values. Drawing upon Sartre, de Beauvoir, W.E.B. Du Bois, Lewis Gordon, Sylvia Wynter, and Frantz Fanon, I will explore how Euromodern colonialism and racism involve a form of the spirit of seriousness. Hence, I will contend that decolonisation is opposed to *a* spirit of seriousness. However, this raises a thornier matter: decolonisation calls for taking seriously commitments that, in turn, pose acute tendencies toward indulging the possibility or temptation of a retreat to the spirit of seriousness. These commitments I will thematise in terms of *the anti-colonial* and *the decolonial*. I conclude by suggesting that this means that the project of decolonisation is an anguished one that, paradoxically, must be taken seriously while nonetheless rejecting the spirit of seriousness.

The two primary texts from which I derive my conception of the spirit of seriousness are Sartre's *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology* ([1943] 1992) and de Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity* ([1947] 2015). We can start, then, with Sartre's phenomenological ontology of the irreducibility of being-for-itself into being-in-itself. Put in simpler terms, we may view the issue as pointing to this matter: the difference between what consciousness is – that is, the 'being' of consciousness – and what an object of consciousness is – that is, the 'being' of which consciousness is conscious.

The key ontological point is expressed by Sartre roughly along these lines: being-in-itself *is what it is* ([1943] 1992: 29). The being of an inkwell, to use Sartre's oft-repeated example, is not a matter of concern to the inkwell. The inkwell is what it is; its being is in the modality of being-in-itself. Human existence, though, raises the possibility of a different mode of being. What I do gives rise to what I am. This type of being Sartre terms being-for-itself. Being-for-itself, according to Sartre, is not what it is and is what it is not ([1943] 1992: 28): when I answer the question of what I am, in addition to whatever answer I give, I am also the being that is giving this answer, and by virtue of that 'giving', I am more than the answer given. Hence, the ontological characteristic of my consciousness is that of being-for-itself. My consciousness confronts the question of what it shall be. For Sartre, being-in-itself and being-for-itself are ontologically incommensurable; they cannot be synthesised into a coherent whole. On this point, Sartre diverges from G.W.F. Hegel, from whom he takes the language of being-in-itself and being-for-itself. As Lewis Gordon points out, for Hegel, 'the in-itself-for-itself – *Geist*, interpreted as

Absolute Spirit – is achievable not only ontologically but historically' ([1995] 1999: 27).

The Absolute in the Hegelian framework is that which by all appearances must be contradictory but is, through internal resolutions that remain opaque to us, coherent nonetheless. For Sartre, though, being-in-itself-for-itself remains an irremediable contradiction; it is an impossibility ([1943] 1992: 145n12). The Absolute is impossible – though human freedom can nonetheless imagine this impossibility as if it were not only possible but actual. Sartre is famous for expressing this point in terms of the impossibility of *God* ([1943] 1992: 140). The God who is the subject of Christian theodicy, for instance, would seem to manifest the ontological characteristics of being-in-itself-for-itself. In theodicy, God is understood to be both omnipotent and omnibenevolent – that is, at once all-powerful and capable only of good. To be a powerful agent is, ontologically, in the terrain of the for-itself: power implies choice, and the being of one who chooses what to be is being-for-itself. But to *only* be good would seem to imply the register of being-in-itself. If God is good, it would seem that God is good in the way that an inkwell is an inkwell. God's goodness is not a matter of choice or even concern for God. This would seem to present a paradox, though, if God is understood to be omnipotent. Is not an all-powerful being powerful enough that it may choose to be bad?

The theodicean conclusion that God may be both omnipotent and omnibenevolent would seem to imply that God's being is such that it resolves the ontological tension between limitless power and invariant benevolence.

God is an Absolute in which apparent contradictions are opaquely resolved. Consciousness of God, of course, can nonetheless treat God as an in-itself-for-itself, regardless of whether one rationally avows the logical coherence thereof. Such consciousness we can term faith. Indeed, faith of some sort – as Immanuel Kant ([1787] 2007) sought to show – may be a necessary foundation for knowledge. But by the same token, faith may function as an assault on knowledge: I may regard what I know to be true as if it were false and what I know to be false as if it were true. This is what Sartre terms *mauvaise foi* or *bad faith* ([1943] 1992: 86 - 116). In bad faith, I am conscious of evidence in such a way that it functions non-persuasively *despite* the presence of adequate evidence (Sartre [1943] 1992: 113). I know my faith to be at odds with reality. Why would I do this? The Sartrean answer is that my freedom presents the ubiquity of *anguish*. In anguish, I am reflectively conscious of my freedom ([1943] 1992: 64 - 85). I realise that it is up to me to

decide what to do and who to become. If I shrink from the responsibility this entails, then I may opt for a path of self-deception in which I deny the reality of my freedom. In bad faith, I may regard myself as merely a being-in-itself, and this offers the possibility of relief from anguish as the pain or discomfort of responsibility to choose can be evaded insofar as I may imagine myself to be beyond choice in the way that the inkwell is beyond choice. However, I still may confront persistent reminders of my capacity to choose.

An antidote can be found, though, in a further dialectical development of bad faith wherein I regard myself as a being-in-itself-for-itself. In such bad faith I define myself through a theodicean logic in which my capacity to make choices is avowed at the same time that certain choices are regarded as intrinsically impossible. In defining myself as if I were a being-in-itself-for-itself, I believe I *am* good, or that I *am* bad, or that I *am* youthful or that I *am* philosophical, that I *am* artistic or I *am* scientific, and behold: each of my actions, chosen on the basis of this self-definition, appears plainly to be a manifestation of my identity. I *am* good, and each of my acts is good; I *am* scientific, and each of my beliefs are scientific; I *am* youthful, and each attitude I adopt must properly be the attitude of those who are youthful. My ontological prophecy can function in self-fulfilling fashion.

It would be a different matter, however, for me to express these characteristics as desired ones: I want to be youthful, I want to be scientific, I want to be good, etc. Such desire invites an anguished reflection: *how* can I be youthful, or scientific, or good? In bad faith, though, I may assert that I am what I desire to be, such that the choices through which this is manifest are not anguished ones but are simply my fulfilments of a fixed and unavoidable essence. The path to overcoming bad faith would seem, then, to call for me to understand myself as driven by desires to be this or that: I could defeat the tendency toward bad faith by insisting on understanding my acts as chosen in relation to values that are themselves chosen.

It is here where we can clearly outline the spirit of seriousness in its particularity: the spirit of seriousness is a form of bad faith about what is valued or desired. The spirit of seriousness treats values as if they were unchosen. In the spirit of seriousness, I treat what I value as if it were something that I *must* value. I would not be *me* if I didn't value it, or I would not be *human* if I didn't value it, etc. Sartre gives the example of bread: the 'serious man' eats bread not because he values its taste or nutritional facets but, simply, because to him bread is necessary for human life. We can point to much empirical evidence –

of those from communities that do not consume bread, or persons who have adjusted their diets because of coeliac disease, for instance – to show that it simply is not the case; our serious man is lying to himself about the necessity of bread.

For Sartre, he does so in order to evade anguish: to take responsibility for what he values displeases him, so he opts to regard his values as matters that are not up for debate. He values what he values, and there is nothing more to say on the matter – or so he claims. From the perspective of a Sartrean ontology, a being-for-itself is condemned to make choices shaped by values that are themselves chosen. There are no unchosen values, nor are there acts that do not reflect one's values in some way. The spirit of seriousness, then, in regarding its values as unchosen, is in bad faith. Rather than being the contingent products of my ongoing axiological agency, in the spirit of seriousness I regard my values as if they simply are what they are. The spirit of seriousness is thus a sophisticated effort to define oneself in relation to the in-itself-for-itself. In bad faith, I may define myself directly as God or as a similarly Absolute mode of being, e.g. a demonic embodiment of a 'pure evil'.

Yet I may also define myself indirectly as one who is *judged* by God. Bad faith can appeal to the in-itself-for-itself by manifesting its desire for *fealty* to God. In doing so, bad faith can manifest a form of what I call *Ideal Shame* (Meagher 2018: 117). I capitalise this term because it is ultimately neither normatively ideal nor actually shame. For Sartre, shame occurs when I see myself being seen. In shame, I see myself as a being-in-itself because I see what I am to another. I see myself as an object of another's consciousness. You see me as lazy, and seeing myself seen as lazy, I see this laziness that I am *for you*. This implies that, read rigorously, shame in the Sartrean sense is normatively neutral: shame is equally present where I see myself through your loving gaze as when I see myself through your despising gaze. Crucially, shame may thus function as an antidote to bad faith: if I have persisted in believing in my superior productivity despite all evidence to the contrary, the shameful apprehension of my laziness through an encounter with someone who regards me as lazy may snap me out of my stupor. Shame can spur me on to pay attention to the evidence. But by the same token, I can appeal to shame to maintain my self-deception: I can seek out being seen by you because I know that you will see me in the way that I want to see myself. Shame, thus, can serve either an interruptive or a reinforcing function with regard to bad faith.

If we move from shame to Ideal Shame, this involves a shift from seeing myself as seen by another to seeing myself as seen by an *imagined* other. The other that judges me is not, then, a fellow being-for-itself but is a projected being-in-itself or a projected in-itself-for-itself. In Ideal Shame, I sit in judgment by God. In shame, my adjudicator is free, and I would be wise to remember that it is the values chosen by this other that shape how she or he sees me. In Ideal Shame, though, my adjudicator is *dictated* by values. Such dictation implies a corruption of the notion of value, though, since values become material features of the world, beings-in-themselves. Ideal Shame is thus a masquerade in which I project a God who can judge me, so that I can be relieved of the anguish of judging myself. The problem, though, is that I have projected this God, such that I have not taken leave of that anguish but have merely disguised it. In the spirit of seriousness, I adopt the perspective of Ideal Shame, in which I am always judged by an absolute standard of value that I regard as external to me, though it is ultimately my own choices that make this standard function as if it were absolute. Values internally and contingently adopted are regarded as if they were externally and inescapably imposed.

How does such seriousness manifest? In *The Ethics of Ambiguity,* de Beauvoir provides an existential typology given in terms of five figures: the serious man, the sub-man, the nihilist, the adventurer, and the passionate man. The serious man we have already sketched through Sartre: in de Beauvoir's words,

> The serious man gets rid of his freedom by claiming to subordinate it to values which would be unconditioned. He imagines that the accession to these values likewise permanently confers value upon himself. Shielded with 'rights,' he fulfils himself as a being who is escaping from the stress of existence ([1947] 2015: 49 - 50).

He is emboldened by a sense of Ideal Shame that, by positing an external God-figure that stands in judgment of him, relieves him of the anguish of working out values of his own. The God-figure of the serious man, though, need not be a theological or religious conception of the divine, since the function of Ideal Shame can be converted into secular terms. Hence, the serious man may stand in relation to secular ideals of right, of patriotism, capitalism, colonialism, and so on.

The sub-man is a variation on the serious man. For the sub-man, the

source of Ideal Shame lies not in the transcendent (God, nation, race, etc.) as it does for the serious man, but lies instead in the figure of a concrete other. The sub-man yearns for a reality in which a fascist or totalitarian leader ascends and can function as 'dictator' not only of a state but of the values of the sub-man. He is suffused with a masochistic desire for an indispensable hegemon, because this presence will relieve him of the anguish of his acting freely upon the world. Yet the sub-man's embrace of a concrete other, a leader or an abuser, implies the projection of divine characteristics onto this other, such that they function for him as does God or the projection of transcendent values for the serious man.

The nihilist is the ironic counterpart to the serious man, and often evolves out of an existential position of seriousness. The nihilist finds no validity in the transcendent and from this concludes that all values are value-less. Because there is no value in values, the nihilist rejects all values, and is thus thrust into a project of negation that seeks, in some sense, to annihilate the world. The serious man who confronts, through failure or calamity, the limits of his beliefs often spirals into nihilism, concluding that, because *his* values proved to be rubbish, all values must be so. The nihilist, then, embraces his freedom insofar as he does not, like the serious or the sub-man, regard himself as yoked to this or that source of value, but his embrace is circumscribed by his inability to establish positive values of his own.

The foil of the nihilist is the adventurer. The adventurer is like the nihilist in rejecting seriousness; the adventurer does not see himself as serving transcendent ideals. The adventurer regards life as a journey that is worthwhile for the experience, for its swashbuckling exploits, even if in the end there are no values to be served, no destination by which to judge the journey. The problem with the adventurer, as de Beauvoir lays it out, is that his passion for adventure values the experience of freedom rather than freedom itself. As such, the adventurer becomes the useful idiot of the powerful, who are willing to bankroll his exploits so that he can enjoy the journey and that they can enjoy the fruits thereof. He rejects the project of arriving at a chosen destination, but in so doing has his destination chosen for him.

The passionate man appears, at first, to embrace his freedom. He does not shy from the anguish of choosing what to value: rather, he defines all others in terms of their value to him. For the passionate man, what is valuable in the world is whatever is valuable to him. Whereas the serious man finds value in the external and transcendent, value for the passionate man is an internal

production. Rather than standing in judgment from a source of Ideal Shame, the passionate man regards himself as if *he* were the source of Ideal Shame. It is in the eyes of the passionate man that others should locate their true value. Hence, the passionate man is the existential type who most literally manifests the desire to be God: his perspective is the ideal perspective not because of the value of his choices but because his being necessitates as such.

What each of these existential types – the serious man, the sub-man, the nihilist, the adventurer, and the passionate man – holds in common is an attitude toward values in which a responsibility for values vacates the scene. They are in bad faith about their capacity to choose what to value. The serious man and the sub-man do so by holding an external source of value as inevitable; the nihilist and the adventurer do so by holding a valid source of values as impossible; and the passionate man does so by regarding himself as an intrinsically sufficient source of values, such that it is indifferent which values he has chosen because the point is that *he* has adopted them. Although of these five types only one is named with explicit reference to seriousness, as I interpret it, all five are different manifestations of the spirit of seriousness. Each evinces a bad faith denial of axiological responsibility.

The Seriousness of Colonial Man

One of the paradigmatic examples given by de Beauvoir of the serious man is the colonial administrator.

> The colonial administrator who has raised the highway to the stature of an idol will have no scruple about assuring its construction at the price of a great number of lives of the natives; for, what value has the life of a native who is incompetent, lazy, and clumsy when it comes to building highways? ([1943] 2015: 53).

He is one who *must* build the highway; his acts are imagined to be governed by absolute imperatives of values that lie beyond him, despite the reality that he is one who ultimately chooses to regard those values as absolute. He acts for 'Civilisation', or for Europe, or for Mother England or France or the United States of America (USA), or for Science or for Democracy, or even simply for God or for Christ. He colonises in the name of serious, unconditioned values that, he asserts, lie external to him and dictate what his acts would ideally be.

This portrait accords with those given by a variety of theorists of racism, colonialism, and decolonisation. For instance, an attitude of seriousness is diagnosed by W.E.B. Du Bois in his classic essay, 'The Souls of White Folk' included in *Darkwater* ([1920] 1999: 17 - 29). There whiteness is defined as 'the ownership of the earth forever and ever, Amen!' (18). Indeed, Du Bois worries there that the national culture of the USA tends toward taking whiteness as an axiological absolute. Whiteness, he contends, is an ideal that lowers and demeans humankind; but societies premised on service of this ideal function so as to generate a form of hegemony or overlapping consensus for which whiteness is, simply, God.

This dynamic was manifest in the problem of double consciousness. For Du Bois, as stated clearly in '*The Conservation of the Races*' ([1897] 1971), race is a matter not of phenotype but of shared ideals. If race is a 'social construction', it is one constructed in reference to posited ideals of what the society ought to be – ideals, in Euromodern contexts, in which whiteness figures as divine and blackness as demonic. Double consciousness as experienced in the USA emerges through a situation of warring ideals: to have been educated and cultivated such that one sees oneself as a typical person abiding by the society's typical ideals and mores – hence, abiding by a white normativity – but to also experience oneself as black in relation to the demands of whiteness, and hence, to be pushed toward an existential conflict as to the desirability or undesirability of whiteness (Du Bois [1903] 2018: 3; Henry 2016: 34–7). In short, such double consciousness confronts whiteness as a source of Ideal Shame and must deal with the apparent contradiction that, on the one hand, one ought to do as whiteness prescribes but that, on the other hand, as a black person one may never fulfil whiteness's demands since one remains black and hence antithetical to the ideal.

Lewis Gordon, in *Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism* ([1995] 1999) reinforces this analysis. There, he contends that racism is a form of the spirit of seriousness in which the white anti-black racism is manifesting the desire to be God. He is asserting himself as an Absolute source of value. As in Du Boisian double consciousness, a consequence is the production of black-based anti-black consciousness: because the social world is one premised on an aversion to the freedom of black consciousness – including the freedom to construct and fulfil values – black people develop ways of seeing the world and themselves through a projected white consciousness.

In short, colonialism seeks to build a world in which the perspective

of the coloniser is treated as Absolute. Hence, colonialism colonises both the freedom of the coloniser and the freedom of the colonised. Each becomes an instrument of the colonial perspective. In terms of Beauvoir's existential typology, the fundamental relation of colonialism could be characterised in terms of producing the coloniser as the serious man and the colonised as the sub-man. The ideal of colonialism is to produce colonisers who regard themselves as *needing* to advance the colonial project and colonised people who regard themselves as *needing* to acquiesce to it, savages who have finally encountered the God for whom they had laid in wait.[1]

It would be superficial, though, to regard colonialism as only desiring the production of these two types. To begin with, the framework of colonialism suggests in some sense the presence of the passionate man, although perhaps one collectivised in crucial senses. That is to say, if the serious man sees the colonial project as necessitated by the value of civilisation, he may nonetheless be in league with those who see the colonial projected as necessitated by the whim of European Man, a passion project, as it were. How to make sense of Euromodern colonialism, after all, without accounting for the way in which at the bottom it rests upon asserting the actual desires of concretely existing white people as mattering, to the exclusion of the desires of people of colour? Colonialism, in that sense, can be understood as a project to bring about a serious world governed by a coalition of passionate men. This effort, though, need not rest upon a strict division of the world wherein all the colonisers are serious and all of the colonised are sub-men. For one, we know that it is not disruptive to the colonial project for there to be sub-men among the colonising societies. Fascist and totalitarian configurations within the colonial powers are compatible with their colonial ambitions; the production of white sub-men is compatible with colonial aims. For two, the type characterised by Beauvoir as the adventurer can be seen as part and parcel of the colonial endeavour.

Indeed, the colonial project desires not only to have adventurers culled from the colonising society but ones drawn from the colonised society as well: colonised people willing to enlist in the armies and forces of the colonisers are welcome, regardless of whether or not they take the colonial project seriously. Likewise, the production of nihilism among the colonised is clearly

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[1] Indeed, even avowedly anti-colonial readings of the colonial situations may presuppose the latter, as Frantz Fanon shows in chapter four of *Black Skin White Masks* ([1952] 1967: 83 - 108).

commensurate with the colonial project. In short, then, while the seriousness of the colonial administrator may be an ideal type for colonialism, colonialism benefits across the board from a variety of dispositions of seriousness so long as they do not upset the colonial apple cart. We can thus state that colonialism rests upon a spirit of seriousness, and it follows, then, that decolonisation must at least be opposed to *a* spirit of seriousness. Colonisation is the effort to impose a symbolic expression of the in-itself-for-itself, an aesthetic rendering of a God who, by a colonisation of the quotidian axiology of the lifeworld, is to serve as a source of Ideal Shame for all.

Here we may note that the process of colonisation is a multifaceted and *longue durée* process. Hence, as Sylvia Wynter (2003) argues, this process involves a 'transumption' of earlier Gods into newer ones. By 'transume' we mean here to carry over through a transformative preservation; God is, as it were, given a series of successive makeovers as colonisation unfolds. Hence, we have a transformation from

> (1) an earlier period in which the axiology of Christendom mandated wars of evangelisation by appeal to God as a theological absolute; to
> (2) a middle period in which Christendom becomes 'Europe', driven by the mandate of wars of colonisation through appeals to the rationality of *homo politicus* as a philosophical absolute; to
> (3) a later period in which Europe is globalised and fights wars for coloniality through appeals to the natural selection of *homo oeconomicus* as a scientific absolute.

Each of these is a form of the spirit of seriousness: 'Man', to use Wynter's term, functions as the in-itself-for-itself who can be regarded as a source of Ideal Shame. 'Man' functions as the secular God-figure anchoring a Euromodern spirit of seriousness, and the serious man functions as an acolyte of this Man.

Yet at the same time, there is an apparent contradiction insofar as Euromodern man is taken to be *instantiation* of Man and not merely servant. Hence, there is a theodicean logic – one that Wynter terms 'biodicean' (Wynter 2006; Gordon 2013) – in which Euromodern man functions as both God and servant, a fusion of the serious and the passionate understood by himself and his society on the model of the Absolute.

Colonialism thus stands in relation to the very core of the spirit of seri-

ousness. The spirit of seriousness is concerned, most fundamentally, with denying human freedom to construct values. This does not mean that the spirit of seriousness *pre-empts* such construction: indeed, the serious man is constantly at work articulating the rationalisations for his acts. The key, though, is that he does so through an obscurantist logic in which these values he synthesises are regarded as emerging from outside of him. So, too, for a serious *society*: it is hard at work producing values, all the while it seeks to articulate how such values are transcendent. The serious man is not afraid of values, nor of the responsibility of fulfilling them, but is afraid of *responsibility for constructing them*. The coloniser thus acts in the name of God, or civilisation, or the flag; the coloniser sets up social and economic systems in which it is not these administrators or those agents of capital who are choosing to value human degradation, but 'The Market' – neoliberals always acting, it would seem, on the basis of a distant divinity. Colonialism proper is premised on regarding the autonomy of one nation as if it were transcendent: colonialism seeks to produce a serious world governed by the dictates of the Passionate Nation. In its Euromodern incarnation, this is given a peculiarly political expression, as the coalition of colonisers sought to erect compacts recognising each other's right to colonial power.

Euromodernity emerges as the serious project of passionate nations, working in concert to colonise the globe. At the meta-level, this amounts, as Wynter's argument (2003; 2006) suggests, to the construction of a passionate man *par excellence* – European man, white man, modern man, etc. He is here the autonomous individual, licensed to inflict his passions upon a servile world, and he is there the transcendent value (civilisation, reason, science, philosophy, modernity, market) to which all agents must seriously subscribe. He is, in short, the Absolute – and his contradictions are to be apprehended in the wondrous aesthetic consciousness of religious belief rather than the sober rationality of a critical philosophy. He is Colonial Man, serious in the project of building a world governed by the passions of colonial *men*, yet imbued with the narcissism of the passionate man such that his seriousness is above all a matter of serving himself.

Coloniality and Decolonisation

The antidote to this colonial spirit of seriousness would thus seem to lie in decolonisation. In decolonisation, the autonomy of the individual nation gives

way to a heteronomy of interests and agents. In decolonisation, the colonised acts upon the coloniser; the colonised inflict their will. Decolonisation thus is only coherent on the grounds of its opposing the seriousness of the coloniser, and taken to its radical conclusion, decolonisation seeks to build a world in which the seriousness of Colonial Man becomes impossible. Decolonisation, as Frantz Fanon writes, 'is quite simply the replacing of a certain 'species' of men by another 'species' of men' ([1961] 1963: 35). Decolonisation obliterates the serious Colonial Man and any vestiges of the Colonised sub-man that he had managed to erect. Seriousness – a bad faith about one's responsibility for values – is thus part and parcel of the colonial project, and the spirit of serious-ness undergirding the colonial project is one that decolonisation must oppose.

But this raises a crucial question: can opposition to a spirit of seriousness avoid becoming a spirit of seriousness in its own right, or is seriousness an intractable existential problem? Must decolonisation, in short, replace the serious Colonial Man with the serious Decolonial Man? Fanon's detailed phenomenology of decolonisation in *The Wretched of the Earth* ([1961] 1963) complicates and unsettles such a claim. The anti-colonial struggle, we find, involves a seriousness parallel to that of the coloniser. The colonised commit to a violent project of displacing the coloniser, one undertaken in light of the utmost seriousness of bringing about the coloniser's exit. If the coloniser seeks to bring about the serious world of the passionate man, then the anti-colonial struggle is governed by the serious imperatives of the passion of the colonised.

> The look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses his dreams of possession – all manner of possession: to sit at the settler's table, to sleep in the settler's bed, with his wife if possible. The colonised man is an envious man. …[T]here is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in the settler's place ([1961] 1963:39).

As the dialectics of decolonisation evolve, dynamics of nation and class emerge or are reconfigured so as to recapitulate these matters. The birth of the postcolonial nation, Fanon shows, becomes yoked to the rise of a *petit-bourgeoisie*, who are empowered, in turn, to cut deals with the coloniser in the guise of a serious project – for the national economy, say – that is, in essence, a ruse for the passionate project of the mutual enrichment of elites. The new

nation is caught up in the vicious cycle of trying to equal and surpass Europe, precisely through mechanisms of collaborating with a Europe hell-bent on retaining its status. Ironically, it is in these dynamics that the hardened seriousness of the coloniser begins to wane. The coloniser comes to accept that he need not be installed absolutely as sovereign. The coloniser recognises the postcolonial elites not as snivelling toadies but as fellow businessmen, entitled to negotiate a deal. The passion of Colonial Man for capital, for power, and for control does not subside, but it accepts a configuration in which this passion cannot function as an unconditioned, supraordinate value governing the sum total of all transactions in the developed world-system. Reading *The Wretched of the Earth* as a Fanonian work in the existential phenomenology of decolonisation, we may say that the issue it raises acutely is that of the relationship between colonialism and coloniality. Fanon called for leaving Europe behind, for abandoning its 'Greco-Latin pedestal' ([1961] 1963: 46). He sought, in short, a movement beyond not only colonialism but coloniality, where the latter speaks to a broader configuration of values inaugurated by colonialism but durable enough to persist after the formal transfer of sovereignty. One might conclude, then, that decolonisation implies a double opposition: decolonisation is against both colonialism *and* coloniality. This may at first blush seem a simple matter, given the clear relationship between colonialism and coloniality. Let us try, though, to demonstrate the complications such a double opposition suggests.

Colonialism involves the structure of the Absolute. It seeks to impose the will of the coloniser, or of the colonial nation, such that trespassing upon his desired ends and means is equivalent to a violation of the transcendent. The coloniser ascends, in the values of the world colonialism creates, to the status of the divine. Opposition to colonialism thus must take the form of what I will call here *the anti-colonial*. The anti-colonial is given over to the project of displacing the colonial power. The displacement of the coloniser functions for it as an absolute value: as Fanon writes,

> the primary Manicheism which governed colonial society is preserved intact during the period of decolonisation; that is to say that the settler never ceases to be the enemy, the opponent, the foe that must be overthrown ([1961] 1963: 50 - 51).

The absolute nature of this opposition is non-negotiable for the anti-colonial.

Calls are made, of course, for a moderation of strategies and tactics; there is a moral appeal to humanistic values, to the imperative of a non-violent approach. The problem, though, is that once such appeals are taken seriously, we have ventured out of the territory of the anti-colonial. The moral cleanliness of the colonised is afforded greater value than the overthrow of the colonial system. For the anti-colonial, the demand of the coloniser's ouster functions as Absolute; it is the source of Ideal Shame against which all acts must be judged.

Coloniality, though, is more insidious than colonialism. Colonialism proffers a well-ordered social world in which all and sundry understand that it is the coloniser who is to rule. Coloniality, by contrast, involves a world structured by colonial ends but confused about their meaning in the present. On the one hand, coloniality involves the agents of those who avow the value of coloniality. There are those who take relatively seriously that it is Euro-modern Man who ought to continue to rule, and although they are softer in their approach than Colonial Man had been – they are conducive to compromise and to recognising the humanity of those embodying darker hues – they nonetheless take up the bulk of the serious values of their colonialist predecessors. On the other hand, coloniality also involves agents who reject and repudiate colonialism, who are shaped by a genuine existential commitment to build the world anew. Coloniality seeks, in short, to configure relations in such a way that even those explicitly committed to decolonisation nonetheless maintain the system of coloniality. Hence, the existential problem confronting those committed to decolonisation within conditions of coloniality is that it is not necessarily the case that one committed to overturning the colonial is clear on the precise contours of the colonial landscape or on the precise ways in which the colonial past shapes their efforts to build a post-colonial future.

The tragedy of 'man' – as both Fanon ([1952] 1967: 10, 231) and de Beauvoir contended ([1947] 2015: 37) – is that he was once a child, and hence confronts the melancholia of being shaped by desires that the adult cannot fully grasp. The tragedy of the post-colonial adult stems, as it were, from the trauma of a colonial childhood. There is a psychological drama here wherein the one who is committed to overcoming a past of colonialism and a present of coloniality may nonetheless have been shaped and structured by colonial values.

It is in this drama that the impulse of *the decolonial* emerges. The decolonial lives a commitment to revolutionise the values of the world. The decolonial does not seek to return the world to a pre-colonial past, but the decolonial is nonetheless absolutely committed to the project of building a *non*-colonial

future. Such a future is one in which, as Fanon puts it, 'the tool [shall] never possess the man' ([1952] 1967: 231). Coloniality, as colonialism's residue, is that which the decolonial is hell-bent on removing. The decolonial must take seriously, then, the project of building a world in which the power of Colonial Man has been diminished to zero. And because the power of Colonial Man has resided in a revolution of values – in 'his' ability to spread the gospel, to reconfigure what human beings the world over want – the decolonial lives an Absolute commitment to overthrowing the values of the colonial. If these are, respectively, the natures of the anti-colonial and the decolonial, then what is the precise relationship between these two terms and the broader one under discussion thus far, decolonisation? It would appear the anti-colonial and the decolonial are jointly necessary for decolonisation. If there is simply the persistence and victory of the anti-colonial impulse, then the coloniser is displaced from sovereignty, but the coloniser's influence – in shaping the nature of post-colonial states and, indeed, worlds – remains. That is to say, the anti-colonial is insufficient for decolonisation if decolonisation demands a revolution in values.

The anti-colonial is, tragically, compatible with residual coloniality. This would suggest that the decolonial is necessary for decolonisation. Indeed, where colonialism has subsided and only coloniality remains, it may appear that the decolonial suffices for decolonisation: it brings about the clean-up where the anti-colonial has killed the beast, and at this point, the anti-colonial may simply be dismissed from the scene. A problem, though: the shift from colonialism to coloniality does not by necessity bring with it the finality of such a shift. Indeed, coloniality's affection for a colonialist past makes it conducive to a revival. In this regard, the purity of the decolonial impulse can be an impediment to its underlying mission. The decolonial confronts a drama akin to that of the adolescent or adult who resolves, 'I will never be like my parents!' The decolonial resists whatsoever shall appear to be a recapitulation of the values of the coloniser. Colonial Man was violent, so the decolonial announces its commitment to non-violence; Colonial Man spoke of Civilisation, of Science, of Democracy, so the decolonial announces its wholesale rejection of these ideals; Colonial Man said that he and his affiliates retained the exclusive right to speak and be heard, so the decolonial comes to respect the right of all to be heard with eager and approving ears. The decolonial takes up, in brief, the serious project of abandoning the values of Colonial Man altogether.

Thomas Meagher

The pitfalls of the decolonial can thus be summarised in terms of two categories. First, the decolonial may create the conditions for the exacerbation of coloniality and/or the return of dimensions of outright colonialism. By repudiating colonial values, the decolonial forswears many of the tools that the anti-colonial may effectively be able to take up in order to counter neo-colonial encroachments. Second, the decolonial may find itself unintentionally manifesting precisely the characteristics of Colonial Man; the decolonial confronts the possibility of the return of the repressed. In brief, because Colonial Man is serious about retaining coloniality and taking up every possible avenue of return toward colonialism, the anti-colonial is indispensable to decolonisation, and cannot be dissolved in the seriousness of the decolonial. But the seriousness of the anti-colonial is a near-guarantee of a return to the values of Colonial Man, insofar as it must – by means of being a steadfast project of opposition – be subject to the modes of intentional manipulation to which Colonial Man may always make recourse in order to reinforce his position. The temptation, then, would be to simplify the meaning of decolonisation by developing a configuration of the anti-colonial and the decolonial wherein they can be neatly synthesised, wherein they can be fused into the ideal embodiment of decolonisation. But is not such a call, ultimately, a demand for the Absolute – for the impossible synthesis of two characteristics that nonetheless bear an ineffaceable tension?

The tragedy of decolonisation is that it is drawn to desire a pure, authentic opposition to the coloniser – to the coloniser's power, as in the anti-colonial, or to the coloniser's values, as in the decolonial. Yet colonialism is precisely a force engineered to nullify the purity and authenticity of its victims, let alone its perpetrators. Colonialism seeks to produce a world in which all who live are complicit in colonial power. To live in such a world is to serve, whether as volunteer or conscript, at its discretion. Coloniality, in turn, seeks to sublimate this complicity into an incessant relation of profitability for the few, wherein the denial of an ongoing project of colonialism functions to ensure the persistence of colonial outcomes.

In short, what decolonisation must critically confront is the issue of a desire for either the anti-colonial or the decolonial – or an imagined, impossible synthesis of the two – to function as a source of Ideal Shame. To hear many proponents of decolonisation speak, the function of decolonisation is akin to the function of the divine. Decolonisation calls, on that model, for the utmost seriousness: to be non-colonial functions as a transcendent ideal, impervious

to philosophical attack. Within that framework, we are called upon to build the serious world of the decolonial passion. The desire to be non-colonial is regarded as unassailable. A simple criticism may be issued: if this is the function of decolonisation, then it remains a recapitulation of a crucial element of colonialism.

Conclusion – Toward Decolonisation, Against the Spirit of Seriousness

I submit, then, the following conclusion: that not only is decolonisation opposed to *a* spirit of seriousness – the seriousness of Colonial Man – but that decolonisation is opposed to the spirit of seriousness in general. The paradox that this would seem to present is that one cannot engage in successful projects of decolonisation without *taking seriously* anti-colonial and/or decolonial commitments. For the purposes of this or those acts of decolonisation, the anti-colonial impulse must be regarded as sufficiently justified, or the decolonial impulse must be regarded as sufficiently justified. This suggests that essential to the project of decolonisation is a sense of *maturity* in which, I have argued, one must take commitments seriously without a collapse into the spirit of seriousness (Meagher 2018).

Paradoxically, then, the commitment to decolonisation calls for a commitment to discovering and synthesising values that would call for the teleological suspension of decolonisation. To have achieved decolonisation means to have put in place values whereby other things could matter more than the continued imperative of effacing colonial residues. But, crucially, this does not entail that the project of decolonisation can be done away with altogether and replaced with the project or projects that would be its successors – for, indeed, to accept that conclusion would be to accept that one knows, in advance, which values are the sticky remains of colonialism and coloniality and which are not; it would be to recapitulate the path that besets the decolonial. If the destination of decolonisation points to a further destination beyond it, this does not imply the irrelevance of the journey itself.

If this conclusion is correct, then it means that decolonisation is necessarily an *anguished* project. The spirit of seriousness offers relief from anguish: one knows that one is right, or that one has fulfilled one's duties, and need not take responsibility for evaluating the schema of rights and duties that has animated one's acts. The scam of colonialism is that it at once would seem

to take on a profound responsibility for the world – by installing Colonial Man as undisputed ruler and hegemon – and yet to discount such responsibility by the same stroke, since Colonial Man may always appeal to transcendent values that mean he is merely enjoying what is rightfully his and discharging his rightful duties. His structure is one of domination, in which the acts of the master are a matter of *license* and are thus up to his arbitrary, passionate whims. The master and the coloniser may speak of 'taking responsibility' for the slave and the world, respectively, but through a trick of bad faith, each takes this to mean a reduction rather than intensification of anguish. They are emancipated to do as they please, regardless of the values of the dominated, who for them do not function as sources of shame.

The project of decolonisation would be more comforting if it could re-enact these dynamics. It would be comforting if the anti-colonial impulse meant one was *licensed* to revolt by all means necessary without responsibility for what one wreaks. It would be comforting if the decolonial impulse meant that one was *licensed* to live through the purity of unassailable values that preserve one's goodness and innocence even as neo-colonial tempests erupt all around. To bring about a world that is no longer colonial, though, means to bring about a world in which humanity seizes responsibility for its values. Such a project is an anguished one – and it is this grappling with the anguish of decolonisation that each of us must take up in order to fulfil Fanon's call ([1961] 1963: 316) to set afoot a new humanity.

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From Recolonised to Decolonised South African Economics

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Abstract
Replacing a neocolonial project of financial control by neoliberal forces, with one that represents genuine economic decolonisation has never been more urgent in South Africa and everywhere. The essence of the critique we offer is that the intellectual roots of a decolonising analysis and strategy can be found not only in the classical anti-colonial/capitalist/imperialist analysis of Marx and Luxemburg, but also in works by Africa's leading decolonial political economist, Samir Amin, as well as by some of the South African writers who specified race-class-gender-environmental oppressions. The main problem in changing economic policy, though, is the ongoing power of a local agent of economic colonisation, the Treasury (regardless of who happens to be Finance Minister). In one recent exception, however, students demanded an extra R40 billion be added to the annual budget, and their power of protest was sufficient to defeat Treasury neoliberals. In other sectoral struggles, the students' lessons about broader-based coalitions and national targets, as well as the need for much deeper-reaching and militant critique (in the spirit of Amin) have yet to be learned. Ultimately a much more comprehensive critique of how South Africa was economically recolonised may well be necessary, one based on ideologies that link other intellectual and activist campaigns for economic justice.

Keywords: delinking, decolonisation, economics, political economy, South Africa, neocolonialism

> The limits of bourgeois nationalism are essentially defined not just by its underlying loyalty to the institutional structures inherited from colonialism, but also by the belief of colonial elites that capitalism remains valid despite the state of their underdeveloped and impoverished societies .... Neocolonialism necessitates that the petty bourgeoisie be given enough cards to play, their authority with their own people depending upon it (Ben Magubane, *African Sociology*, 2000).

Introduction

Replacing a neocolonial project of financial control by neoliberal forces, with one that represents genuine economic decolonisation has never been more urgent in South Africa and everywhere. The essence of the critique we offer is that the intellectual roots of a decolonising analysis and strategy can be found not only in the classical anti-colonial/capitalist/imperialist analysis of Marx and Luxemburg, but also in works by Africa's leading decolonial political economist, Samir Amin, as well as by some of the South African writers who specified race-class-gender-environmental oppressions. The main problem in changing economic policy, though, is the ongoing power of a local agent of economic colonisation, the Treasury (regardless of who happens to be Finance Minister or the political party in power). In one recent exception, however, students demanded an extra R40 billion be added to the annual budget, and their power of protest was sufficient to defeat Treasury neoliberals. In other sectoral struggles, the students' lessons about broader-based coalitions and national targets, as well as the need for much deeper-reaching and militant critique (in the spirit of Amin) have yet to be learned. Ultimately, a much more comprehensive critique of how South Africa was economically recolonised may well be necessary, one based on ideologies that link other intellectual and activist campaigns for economic justice.

Seen as a full-cost-accounted, public-sector balance sheet, South Africa is an extremely wealthy country; its vast state-owned assets should permit a decolonisation drive in society to be enhanced and nurtured by a ruling class defending genuine economic sovereignty. Indeed, a 2018 International

Monetary Fund (IMF) survey of public sector wealth in many leading states (i.e. those with reliable data) determined that once not only net financial assets (i.e. budget surpluses/deficits and public pension funds, minus public debts including state pension liabilities) are calculated, as is standard in public finance, so too should other non-financial assets be included, such as state-owned natural resources. In that survey, only five countries highlighted in the IMF's main graphic – Norway, Russia, Kazakhstan, Australia and Peru – could boast a higher state-owned 'non-financial asset' wealth ratio than South Africa's 240 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), although many other countries with oil or mineral-based economies did not provide data (Figure 1). In contrast, South Africa's coloniser Great Britain shoulders a *negative* 120 percent net worth in relation to GDP.

Figure 1.1. Public Sector Balance Sheets
(Percent of GDP 2016)
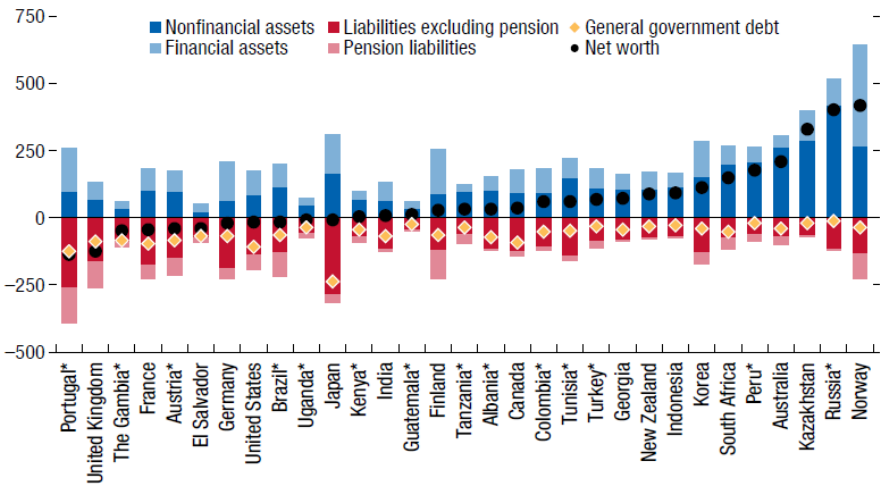
Figure 1: The wealth of selected states: public sector balance sheets, as a % of GDP (2016)
Source: IMF (2018:4)

In 2002, parliament confirmed that this wealth is now at least technically state-owned, within the scope of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act. In practice, mining rights vest effective ownership in corporate hands, so South Africa's wealth depletion is worsening (Bond 2021a). This is due to what we consider to be an extreme case of economic recolonisation, favouring the local white bourgeoisie and multinational capital, with an insignificant share going to an aspiring black bourgeoisie and very little to the workers who produce economic value. There is, too, a tokenistic level of state social spending directed at the majority; it is fourth lowest (as a share of GDP) among the world's 40 largest economies (OECD 2016).

Evidence of this recolonisation is obvious. Since the early 1990s, South Africa has suffered worsening unemployment, inequality, and poverty. Environmental degradation and climate chaos – both cause and effect – accompany worsening food insecurity and severe water shortages. This suffering is the result of a complex history of colonialism and apartheid, but it also reflects the route taken out of apartheid during the 1980s and early 1990s in the context of South Africa's capitalist crisis, in which capital played a facilitative role. Among others, Chris Malikane (2017: 2) argues that institutions responsible for this complex history of colonialism and apartheid were integral to South Africa's racialised process of capital accumulation. The persistence of these problems in post-apartheid South Africa is not only because capital continues – and expands – super-exploitative processes such as (highly gendered) migrant labour, but also can partly be explained by the fiscal, monetary and international-economic policy choices of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) government (Bond & Malikane 2019).

This article considers renewed demands for a decolonial South African economy – and economics discipline – within two contexts: first, *intellectual trends* in political economy starting with the anti-colonial theories of capitalism developed by Karl Marx and Rosa Luxemburg, moving through African dependency theory's contributions, especially Samir Amin's, and ending with some of the main South African analyses of race, class, gender and ecology; and second, consideration of the *concrete forces through which a 'recolonised' post-apartheid economy* – especially policies popularly known as 'neoliberalism' – took root. The aim is to contribute to strategising a reversal: an economy that carefully 'delinks' from the most destructive circuits of world capitalism, in the spirit of Africa's lead economic decoloniser, Amin. To do so, we draw on lessons from the 2015–17 student movement's campaign

to decolonise tertiary education, in part through gaining dramatic increases in budget allotments from the National Treasury to pay for tuition fees and also for 'insourced' labour. As we will explain, Treasury is the central agent of economic recolonisation, so this was a highly significant recent victory, arguably on par with defeating apartheid and ending AIDS-denialist policies by delinking South Africa from the tyranny of multinational corporate patents on AIDS medicines.

In his 2010 book, *From Capitalism to Civilisation: Reconstructing the Socialist Perspective*, Samir Amin (1931 - 2018) was critical of the ANC government's inability to break apartheid's structural legacy, in part because the party's leaders embraced economic recolonisation instead of genuine sovereignty:

> In South Africa, the first settler-colonisation – the one of the Boers – led to the creation of a 'purely White' State involving expulsion or extermination of Africans. In contrast, the initial objective of the British conquest was to forcibly submit Africans to the requirements of the metropolis' imperialist expansion primarily for the exploitation of the minerals. Neither the first colonisers (the Boers) nor the new ones (the British) were capable of standing as autonomous centres. The Apartheid State of the post-war period attempted to do so, basing its power on its internal colony – Black for the essential part – but did not reach its ends owing to an unfavourable numerical balance and to the growing resistance of the dominated populations who will finally be victorious. The powers in place after the end of Apartheid have inherited that issue of internal colonisation without having, up to now, brought in its radical solution (Amin 2010: 86).

Amin's long-standing critique of both South Africa's unreconstructed race - class relations and its post-1994 recolonisation due to adverse international forces is ever more vital, in part because a 'Rethinking Economics for Africa' movement emerged in South Africa in 2018. Both the strengths and limitations of student-driven decolonising politics *within* (not yet fully *against*) this tortured discipline are already evident. It is likely that opportunities to engage in genuinely decolonising intellectual work will not emerge from inside the ossified economics profession (especially in academia), but will instead follow two other processes:

- first, social and environmental activists turning to much more radical modes of contesting economic power, including against a foe – the Treasury – that until recently many progressives believed was essential to defeating Zuma-era looting; and

- second, a revived intellectual commitment to *political economy* (based in various academic disciplines but generally *outside* formal economics) that attempts to keep race, gender, ecological and class critiques in synthetic, mutually-reinforcing balance, while drawing upon capitalist crisis tendencies as a central feature of South African neoliberalism and super-exploitation.

Decolonial political economy will naturally conjoin these processes, seeking a praxis epistemology in which *social struggle produces knowledge*. To that end, the main merit of Marxist analysis, Amin (2016: 518) argued, is its 'claim simultaneously to understand the world, our capitalist global world at each stage of its deployment, and provide the tools which make it possible for the working classes and the oppressed peoples, i.e., the victims of that system, to change it'. Amin endorsed knowledge produced in these struggles, not based upon participatory action research, but instead, upon conflict-seeking research:

> Marxism does not separate theory from practice; Marxist praxis associates both. Marxists try to understand the world through the processes of action to change it. You do not understand first through a process of academic research developed in isolation and then eventually try to modify reality by making use of the theory. No. Marxist praxis is a process which involves simultaneously theory and practice, mobilising all ordinary people, the working classes and the oppressed nations. While you progress in your struggles, you understand better the reality that you are fighting against (Amin 2016: 518).

The mix of 'structure' and 'agency', always so difficult to work out properly in both intellectual and practical terms, can come into better focus with this perspective on the recolonisation and decolonisation of South African economics, especially if we draw on the wisdom of prior critics of capitalist/non-capitalist power relations.

Patrick Bond & Gumani Tshimomola

Economic Colonisation as Super-exploitative Capitalist/ Non-capitalist Relations

Dating initially to the Dutch mercantile conquest in 1652, the occupation of the Cape Colony resulted in 150 years of a settler-based 'previous accumulation', a term Adam Smith coined for pre-capitalist wealth. Marx relabelled this process 'original accumulation' and others translated it as 'primitive accumulation', so as to specify a variety of *dispossession* strategies that capital deployed against non-capitalist social relations and natural life (Harvey 2003). Britain's takeover of the Cape as a spoil of the Napoleonic Wars in 1806 was followed by the banning of slavery as the new rulers imposed wage-labour relations, thus beginning to replace racial feudalism with a more efficient racialised capitalism (Saul & Bond 2014). That was a major factor compelling the Dutch settlers' descendants, the Afrikaners, to leave the Cape, embarking on the Great Trek in 1835 to establish their own quasi-states and super-exploitative petty-commodity mode of production as far north as the border of present-day Zimbabwe.

The capitalist mode of surplus value extraction that Marx would have recognised only prospered at scale with the birth of the black migrant proletariat in the late 1860s, after diamonds were discovered at Kimberley and a coercive recruitment system was established for 50 000 workers. The black working class was, for the next century, rooted within a rural-urban migration system still mixing capitalist and pre-capitalist relations, as colonial and then apartheid-era control of rural labour drew male 'temporary sojourners' to the white-owned mines, fields and factories, subsidised by social reproduction especially drawing on rural black women's unpaid labour. They looked after the pre-working-age youth, injured and ill workers, and retirees who lacked pensions (Kuhn & Wolpe 1978).

How relevant is Marx to South Africa (Bond 2021b)? He wrote only a few passages in *Capital* aimed at reconciling contradictory laws of accumulation between capitalism and pre-capitalist tributary power structures; he would have gleaned insights when, shortly before finishing Volume I in 1867, his brother-in-law Jan Juta visited from Cape Town (after establishing South Africa's first publishing house). In Volume 1 (Chapter 26), Marx remarked, ironically, about how '… the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production'. In Volume 2, Marx explained the longevity of the slave

mode of production, which allowed a fusion of capital's internal laws of motion and the extra-economic coercion associated with slavery and colonialism. And in the final pages of Volume 3 ('Supplement'), in which an original capitalist *crisis theory* is proposed, the very last words of *Capital* concern the colonial conquest of Africa, termed (by Marx's collaborator Engels) 'purely a subsidiary of the stock exchange' so as to reflect the era's rising *financial* power. The 1885 'Scramble for Africa' – the full codification of colonial land grabs – had transpired in a Berlin conference's carve-up of the continent just after Marx's death, as systemic capitalist overproduction and excess capital within the London and Paris stock markets contributed to the colonial push (Phimister 1992).

Scholarship on the racist character of imperialist capitalism in Africa began in 1902 with John Hobson (1902), a British liberal critic. But within South Africa, at least two prominent writer-activists, although moderate in advocacy tactics and assimilationist with respect to race politics, were simultaneously advancing anti-colonial, political-economic reasoning. Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje, while editing *Koranta ea Becoana* (1901 - 1908) and *Tsala ea Becoana* (1910 - 2015), was often in solidarity with South African capitalism's working-class and women victims (notwithstanding periodic arguments in favour of the Empire) (Ndebele 1993; Limb 2007). And Olive Schreiner (1897) was firmly anti-imperialist (Krebs 1997) even while advancing the 'civilising' race politics of colony, for example in criticising her former friend Cecil John Rhodes sarcastically in *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland*:

> if it should come to pass that you should obtain those lands you have desired, and you should obtain black men to labour on them and make to yourself great wealth; or should you create that company and fools should buy from you, so that you became the richest man in the land; and if you should take to yourself wide lands, and raise to yourself great palaces, so that princes and great men of earth crept up to you and laid their hands against yours, so that you might slip gold into them – what would it profit you? (Schreiner 1897).

But it was in 1913 that a decisive anti-imperialist analysis of South African capitalism was first elaborated in theoretical form, in Rosa Luxemburg's (1968) *The Accumulation of Capital* (Bond 2019; 2021a). She described

Rhodes' formalised settler colonialism after his 1870s diamond mine consolidation. Notwithstanding how severely this system repressed black people, it was not until the 1910s that a widespread movement of urban socialists emerged at the core site of accumulation: Johannesburg's vibrant gold mines, where more than a third of the world's store of the metal has been dug since 1884. The Witwatersrand mining and associated industrial complex boasted the African continent's greatest number of organised workers, and the most militancy, although this initially emerged from the white immigrant socialist cadre (hailing especially from Britain and Eastern Europe, from which Lithuania stood out).

In spite of the 1921 establishment of the Communist Party South Africa (in 1953 renamed the SACP), white workers failed to make common cause with black counterparts, instead witnessing their unions calling out, 'Workers of the World Unite for a White South Africa!' This division was debilitating during the 1922 Rand Rebellion strike of more than 20 000 white mineworkers. As capital and the state regrouped by making concessions to white workers, and as blacks organised within Clements Kadalie's (1970) syndicalist-influenced Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa, SACP leader Sidney Bunting took orders from Moscow, in 1928 shifting the party to support an 'Independent Native Republic', not explicitly socialism. Only after a victory over colonialism would the SACP be encouraged to wave the red anti-capitalist flag in the struggle's 'second stage' (as opposed to immediately organising workers with more socialist aims). But in 1950, the SACP was banned by the apartheid regime, forcing socialist discussions and literature deep underground (Drew 1996; 2019). By the time of its emergence in 1990 as one of the world's most Soviet-centric communist parties, there were very few official documents which carried theoretical insights beyond those of the ANC's National Democratic Revolution.

In contrast, the critique of colonial-imperial-capitalist racism emerged at first gradually then explosively in academia, especially safe sites in British exile. The University of Essex hosted the leading SACP intellectual, Harold Wolpe (1972; 1980), whose adaptation of the French Marxist anthropological theory of 'articulations of modes of production' explains how apartheid subsidised big business, hence suggesting a need to address race and class simultaneously (see also Legassick 1974). Nearby at Sussex, a Poulantzian interpretation of South African capitalist fractions became dominant, including the doctoral thesis of Rob Davies (1980), subsequently the South African

Minister of Trade and Industry from 2009–19. On the one hand, Simon Clarke (1978) considered it 'the best 'neo-Marxist' work on the state that has blossomed in recent years', but on the other, he attacked the Poulantzians for reducing Marxism to liberal interest-group analysis.

That critique could be extended to some scholars who adopted neo-Marxism by throwing out the very core of the argument, e.g. the leading labour scholar Eddie Webster (1985; 1987) who was explicit*:* 'I begin my account of the labour process at Chapter 7 of Volume 1 of *Capital* in order to *deliberately* avoid the labour theory of value'. Whether SACP or New Left, the majority of internal and exiled political economists – mostly white – simply could not grapple with *Capital's* deeper-rooted explanations for uneven development, especially capitalist crisis tendencies based on overproduction (Bond 2021b). Exceptions included notable books and papers of the era by Ben Magubane (1979); Duncan Innes (1984); Colin Bundy (1988); Charles Meth (1990); and Baruch Hirson (1991). Later, some of Magubane's (2001) work was dedicated to correlating differential characteristics of racism and epochs of capital accumulation, distinguishing between periods of land dispossession, labour mobilisation, workforce management and consumption.

Thus armed primarily with a critique of capitalism based on the articulations of modes of production, specifically the apartheid Bantustans' race-gender-ecological intersections with high-profit capital accumulation, the independent left spent the years prior to 1985 insisting, mistakenly, that to end apartheid would also require a transition to socialism, since capital *needed* the state's formal racial restrictions to sustain super-profitability. More attention to *Capital's* crisis theory – and also to neoliberal economic policy as a universal bourgeois response to the falling rate of profit, beginning in Chile in 1973 – would have allowed apartheid's critics to anticipate the durable overaccumulation tendencies, culminating in the 1985 financial meltdown. That event, in turn, broke the intra-white alliance between the racist Afrikaner-dominated state and the big English-speaking capitalists in the mining, manufacturing, retail, and finance sectors.

This lack of foresight drove the half-dozen central neo-Marxist intellectuals – especially those (mainly white males) based in Durban and affiliated to industrial trade unions (Desai & Bohmke 1997) – towards a whimsical engagement with a 'Regulation Theory' derived from a very different conjuncture in French political economy (Bond 2014). The diversion was centred upon a fantasy: the apartheid-capitalist super-exploitation they had

earlier criticised – renamed as 'racial Fordism' in a nod to Antonio Gramsci via the Regulation School (since mass production and mass consumption occurred not in a virtuous cycle in which working-class labourers could consume their own product, as Henry Ford's model suggested worked in the North, but in South Africa along racially-distinct, super-exploitative lines characteristic of world capitalism's unequal periphery) could be reformed into post-apartheid 'non-racial post-Fordism' (Gelb 1991). Extensive analysis was undertaken especially by the Economic Trends group that served the black union movement (Padayachee & van Niekerk 2019: 80 - 84). Yet the intellectual weaknesses associated with the critique of economic colonisation left these analysts and union-movement strategists with the mistaken impression that a renewed export-orientation along with the deregulation of international financial, trade and investment relationships would profitably align South African capitalism with corporate-dominated globalisation. This re-alignment would also allegedly shift white South African capital from super-exploitation to a more harmonious model, replete with deracialised Team Concept and Quality Circle human resource management trends, thus allowing labour to flourish and the economy to become more internationally competitive (Gelb 1991). Instead, the result was deindustrialisation, an even more desperate proletariat, and economic recolonisation.

However, not only did that 1985 conjuncture once again split the white elites, between the English running business and Afrikaners running the state, but the latter group themselves divided into bitter-end '*verkramptes*' and 'securocrats' who soon lost their earlier hegemony, on the one hand, and on the other, neoliberal '*verligtes*' and 'econocrats' led by F.W. de Klerk. He wrestled the presidency from P.W. Botha in 1989 and six months later freed Nelson Mandela and unbanned the ANC, SACP and other smaller liberation movements. Although de Klerk left the active political scene in 1997 after serving as Mandela's deputy president from 1994–96, he retired knowing that the econocrats, big business and the core institutions of neoliberalism he had empowered during the early 1990s negotiations, culminating in the 1996 Constitution, would remain durable for decades (Bond 2014). The two exemplary institutions reflecting this power were the Treasury and Reserve Bank, which were during the transition process already beholden to international credit rating agencies (once South Africa recovered investment-grade level in 1994) and the lenders who helped call the shots during post-apartheid economic recolonisation.

Treasury as the Primary Local Agent of South Africa's Economic Recolonisation

To foreground the argument that during the 1980s, South Africa's financial delinking from the world economy *could have provided the potential for a decolonised, self-reliant, post-apartheid balancing along race, class, gender and environmental lines*, we must first recall the traditional role of the main agent of *recolonisation*. The South African 'Treasury' refers to the Ministry of Finance and the Departments of Finance and State Expenditure. There are other aspects of the Treasury which include fiscal responsibility for national, provincial, metropolitan and municipal bodies and state-owned enterprises, especially where they collect taxes or fees, borrow, budget and spend money. But South Africa's economic recolonisation is most explicit in Treasury's relations with lenders, credit rating agencies, the World Bank and the IMF, and other global and national financial actors. While the Reserve Bank has received public attention especially because of its extreme monetary policy, generous bailouts (to white-owned institutions but not black) and lax regulatory capacity, South Africa's main economic policy decisions, budgetary allocations, international economic relations and financial sector politics were the responsibility of Treasury (Terreblanche 2014).

Across the world, including most African countries, the rise of Treasury ministries dates to early patterns of colonisation. Sampie Terreblanche (2014: 53) traces the foundation of the British Treasury to the late 1600s when the Gentry Parliament of London institutionalised executive powers to decide on taxation, borrowing and public expenditure. Since the era of neoliberalism began during the 1970s, as older social-democratic and national-liberation traditions have faded away, most Treasuries have insisted upon both imposing fiscal restraints and liberalising capital flows (Terreblanche 2014). The latter instil discipline via a country's international financial reputation and hence the interest rate at which a Treasury, Reserve Bank and local banks and firms can borrow (Bond 2003). Reflecting the older traditions, the apartheid regime generally did not restrain spending, especially from the late 1950s until the mid-1970s, and again in the transition period when the deficit rose to nearly 10 percent of GDP. During the 1980s, government had increased unjustifiable spending on defence and former homelands (including subsidies for business relocation to industrial deconcentration points), while continuing to allocate resources along racial lines, with more funding going to

white constituencies, periodically undermining fiscal discipline.

However, as South Africa began to face more serious sanctions pressure in 1985, Botha revamped the Central Economic Advisory Services (CEAS), an autonomous institution with broader functions compared to the Treasury, with more proximity to the government's securocrats. CEAS' first report recommended privatisation, commercialisation or private financing of public services, as well as relaxing statutory monopolies, all of which laid the foundation for the transition to neoliberalism. CEAS was moved to report to Finance Minister Barend du Plessis, as power shifted to Treasury econocrats. Networks and relationships strengthening the econocrats' influence were generated during the transition to democracy, with the aim of not only co-opting key liberation movement cadres (skillfully managed by Derek Keys from 1992 - 1994), but re-establishing international economic relations following Botha's traumatic default.

That 'debt repayment standstill' occurred because US$13 billion of short-term foreign debt which became due in mid-1985 could not be repaid, after international banks decided to refuse their rollover. This was preceded by the crash of the gold price from US$850/oz (1981) to US$250/oz (1983), several years of economic downturn and a major oil crisis (Padayachee, 1989: 104). The United States Federal Reserve Board's rise in interest rates from 6 to 16 percent in 1979–80 caused debt crises in South Africa and across the Third World (Bond 2003). The South African debt crisis was also a function of increasingly militant domestic politics, including the rise in anti-apartheid, labour, community and student protest during the mid-1980s. This followed the revival of resistance after political parties were banned in the early 1960s, notably the Durban dock worker strikes of 1973 and the 1976 Soweto uprising.

Monetary policy was also changing, initially zigzagging between sharply negative real interest rates after the debt crisis, and extremely high interest rates starting in 1988. A decade earlier, the De Kock Commission advocated a more independent South African Reserve Bank (SARB) with control over interest rates, exchange control, bank supervision and money supply unhindered by accountability to parliament. Reflecting the neoliberal bloc's increasing power, the 1993 interim constitution made the SARB a formally independent institution. One otherwise critical South African political economist, Ben Turok, in 1998 led a parliamentary commission on the SARB that endorsed the point of view that formal independence was essential to carrying out its mission of currency stabilisation – a bizarre conclusion given

that the SARB was a strong advocate of exchange control liberalisation, which had an adverse impact on currency volatility. The independence of the SARB meant it was not necessary to subject such financial liberalisation – with its pro-white implications in allowing the expatriation of historic wealth drawn from the (black) working class – to democratic parliamentary debate.

Such economic recolonisation was not the only route for South Africa, given how weak the financial system had become by the late 1980s, as international economic relations waned. Had political will existed in the liberation movement, instead of despondency following the Soviet Union's collapse, a more critical perspective on economic imperialism might have gained traction and defined policy. After all, to finally defeat apartheid, ending new bank loans had become a central political mobilising strategy, starting with a United States of America (USA) congressional ban on the IMF lending to South Africa, following a 1982 bailout of Pretoria after the gold price crashed (Bond 2003). After the United Democratic Front (UDF) was formed in 1983 and began organising nationally-coordinated protests – while joining the ANC's call for international boycotts, as did the trade unions in 1985 – foreign lenders realised that South Africa was becoming unbankable. The chairman of Chase Manhattan Bank, Willard Butcher, was the first to pull the plug in August 1985, just after Botha's Rubicon speech (Bond 2003). Botha declared a temporary moratorium on short-term debt repayment of US$13 billion, closed the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) and imposed tough new exchange controls (Hirsch 1989:31).

The anti-apartheid movement used the opportunity to deepen the contradictions between white capital and the state. The Commonwealth's Eminent Persons Group sent by the United Kingdom's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, working with US President Ronald Reagan, aimed to protect capital accumulation by advocating minor reforms, in contrast to 'one person, one vote in a unitary state' demanded by the ANC and UDF.

The solidarity movements in the USA and Europe eventually forced their governments to impose economic sanctions during the mid-1980s – an indication of the international potential for decolonisation allies, both then and potentially in future, too. Of course, notwithstanding sanctions and oil embargos, the Western powers, Latin America and some countries in Asia continued to trade armaments and oil with South Africa throughout the 1980s (Van Vuuren 2017). Whereas opportunities were presented by the sanctions strategy to decolonise South Africa and weaken its links to major multinational

corporations, thus raising the potential for post-apartheid economic sovereignty, these were not acted upon.

Botha's debt standstill and imposition of exchange controls to prevent capital flight allowed some funds to circulate within South Africa that would otherwise have been moved abroad, and initially the SARB lowered interest rates to stimulate demand. But after that policy failed, as a result of the persistent crisis of capital overaccumulation (Bond & Malikane 2019), economic pressures rose. Visiting IMF missions firmly advocated neoliberal policies during the late 1980s. Thus, the foundation for the transition to neoliberalism is closely associated with the phasing out of apartheid. One such policy was a dramatic rise in interest rates in 1988, which pushed the economy into a four-year depression, leading to half a million new unemployed workers and the rise of domestic public debt to new heights.

As already discussed, even in the most sophisticated neo-Marxist circuits of South African political-economic research – for example, the Economic Trends Group, Industrial Strategy Project and ANC Economic Policy Desk (supported by University of London radical economists) – there was insufficient research into either the core processes behind the capitalist crisis or the subsequent role of the Treasury, with the exception of an analysis by Ben Fine and Zav Rustomjee (1996: 248). (The latter changed course, however, and became the first democratic Trade and Industry Director General at a time his ministers – Trevor Manuel and Alec Erwin – endorsed excessively rapid trade liberalisation, thus destroying many local labour-intensive sectors, including clothing, textiles, footwear, appliances and electronics.) By the early 1990s, South Africa had entered a period of economic policy negotiations that would shape all spheres of life for decades to come. Amongst the range of issues agreed upon during the negotiated settlement were the repayment of the US$25 billion apartheid foreign debt, the constitutionally-confirmed independence of the SARB, and accession to the World Trade Organization on disadvantageous terms (Bond 2014).

One of the other main signals or imminent economic recolonisation was Pretoria's secret deal with the IMF in December 1993. ANC leaders supported government's 'Statement of Economic Policy Intent' as part of the motivation needed by then Minister of Finance, Keys, to apply for a US$850 million loan. The Statement included public-sector wage restrictions, high real interest rates and budget deficit cuts. These neoliberal policies were later accompanied by World Bank strategies including market-orientated housing

policy and land reform, and a shift to commercialisation of essential services (i.e. water and electricity cut-offs for those unable to pay). While this was just one of many instances of economic recolonisation, it is often considered decisive (e.g. Kasrils 2013), although Vishnu Padayachee and Fine (2018) argue that the IMF did not overtly influence post-apartheid policy, since the adoption of neoliberal policies by the ANC had already occurred, a fair point. Still, the IMF's view was that it was their influence that convinced the ANC of the need for neoliberal macroeconomic policies.

Today, similarly, the most dangerous reflection of power enjoyed by international financiers to continue South Africa's recolonisation, must be the country's foreign debt: US$180 billion in mid-2019, up from US$25 billion in 1994 (SARB 2019). At 51 percent of GDP, this is far higher than in 1985 when Botha defaulted (at 41 percent of GDP). The mid-2019 decision by Treasury and the SARB to authorise Naspers' share relisting (in Amsterdam) of its main income earner, the Chinese IT firm Tencent, will redirect hard currency away from the JSE and worsen an already dire balance-of-payments deficit (Figure 2).
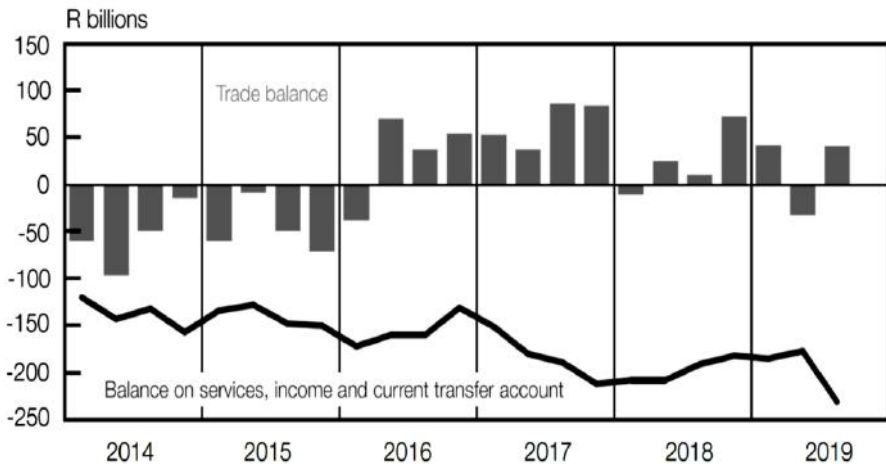
Figure 2. Current account of the balance of payments
Source: SARB 2019: 38.

With both foreign debt owed by the country as a whole (mainly private sector borrowers, but channelled through the SARB) and domestic public debt at

levels above 50 percent of GDP, bourgeois economists and financiers are more vocally demanding fiscal austerity. At the core of this philosophy is the belief that government should avoid crowding out private investment. In South Africa, this belief persists in spite of a 'capital strike' and overwhelming evidence of economic underperformance and growing unemployment, and hence the need for Keynesian-style state stimulation through greater expenditure. The one post-apartheid exception was from 2009–11, when the Treasury complied with a temporary world consensus along these lines, encouraged by the G20 and IMF – then led by Dominique Strauss-Kahn – to expand fiscal deficits so as to help avoid a 1930s-style global depression. South Africa's debt to GDP ratio rose to new, post-apartheid heights, as did that of many other countries, which led to even greater economic recolonisation, this time by international credit ratings agencies whose 2017 junk rating of South African securities followed Jacob Zuma's attack on the Treasury and the replacement of Pravin Gordhan with Malusi Gigaba.

That exceptional period of global capitalist crisis aside, the costs of the neoliberal policies are resented. Since 1994, the Treasury has been seen, in some political circles, as 'too powerful' (Pillay & Pearson 2016). Complicating matters, the Treasury is often credited with defending against reckless expenditure by the 2009–18 Zuma regime, even when a 'Gupta-aligned' minister briefly took charge: Gigaba, for less than a year in 2017–18. Moreover, reflecting its durability, Treasury's post-apartheid power included what can be considered as neoliberal state-building: constructing internal institutional capacities coupled with outsourcing of government services, ostensibly so as to cut spending (Pillay & Pearson 2016; Brunette *et al*. 2017). Procurement was not only a matter of allowing white-owned firms and multinational corporations to generate massive, often unrestricted profits – e.g. the construction industry's notorious collusion – but also became tied into Black Economic Empowerment patronage systems. One internal Treasury estimate, by former chief procurement officer Kenneth Brown, is that as much as 40 percent of such contracting (i.e. R240 billion per annum) amounted to wasteful and fruitless expenditure due to corporate overpricing (Mkokeli 2016). No substantive progress was subsequently reported in shrinking this, the single largest budget item.

Nor has there been noticeable progress by Treasury in addressing several of the most important vehicles of economic recolonisation: corporate criminality. South African businesses are persistently the world leaders in biannual PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC 2018) 'Economic Crime' reports,

which survey money-laundering, cybercrime, bribery and corruption. Lax stock market regulation allowed fraud-filled firms like Steinhoff and Tongaat Hulett to regularly issue bogus financial reports. The world's main auditing firms gained the confidence in South Africa to issue either corrupt or incompetent audits proclaiming clean-bills-of-health for a variety of deviant companies, including many associated with the Gupta empire.

Treasury was often to blame. The senior operations manager of its Financial Intelligence Centre admitted in October 2019, 'South Africa is still losing anything between US$10 billion and US$25 billion annually in illicit financial flows' (Planting 2019). The embarrassment of Treasury addressing this head on was obvious, for prior to becoming Deputy President of South Africa in 2014, Cyril Ramaphosa oversaw firms in which billions of rands of such flows have been documented (at Lonmin, MTN and Shanduka) (McKune & Makinane 2014; AmaBhungane 2015). In one case, the Treasury's closely-related Financial Sector Conduct Authority was unveiled to be state-captured by the third largest insurance company, Liberty Life (Open Secrets 2019). Another example was the collusion in the manipulation of the South African currency, to which major international banks including Citigroup and Standard Chartered pleaded guilty, *but in US court proceedings, not in South Africa*. Asked by the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF – the country's third largest political party) in parliament about why Treasury had not prosecuted, Finance Minister Tito Mboweni replied nonchalantly:

> It is important for members to differentiate between the impact of any transaction on consumers and the impact on the value of the rand – the investigation before the Competition Commission appears to be related more to the conduct of bank traders towards clients, rather than providing evidence of their [actions] affecting the actual value of the Rand (Phakathi 2019).

Since the EFF were unable to hold Mboweni to account using democratic parliamentary powers, and since pronouncements and mobilisations by the EFF, trade unionists and other progressives did not persuade Mboweni to change course, then could heterodox political economists persuade him of the merits of decolonial economic ideas? In early 2019, an impressive collection of critical thinkers led by Turok had complained to Mboweni about Treasury's ideological bias towards economic recolonisation, for example in the form of

a recent colloquium Mboweni had hosted featuring Harvard's notorious neoliberal Ricardo Haussmann. Turok *et al*. (2019: 2) reminded Mboweni of a prior – 1996 *Growth, Employment and Redistribution* – home-grown structural adjustment programme influenced by 17 World Bank and white pro-corporate economists, and made five mild-mannered requests for the next one, these being:

1. There be greater transparency and coherence in relation to government economic policy formulation, and that government ensures that processes include proper representation of key role players both inside and outside government.
2. The list of invitees be entirely reconsidered in order to take the above into account.
3. The above should include a reconsideration of the balance of international invited guests and their role within the colloquia.
4. Progressive economists be given a meaningful platform to present alternative policy proposals at the Colloquia.
5. That documentation prepared for the Colloquia be made public (Turok *et al*. 2019: 2).

Mboweni (2019) was mildly apologetic in an email reply: 'We will endeavour in future to reach out to as inclusive a group as possible. It is a good practice to be inclusive'. Yet his high-profile August 2019 economic strategy document – *Economic Transformation, Inclusive Growth and Competitiveness* – included no prior consultation process outside Cabinet. Notwithstanding substantial evidence of deglobalisation then underway (Bond & Malikane 2019), the document was based upon the economic recolonisation philosophy:

> South Africa needs to promote export competitiveness and actively pursue regional growth opportunities in order to leverage global and regional value chains for export growth. Exports have been identified as a key driver of economic growth. Technologically sophisticated exports, in particular, are crucial to structural transformation as it enables an economy to move from low- to high-productivity activities (Treasury 2019: 3).

It is in this context, in which alternative decolonising ideas mean very little on

their own, no matter how gently they are introduced, that it is vital to look at the social struggles over public policy. Such struggles reveal how demands made by oppressed people often take the form of financing disputes, in which Treasury holds the line against what it understands to be dangerous fiscal degeneration. The critical question typically asked by those in society comfortable with recolonisation, is, 'Where will the money come from?' There are typically two kinds of answers provided by those activists in society opposed to fiscal austerity: reformist and radical. The first is exemplified in October 2019 demands made by the non-governmental organisation-dominated Budget Justice Coalition (2019):

- Increase personal income tax for the highest earners;
- Increase taxes on wealth, and the income that comes from having wealth;
- Reduce tax breaks such as medical aid credits that high earners currently enjoy;
- Cut at least some of the tax breaks to companies;
- Gradually increase corporate income tax back to levels similar to that of the early 2000s;
- Improve the South African Revenue Service's (SARS) capacity to collect taxes; and
- Combat illicit financial flows and tax evasions.

(Budget Justice Coalition 2019)

All of these logical reforms were simply too ambitious for Mboweni. But beyond these, were much more radical demands made by the South African Federation of Trade Unions (2019) and other critics of neoliberalism:

- Halt the two main state-subsidised high-carbon mega-projects – R800 billion for exporting 18 billion tons of coal, and R250 billion for the Durban port-petrochemical expansion – that are both now underway (and which in any case face strong opposition in communities ranging from the coal fields to South Durban);
- Insource the R800 billion+ of state and parastatal annual procurement, thus saving the 35–40 percent (R300 billion) that Treasury well knows is stolen from every rand spent, by exceptionally corrupt companies;

- Refuse to repay multilateral creditors the R200 billion+ in corrupt, odious, climate-catastrophic debt taken on by Eskom to finance Medupi and Kusile (thus inconveniencing supposedly-'public' lenders including the World Bank, European Investment Bank, African Development Bank, China Development Bank and BRICS New Development Bank);
- Lower interest rates, starting with a 3 percent cut, by first imposing much tighter exchange controls so as to prevent capital flight, thus lowering the massive debt repayment burden (now 4 percent of GDP – thus saving tens of billions of rand);
- Cease the R27 billion/year [investment] in 'robot-making automobile' subsidies; and
- With prescribed asset requirements, protect the working-class victims-to-be of the JSE – which is the world's second most overvalued (using the Buffett Indicator) – by compelling investment managers to balance their portfolios with state securities (South African Federation of Trade Unions 2019).

Still, the prestige of Treasury remained intact, so no matter how many strong ideas were proposed to loosen the fiscal constraints, the central question that had emerged in the 21st century, is what kind of social activist pressure can rise up to the point that state rulers must concede, and begin to reverse the economic recolonisation process, even momentarily and incrementally. Before austerity was decisively imposed in the Covid-19 era – in spite of what was falsely advertised as a fiscal stimulus in 2020 – creeping budget constraints were introduced during the 2010s. But in spite of that, tertiary-level students demanding that #FeesMustFall and then winning free schooling for most has vital lessons for a broader economic decolonisation movement, including pressure points and cross-class progressive alliances.

Treasury's Power Wilts before Students Demanding Decolonisation of Higher Education

On 21 October 2015, several thousand students began national #FeesMustFall advocacy by protesting in the parliamentary precinct in Cape Town. It was the day of the budgetary mid-term review. Prior to Gordhan, the 2014 - 2015 Finance Minister was Nhlanhla Nene, whose response that day – formally

articulated in his Budget Speech – was that student protests were 'unconstructive' (Reuters 2015). The word was perhaps chosen by the Treasury's neoliberal speechwriters; it scornfully revealed a vast distance between those championing the austerity logic in Treasury on the one hand, and on the other, the society's ascendant leadership at the elite universities (much less the 63 percent of society living below the poverty line, as measured by Budlender *et al.* 2015). Nene was fired by Zuma in December 2015 but mainly because he refused to countenance nuclear energy spending involving the Guptas and the Russian firm Rosatom, and then in 2018 was rehired briefly once Ramaphosa came to power but soon resigned in disgrace because of lying about other meetings he had with the Guptas.

Reuters (2015) reported that Nene 'downplayed the effect of university students storming parliament as he delivered his medium term budget on the credit rating of Africa's most advanced economy. 'What matters for the ratings agencies is our response as government in addressing these challenges', he said about the students' demands to keep tuition fees unchanged'. Revealing 'what matters' in terms of the economic recolonisation agenda, in February 2015 Nene had relaxed exchange controls, allowing wealthy individuals to take R10 million out of the country each year, an increase from the previous R4 million limit, while at the same time cutting monthly social grants to poor people by 3 percent in real terms (Bond & Malikane 2019).

Having made this powerful statement to Treasury and parliament, the students then marched in their thousands to the Johannesburg and Durban headquarters of the ANC on October 22 and 23, and then demonstrated – more than ten thousand strong – at the Union Buildings in Pretoria on October 23, leaving Zuma too frightened to appear before the crowd. But he did agree to two immediate demands that day: a zero percent tuition increase for 2016 and the insourcing of low-paid service workers. Conceded University of the Witwatersrand Vice Chancellor Adam Habib and the leader of Universities South Africa, Ahmed Bawa, 'the students achieved more in 10 days than vice-chancellors achieved in 10 years' (Habib & Bawa 2016).

The students had also spun their wheels for many years prior to 2015, protesting annually and with great passion (albeit mostly the media covered the traditionally white campuses, ignoring the majority of campus protests). What transpired that year was new*: alliances between students and low-paid campus workers* who, fifteen years earlier, had suffered outsourcing and the destruction of their unions; and a *national* not merely local-campus-based

protest coordination, allowing a scale-jump to much more appropriate targets, including Treasury and top politicians like Zuma.

Treasury was certainly overdue for protest, because in November 2015 it was revealed that Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande had two years earlier commissioned a major study of how to finance the students' demands, but then buried it. His spokesperson explained: 'It is a public document, but due to the nature of the report, we decided not to make it public. *Obviously we would have been setting the finance minister up against the public if that decision and report was released*' (e.a.) (Petersen 2015). It was increasingly obvious that decolonising educational visions were being snuffed out by Treasury. As student leader Kgotsi Chikane (2016) put it in October 2016,

> The struggle for free education is not new to many of us. In fact, it has been our rallying call before some even entered university. However, a call for Free Decolonised Education is one that is new and with it comes a new form of politic. A politic that requires you to be relentless because you are challenging a system that doesn't even view you as truly human (Chikane 2016).

Treasury was just as relentless, deploying as its most aggressive public spokesperson a University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) academic (and Treasury consultant), Ivor Chipkin (2016). In October 2016, Chipkin condemned his university's Student Representative Council (SRC) because it 'called for a march on 'national and provincial sites of government'. Why was National Treasury the target? It would be too easy to see in the position of the SRC the cynical manipulation of Zuma-aligned agitators'. One such 'agitator', whom Wits Vice Chancellor Adam Habib deemed part of a 'Pol Pot Brigade', was Wits Anthropology Department chair Kelly Gillespie. A few days before Chipkin's critique, she had written to Finance Minister Gordhan:

> … your department is structurally responsible for the violence that I witnessed on campus today, that my colleagues and I must face in dealing with the very real lives and bodies of young people in our institutions. While I am furious with Wits management for its role in the militarisation of campus that exacerbates and flares this conflict, they have no power to change the underlying structural conditions that fuel campus violence. You do .... The only thing that will stop this

antagonism at our institutions is the amplification of state funding to universities to keep them public, accessible and providing quality teaching and research. If you don't want to tax the super-rich, which we've been arguing is your political responsibility, then take the money from the defence budget or the unnecessary mega-projects, or the budgets for state pomp and ceremony. How can you not be willing to fund free education? It is not even a radical demand, but one that has been part of the tradition of liberal democracies for generations (Gillespie 2016).

By November 2017, Zuma had overruled a report by his own Heher Commission (set up to investigate university finances), specifically recommendations for a loan-based tertiary financing system, following input from Mukovhe Morris Masutha (an educational consultant who dated Zuma's daughter, and had been both a Wits student leader and an alleged spy for state security in 2016) (Serrao 2017). With an apparent disregard for Treasury, then run by his ally Gigaba, Zuma promised not only a R40 billion grant increase to tertiary institutions, and to permanently raise their budget from 0.68 percent of GDP to 1 percent, but free tuition for those tertiary learners whose parents earned less than R350 000 per year (an estimated 90 percent of all tertiary education level students) (Hall 2018).

Resistance emerged even before the formal announcement in December 2017. In spite of the 47 percent increase in state funding (in real terms) that would be coming to universities, Bawa complained, 'We are annoyed that we were not consulted before the decision was made. We needed at least a year to go through the strategy and implement' (Masweneng 2017). In reality, less than a month's notice was given and the 2018 first-year students were catered for by virtue of tertiary institutions simply billing a national student finance agency, which cut administrative and debt-collection costs massively. Even more powerfully, reported journalist Greg Nicolson (2017):

> Michael Sachs, the Treasury's deputy director general of budgeting, threatened to resign if forced to implement the plan… Those students who marched on the Union Buildings, their institutions, civil society organisations and government departments probably spent weeks preparing their submissions to the Heher Commission. The judge dutifully interrogated dozens of submissions in public hearings. His

> report runs to 748 pages. But Zuma placed his future son-in-law's advice above Heher's recommendations and those submissions (Nicolson 2017).

As it became clear Zuma was serious, Sachs did resign in mid-November (Basson & le Cordeur 2017), although there was no apparent fallout as a result. Nicolson also has a point insofar as the Wits student submission to Heher was, like the Budget Justice Coalition's to Mboweni in 2019, quite moderate, calling only for a 2 percent corporate income tax increase and an apartheid-windfall wealth levy. There was, in that document (which was not circulated throughout the student movement), no questioning of the broader framework in which Treasury maintains South Africa's recolonised economy, even though the current students' generation would become the main victims of climate change fuelled by the fossil fuel-centric megaprojects which Treasury apparently did not mind guaranteeing to the tune of hundreds of billions of rands. In any case, such submissions are ultimately irrelevant, compared to the more profound pressure exerted by activists.

Zuma himself had, at a Security Cluster meeting in 2016, advocated an 'uncompromising' approach to student protesters, including 'maximum sentences for those involved in violence' (*BusinessTech* 2016). But once he was out of power in mid-2018, he admitted why he had succumbed late in 2017: 'The protests were very destructive and property was damaged. We knew that every year protests were coming, but we had no solution, and it was getting worse' (Hans 2018). How destructive? An estimated *R786 million* in damage to universities was tallied up for the 2015–17 protests (Kahn 2018). But the annual 'payoff' in the form of rising student grants was approximately *R40 billion* annually.

Looking back less than a year after their victory, on 16 June 2018 (at an Apartheid Museum seminar), student activists were sober about the 'many objectives' of the 'decolonisation project' and the shared ideals with the youth of 1976, stated as: increased access to affordable if not free, high quality, higher education; rethinking curricula; dismantling exclusionary institutional norms and cultures; effecting staff and leadership changes to reflect society-at-large; and connecting this activism with a range of economic and political struggles for a more just South Africa (Mabasa 2018). Student protest was sufficiently powerful in 2015–17 that it compelled from Pretoria a partial decolonisation, one particularly painful to the Treasury, which in turn amplified its

own austerity plan in the 2018 and 2019 budgets. So it is to the last point that we turn to conclude: the relationship of this and other sector-specific movements to the larger agenda of economic decolonisation. And that agenda must initially address the most dangerous circuits of capital, which are the international financial institutions that Amin feared would exert the most pressure.

Conclusion: The Decolonising Conditions Needed to 'Delink'

The main arbiter of whether South Africa's economic recolonisation continues to the satisfaction of international financiers remain the 'three brothers' who state-captured Treasury in the mid-1990s: Standard & Poors, Fitch and Moody's. Fiscal austerity is intensifying as Mboweni moves forward with the demand repeatedly made by the credit rating agencies: to cut the budget deficit to the standard neoliberal gauge of 3 percent of GDP as soon as possible, or otherwise suffer a final junk rating on securities.

Mboweni can justifiably claim that he is not an economic recoloniser, insofar as the single main budget-busting problem for Treasury is the Eskom loan guarantee of R450 billion, granted to the electricity parastatal by his predecessors Gordhan and Nene. But to deal with that debt, a decoloniser would start by questioning whether creditors don't deserve some degree of lender liability on especially the corrupt loans to build the largest coal-fired power plants under construction anywhere in the world today: Medupi and Kusile. The World Bank is the largest such lender, at US$3.75 billion, even though the loan was granted when its then-president, Robert Zoellick, knew a Western multinational corporation had bribed the ANC's investment arm, Chancellor House, to get the R60 billion boiler contract.

If Mboweni authorises the repayment of such loans, that in turn will require amplifying the austerity strategy he embarked upon in October 2019, which targeted already-impoverished municipalities. This will be a signal for potential urban-based social unrest. It may escalate to the point that it proves correct Moeletsi Mbeki's (2011) prophesy, that 'Tunisia Day' will arrive in South Africa in 2020. If protest does again rise to new heights, the 2015–17 students' lessons in contesting Treasury are vital, including the scale-jump associated with the #FeesMustFall struggle: away from atomistic, community-based, shop-floor or sectorally-limited sites, towards alliances, coalitions and ultimately an integrated movement of decolonisers, rising in increased activist coordination to national prominence.

There are also at least two intellectual lessons drawn from the arguments above: the need to maintain a wide-ranging approach, capable of incorporating analysis of – and resistance to – race, class, gender and ecological super-exploitations. To illustrate, Amin (2018: 86) pointed out:

> Capitalist accumulation is founded on the destruction of the bases of all wealth: human beings and their natural environment. It took a wait lasting a century and a half until our environmentalists rediscovered that reality, now become blindingly clear. It is true that historical Marxisms had largely passed an eraser over the analyses advanced by Marx on this subject and taken the point of view of the bourgeoisie – equated to an atemporal 'rational' point of view – in regard to the exploitation of natural resources.

In other words, the critique of the recolonising economy that South Africa exemplifies, is the ability and 'right to say no!' to extractivism, by not only those immediately affected (often grassroots feminists), but by all citizens who understand that multinational corporations are generating net wealth *depletion* in Africa, which even the World Bank admits now occurs at a net loss rate of more than US$100 billion annually in Africa (Lange *et al*. 2018). That in turn leads to a broader critique of capitalist economic strategies associated with 'neoliberal nature', including the argument that to save the planet from climate change, states like South Africa's should essentially privatise the air, through carbon trading. This was the strategy that South African Environment Minister Barbara Creecy (2019) most publicly prioritised at the Madrid climate summit, and is a classic example of a recolonising-economics strategy. As former US Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers (1991) once argued while justifying emissions trading, 'The economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste on the lowest-wage country is impeccable, and we [the World Bank] should face up to that… Africa is vastly under-polluted'.

Similarly, the second lesson is that given global capitalist crisis conditions, a country like South Africa should more aggressively 'delink' from global circuits. As Amin put it:

> The fundamental – fatal – contradiction of capitalism resulted into continuous overaccumulation and therefore, faced a problem of outlet for capitalist production. On that ground Luxemburg is certainly right.

How has this contradiction been overcome in history? Here also Luxemburg is right: capitalism expanded by destroying pre-capitalist modes of production both within the societies of the dominant centers and the dominated peripheries. Handicrafts are replaced by manufacturing industries, small shops by supermarkets etc. This process of accumulation by dispossession still goes on with the current privatisation of former public services (Amin 2016).

Amin (1990) advocated a selective delinking from those international circuits that were most damaging, especially financiers, and indeed any global force – i.e. most multilateral institutions and global credit ratings agencies – that maintained a recolonising agenda of imposing capitalist power on non-capitalist social and natural life. Given the economic deglobalisation processes now underway, there are a great many opportunities to do just that.

To illustrate, the level of new foreign direct investment (FDI) across the world fell by nearly 20 percent to US$1.2 trillion in 2018, after three successive years of decline from the 2015 peak of just over US$2 trillion (UNCTAD 2019: 1). From peak levels in 2007, FDI profitability, trade/GDP ratios, and even cross-border financial flows all dropped markedly. Although there was a recorded rise in South African incoming foreign investment, it turned out to be 'phantom', i.e. 'mainly' intra-company loans, with transnational corporations seeking the country's extremely high real interest rates as a means of earning quick profits and offshoring assets (UNCTAD 2019). Not only has global FDI been crashing, from the 4.5% of GDP peak level of 2006–07 to 2.4% in 2017, so too have cross-border financial flows (from 16.1% to 4.5% of GDP in the same period) and relative trade rates. The Baltic Dry Index, the world's main measure of shipping, plummeted from a level of 11 500 in 2008 to below 1 500 the next year and has remained there since. The 2008–09 collapse of trade and its subsequent slow decline was similar to two prior episodes of rapid deglobalisation, in which one measure – world imports/GDP – fell during roughly 15-year periods, from 1880–97 and from 1929–45. Along with other indicators, this suggests that a deglobalisation (or as *The Economist* now prefers, 'slowbalisation') era began after the 1980–2007 era of rapid globalisation.

It is true that the Trump regime amplified deglobalisation tendencies with his trade war against China, India, Brazil, Argentina, Europe and also South Africa. In the 2009–17 period, there were an annual average of 436

'discriminatory commercial policy interventions' recorded by the World Trade Organization, but in 2018–19 the amount rose to 1 049 annually. But ironically, long before Trump came to power, the decline in world trade/GDP ratios was led by the Brazil–Russia–India–China–South Africa group; i.e. the economies that once were considered by Goldman Sachs manager Jim O'Neil to be the 'building BRICS' of 21st century capitalism. South Africa was hit hardest, as trade fell from 73 percent of GDP in 2007 to 59 percent in 2018, compared to a world trade/GDP decline over that period from 61 percent of GDP to 55 percent. All the BRICS countries witnessed reduced trade in much greater degrees than the global norm, and three spent parts of 2015–18 in recession: Brazil, Russia and South Africa, with the latter recording a negative GDP again in the first quarter of 2019. McKinsey Global Institute's (2019: 1) latest 'global flows' analysis confirms that '...a smaller share of the goods rolling off the world's assembly lines is now traded across borders. Between 2007 and 2017, exports declined from 28.1 to 22.5% of gross output in goods-producing value chains'. The decline in trade intensity is led by China, where gross exports as a share of gross output in goods fell from 18% to 10% from 2007–17 (McKinsey Global Institute 2019: 1).

The most spectacular example of trade and production delinking in South Africa and perhaps anywhere was the activist-driven Treatment Action Campaign that, during the early 2000s, successfully contested monopoly patent power over AIDS medicines, in alliance with groups all over the world. At the time, a typical annual treatment regime cost US$10 000, making life itself unaffordable to the vast majority of five million South Africans who desperately needed the treatment. In 2005, at its trough, South Africa's life expectancy was 52 years; but after the battle was won, by 2019 it had risen to 65. The primary reason was the roll-out of free medicines to several million people through the public sector. Drug production has since then been accomplished locally at generic pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities in Midrand, and indeed these now exist across Africa. This is the essence of deglobalising capital and globalising people, an antidote to the economics of recolonisation which tends to seek precisely the opposite (Bond 2014).

So, it is here, not in academia's economics profession – which generally adheres religiously to Intellectual Property rights, hence lining up with Big Pharma against the citizenry – that we can identify a praxis epistemology that opens up many new doors to decolonising the economy and society. The current inability of these activists to link up their campaigns across

sectors, spaces and scales, however, raises another thorny question: whether a new generation of progressive scholars and researchers who often serve as strategic and networking support agents to the activists, can rapidly emerge and build a genuinely decolonising political economy. Since 2018, the Rethinking Economics for Africa (REFA) movement explicitly aimed to decolonise the economics discipline, and judging by the great energy and diversity within REFA's 2018 and 2019 festivals (both held at Wits University), there are grounds for optimism. The variety of panels dedicated to wide-ranging race, class, gender and ecological discussions was inspiring.

What pessimistic signs must decolonisers in REFA pay attention to, however? One example is careerism amidst disciplinary loyalty, especially in a South African competitive-university setting that seeks from its faculty members *only* Scopus-accredited articles as the commodity-type output of scholarly research, no matter that the average academic journal article gets just five views. Publishing in academic journals within the economics profession is arduous for decolonisers, since the ideological gate-keeping is formidable. Far too many thriving intellectual communities have degenerated due to obeying the kinds of pseudo-scientific standards of rigour imposed. As for remaining loyal to a discipline that intrinsically despises decolonisers, there are many lessons to consider from scholarly societies of heterodox economists across the world. At the 2018 50th anniversary of the US Union for Radical Political Economics, for example, one author's informal discussions with life-long economists confirmed the essential mistake made by many, if not the majority present: developing a career located principally within a stultifying economics profession. There, the decolonisation agenda rapidly ran out of steam. Preferable are the wide variety of (non-economics) disciplines where expertise in political economy is appreciated.

A last example of a dangerous tendency in REFA – one that one of the authors has recently encountered within the group's senior-academic support network – is a predictable fear that (we) *petit-bourgeois* professionals have in relation to activists. The latter can be, sometimes, dishonest and hackish, because they have often realised, as did some 2015–17 #FeesMustFall student leaders, that their enemies play dishonest politics; so they, conclude, they too are self-empowered to exaggerate or 'tell lies and claim easy victories', as well.

The danger here is, that like other 'sins' committed by allied intellectuals (Bond *et al.* 2016 - 2017), the scholar-activist is drawn into various kinds of analyses, strategies, tactics and alliances that are ultimately

self-defeating. But the overarching lesson we take is not to fear treading in areas of political controversy, but instead, to maintain high ethical standards, and to genuinely adopt a decoloniser's perspective *that it is the knowledge produced when illegitimate power is challenged,* that makes both the activism and the associated scholarship so rewarding. Those are, at least, orientations that we as scholar-activist political economists are intent on pursuing, with the responsibility to continue striving to be economic decolonisers.

Postscript: As Covid-19 Contradictions Rise, Decolonisers Demand a Treasury U-turn

The economic decolonisation process was derailed during the Covid-19 crisis, during the months after this essay was drafted in February 2020. But many voices of resistance emerged, including the initial 'Cry of the Xcluded' combination of the SA Federation of Trade Unions and numerous social and environmental movements who protested against the 2020 budget, followed by a series of protests against hunger, water shortages and corruption in the distribution of emergency funds. Ongoing labour strikes increasingly targeted not only particular grievances – e.g. health workers without sufficient protective equipment – but the more general way Treasury and the Presidency privileged corporate and rich South Africans' interests.

To illustrate this anger on a variety of fronts in September 2020, the following are some of the most explicit concerns, as articulated in a workshop held with the country's largest trade union (the National Union of Metal-workers of South Africa), based on Mboweni's continued – and even more robust – adoption of policies characterised by neoliberalism, privatisation, austerity and the 'Washington Consensus':

1) *Mboweni lied about the fiscal stimulus, thus causing the 2020 Depression and exposed the President's incompetence.* It is now well known that virtually all the April - June statements made by Mboweni about a fiscal stimulus of R500 billion were lies. He knew full well that the kinds of interventions he had in mind would entail budget cuts, and he also was party to programme design – such as for a R200 billion loan guarantee, a tiny fraction of which was actually implemented – that proved to be incompetent. The failure to ensure rapid delivery of unemployment benefits to millions, and the absurd approach to making available a tiny (R350/

month) emergency grant to workers suddenly unemployed and without insurance, have been universally condemned. The likelihood of South Africa's crash in GDP for 2020 exceeding 10% – i.e. a formal depression, not just a long recession – is largely due to the lack of a genuine R500 billion fiscal stimulus. Most countries attempt to manage a pandemic-crash by injecting major fiscal boosts equivalent to or higher than the anticipated loss of GDP, given that lockdown crippled the private sector. But in South Africa, the impact of fiscal policy is *pro-cyclical not counter-cyclical,* i.e. turning a terrible recession into a depression due to lack of budgetary support.

2) *Mboweni has threatened the contractual integrity of the South African government by reneging on a three-year wage deal.* His decision in February to halt payments for civil servant salaries estimated at R161 billion (including R39 billion in 2020 - 2021 that were contractually due) – especially for frontline health workers who risk their lives treating Covid-19 patients – is now in court, with trade unions attempting to prevent this catastrophic breach of trust between organised labour and the country's single largest employer.

3) *Mboweni's IMF, BRICS New Development Bank, World Bank and other foreign borrowings threaten our country's sovereignty.* The roughly R100 billion in foreign-currency financing arranged in mid-2020 was not needed, even his own leading Treasury expert acknowledged in April. The economy's contraction resulted in the first current account surplus in 17 years in the prior quarter and the US$50 billion in foreign reserves were boosted by a rising gold price. And worse, South Africa's foreign debt is already higher than at any other level in the country's history (reaching 53% of GDP in late 2019, before the Covid-19 crisis). There is a genuine fear among experts and activists alike, that the IMF loan will turn over economic policy to a Bretton Woods Institution regime in Washington, DC that is notorious for its anti-African economic impact.

4) *Mboweni's austerity strategies will sabotage the rebuilding of South Africa's economy.* Just as the Covid-19 crisis hit the world hard, in late February, Mboweni chose to cut R3.9 billion in state funding to the healthcare sector. Then, as a *Business Maverick* reporter recently noted, 'Budgets that were slashed in June include, among others, building schools,

support for maths and science initiatives in basic education, provincial road maintenance, allocation of human settlements to the poor, the land reform and rural development programme and allocations towards SA's gender-based violence crisis. Further cuts in similar areas are expected, including in President Cyril Ramaphosa's state-funded initiatives to create jobs'.

5) *Mboweni failed to explore and promote alternative approaches to revenue.* The finance ministries and central banks cooperate to ensure Quantitative Easing provides more fiscal space in the U.S.-UK-EU-Japan, where since 2009 the technique was used frequently to prevent economic calamity. There are many other countries in South Africa's league – Thailand, Korea, Uganda, Nigeria, Malawi, Cuba – which during 2020 turned to stimulative strategies that combine fiscal stimulus and monetary easing.

6) *Mboweni's spending bias – against social programmes – is continuing South Africa's notoriously low level of fiscal redistribution.* As defined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), social spending as a share of GDP has remained in the post-apartheid range of 5–8%, compared to a 22% average of the world's 40 largest economies (only four countries were lower – India, Indonesia, Mexico and China – while France and Finland maintained social spending of more than 30% of GDP). Mboweni has maintained other biases in fiscal policy such as health spending, where the wealthy receive tax deductions for private medical expenses, as well as corporate concessions on municipal services tariffs and electricity (Special Pricing Agreements are especially generous to two giant smelting firms, BHP Billiton and Anglo American, whose per unit cost of power is one tenth the rest of society). The extractive-industry corporates are also lightly taxed – through royalties and income taxes – on their depletion of non-renewable resources, which also exceeds US$20 billion per annum. These are just some of the ways that 'corporate welfare' exceeds the state's social spending.

7) *Mboweni continues to insist that state spending has no meaningful positive 'multiplier' impact on society and economy.* The Treasury position is that, as his representatives said at Nedlac in August 2020, 'Overall, data for SA indicates that fiscal multipliers are zero or negative'. It is this willful blindness to distinguish the huge impact of a small grant to poor people,

whose multiplier effect is very high (their spending is nearly entirely on local products such as basic foodstuffs, utilities and rent), and the multipliers associated with generous subsidisation of corrupt transnational corporations.

8) *Mboweni has made no attempt to prosecute the firms engaged in looting the South African fiscus by over-charging on contracts.* According to former Treasury chief procurement officer Kenneth Brown, this private sector profiteering occurs to the extent of 35–40% on average, yet Mboweni has done nothing to bring this to the society's attention, much less to use his own power to bring this crisis to an end. He has made no meaningful progress in ending the role of corrupt parallel-state agencies from the USA and Europe, such as KPMG, Deloitte, PwC, SAP, etc.

9) *Mboweni's Treasury is state-captured by three brothers whose interests have nothing in common with the majority: Standard & Poors, Fitch and Moody's.* Repeatedly, the state has served the interests of the global creditor tyrants, whose incompetence was proven by their very friendly investment grade ratings for the likes of Lehman Brothers, Bear Stearns, AIG and other 2008–09 world financial crisis catalysts, just before they crashed.

10) *Mboweni has turned a blind eye to Illicit Financial Flows, even though his own colleagues agree it is a pandemic.* Treasury's Financial Intelligence Centre admits, 'South Africa is still losing anything between [US]$10-billion and [US]$25-billion annually in illicit financial flows [IFFs]' – yet failure to prosecute such tax dodging is notorious in South Africa, and likewise, the liberalisation of exchange controls continues. The combination of IFFs and exchange-control liberalisation leaves South Africa very vulnerable to massive outflows of speculative hot-money finance, such as occurred in March, leading to a 38% stock market crash. But in addition, it forces the Reserve Bank to maintain extremely high interest rates, so as to continue attracting international finance. In addition, there are massive outflows of profits and dividends to formerly South African firms that relocated to London, Amsterdam, Melbourne, New York and other global financial centres.

11) *Mboweni has been party to corporate tax cuts that are as generous as*

any. When Donald Trump lowered the corporate tax base rate from 31 to 18% in 2018, he was considered wildly irresponsible. With Mboweni as a central player in South African economic policy making since the early 1990s, the corporate tax rate has fallen from its late-apartheid peak of 52% to today's 28%. South African corporate taxation ranks 172nd lowest out of 213 countries, and fifth lowest in Africa. The expected increase in Gross Fixed Capital Formation (especially private sector investment) never resulted, and instead, corporate profits soared to among the world's highest levels, along with the massive flight of capital abroad. He has made no effort to reverse this, since taking over as Finance Minister in 2018. He has failed to raise taxes on the wealthy in spite of the extreme inequality – usually measured as the world's worst – that Covid-19 has amplified.

12) *Mboweni's hatred of State-Owned Enterprise subsidies is counter-productive.* Like all working-class organisations protecting our members, we want to see state spending directed towards improving the lives of our members and the mass of poor and working people, so we are not opposed to Mboweni's attacks on corruption and incompetence associated with SOEs, especially those state-captured by the 'Zuptas', such as Eskom, Transnet, SAA, Prasa and Denel. But the critical step is class analysis, and in many cases Mboweni's recovery strategy is simply starvation, especially where that affects working-class and poor South Africans. The electricity disconnections, collapse of commuter railways and loss of jobs at dysfunctional parastatals should not result in punishment for workers, as a result of the *managers'* corrupt acts that helped to ruin many of them, especially with the likes of Brian Molefe and Siyabonga Gama still not yet prosecuted. Mboweni's hatred of SOEs and consistent demands to privatise or push them into bankruptcy indicate a Finance Minister operating without the ability or desire to distinguish who caused the problems, and how they can be fixed – with genuine worker participation.

13) *Mboweni's new Zero-Based Budgeting strategy is an even more rapid route to austerity.* Wielded with the same kind of blunt force that was used in the 1980s when the concept was popular in Ronald Reagan's USA government, this is yet another strategy Mboweni has adopted from neoliberals to chop the state, and to reduce the broader, integrated functions of government – creating or delivering public goods we all desperately

need, such as healthcare, water and sanitation and other basic-needs infrastructure – to a banal cost-benefit analysis.

14)   *Mboweni has coddled corrupt lenders, even those so crooked that they are successfully prosecuted by the United States government.* Mboweni has consistently rewarded corrupt banks by authorising repayment of loans known to have facilitated corruption associated with the Zuma years or even with the pre-Zuma ruling party's interest. Most egregiously, he has allowed repayment to the World Bank and other lenders which financed the Medupi and Kusile power plants, even though in 2015 the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act prosecution of Hitachi for bribing the ANC through Chancellor House (so as to be awarded massive contracts at both facilities), led to the Japanese firm paying a US$19 million fine (to Washington, not Pretoria). The bribery was well understood in 2010 when the loan was made, with the Public Prosecutor already the year before (prior to Zuma's ascent to power) identifying Eskom chair and ANC Finance Committee member Valli Moosa – who oversaw the Hitachi tender award – as having an 'improper' conflict of interest. Yet the World Bank's largest loan ever, for US$3.75 billion, was made in 2010 and has been drawn down and partially repaid since, instead of being investigated for corruption and the status of 'Odious Debt', whose repayment rewards ruling-party corruption. The same is true for what in 2018 was reported as a US$5 billion China Development Bank loan, as well as transparently corrupt loans associated with the BRICS New Development Bank, to Eskom and Transnet.

15)   *Mboweni has ignored corrupt bankers who manipulate the South African currency.* In Parliament in July 2019, he patronisingly responded to MPs who questioned why 17 major international banks – clearly guilty of manipulating the currency for their own institutions' profit, were not being prosecuted. He replied that there was no evidence of this manipulation affecting the rand's value. Not only was this incorrect, in the USA several of the banks were already paying more than R1 billion in fines (to the US government, not South Africa's) for Rand manipulation.

16)   *Mboweni has sabotaged the only policy interventions the ANC has proposed that will help the masses.* The need for thorough-going land reform, the urgency of ending the class-apartheid system in healthcare

financing through a National Health Insurance, and the nationalisation of the SA Reserve Bank so it serves society, are all vital to not only the ruling party but the broader mass of poor and working-class people. Mboweni has consistently failed to allocate funding required for these initiatives.

17)   *Mboweni is a privatiser of everything that moves, from road usage to air travel.* In 2019 he used Twitter to attack critics of a corruption-riddled parastatal, Sanral, which by all accounts did not do proper consultations on e-tolling and used an Austrian supplier whose technology and billing system is extremely inappropriate for local conditions. But by insinuating that 'the working class' is entirely dependent on minibus taxis (exempt from e-tolls), Mboweni showed his ignorance about local transport, where many workers must use automobiles, and where the vast distances caused by apartheid's location of working-class townships far from our jobs, requires much more highway transport than people commuting from traditional white areas: 'I don't know why the middle and upper classes in Gauteng want to complicate our lives. The working class do not pay e-tolls! Public transport! Hello'.

18)   *Mboweni has taken upon himself the responsibility for policing neoliberalism – in this case, central bank independence (which diminishes democratic input and increases financial market control of monetary policy) – not only in South Africa, but among neighbouring countries.* This was most outrageously obvious when in August he used Twitter to interfere in the affairs of the Zambian government and openly threaten blackmail: 'Presidents in Africa must stop this nonsense of waking up in the morning and fire (sic) a Central Bank Governor! You cannot do that. This is not some fiefdom of yours! Your personal property?! No! That Governor was a good fella (sic). Why do we do these things as Africans.[?] The President of Zambia must give us the reasons why he dismissed The Governor – or else hell is on its way. I will mobilize!'... 'Looks like I am in trouble about my statement on the dismissal of the Bank of Zambia Governor! I stand by my statement. Central Bank independence is key. Not negotiable. Let all central bankers speak out!' (Fihlani 2020).

19)   *Mboweni's xenophobia and lack of touch with reality were witnessed in April 2020.* That month, in discussing the impact of Covid-19 – which

especially devastated the incomes of precarious migrant workers, all of whom need to send remittances home to their impoverished families across the country and region – Mboweni argued without any proof, 'Today, almost 100% [of restaurant workers] are non-South African. The new economy that we are getting into after the lifting of the lockdown must answer that question' (Vuk'uzenzele 2020). Not long after, legislation was tabled which, probably unconstitutionally, will penalise non-South Africans who are asylum seekers or refugees (i.e. not permanent residents) and prevent them from earning even a survival livelihood in low-income residential areas.

20)   *Mboweni represents South Africa in major multilateral fora, but not to the benefit of the majority, here or across the continent.* One recent example was Mboweni's failure to promote the cancellation of unpayable debt by African countries, by demanding fairer treatment of the continent and poor countries more generally. It is vital for South Africa to return to traditions of liberation, in which we oppose the neoliberal, anti-labour, anti-people, anti-environmental role of both Western and emerging powers – including Mboweni's colleagues at the G20, BRICS and the Bretton Woods Institutions where he sits on important leadership bodies. He has never uttered any statements or been party to any struggles – such as debt cancellation for poor countries – where he sides with the world's masses.

(Source: notes from workshop conducted by one of the authors with leaders from the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, Johannesburg, 27 September 2020.)

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The Socialism of Frantz Fanon:
A Theory for the Rehabilitation of Subjugated People

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Abstract
From Fanon's perspective of deconstructing the logics of expropriation and alienation specific to the colonial system, it is first of all a question of showing that the struggle for independence has not escaped the problematic of the class struggle. Thus, on the strength of this observation, Fanon's socialism mobilizes the socialist project for the total liberation of colonized societies. Suddenly Fanon's thought appears as a complex and powerless arsenal capable of decompartmentalising territories, bodies, minds, concepts and knowledge, and of unlocking the frameworks of Marxist Analysis confined in the prism of bourgeoisie / proletariat domination to open up to a humanism built around the nation, independence and freedom.

Keywords: Colonised people, independent nations, colonised countries, modernity

Introduction
There is, in Frantz Fanon's thought, a specific historicity that characterises the formerly colonised people and which should push them to the invention of a new historical subject capable of carrying, in all its radicality, the work necessary for the survival of the newly independent nations. This is why there is a break, in colonised countries, especially in Africa, from the form of modernity witch the West wanted to impose on the rest of the world.

Euromodernity has turned out to be a system of dispossession that destroys all the creative potentials of the subordinated people. In other words,

this modernity, which found its champions in the Enlightenment movement and which was to be not only the framework of liberation but also of human development, gave birth, in the colonised regions, to a violent and iniquitous system of exploitation and negation of subjected populations. In short, these were all the things that socialism combats in its fundamental principles, whatever the referents or the theoretical obedience. Although in general, during the colonial period, the apathy of Africans against the orderly system of Euromodern administration was seen by the colonists and their specialists as a characteristic trait of the savage, poorly educated and lazy, we can today, with hindsight, see it as, a strategy of resistance, an anti-system attitude specific to Africans.

For Fanon, because of this particular historical weight, radicalism must be the framework from which the subject societies struggle and build their freedom; a creative freedom of a new humanity. He explains this point of view, in a programmatic way, in his speech, presented at the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists of March - April 1959. He said:

> In a colonised country the most elementary, the most brutal, the most undifferentiated is the most fervent and most effective form of defense of national culture.

Thus, throughout the decades of independence that began at the end of the 1950s, the dominant feature of societal dynamics in Africa is the struggle, as Achille Mbembe says, which,

> aims to produce life, to overthrow the hierarchies instituted by those who have become accustomed to winning without being right, 'absolute violence' playing, in this work, a detoxifying and instituting function.

We can, therefore, say that Fanon's position on socialism finds its foundation in the need to fight for the values and cultures specific to the dominated people. Philippe Lucas (1971) speaks of 'betting on the spontaneity of the masses' through a framework that does not necessarily have to follow the contours of socialist systems such as a certain interpretation or 'application' of Marxism [that proponents] wanted to impose in Africa. Amady Aly Dieng (2011: 188), with Fanon, castigates,

a whole host of socialists in Black Africa for disguising the thought of Karl Marx to sing to us about the saving virtues of their African ways of socialism which are in reality the different ways of a colonial capitalism that no longer dares to speak its name.

In this article, I will start from the Fanonian analysis of the colonial system, which he considers as a violent and iniquitous system of expropriation, and negation of the humanity of the colonised people, to show how Fanon's radical position and his socialist perspective find their explanation in his humanism through the project of liberation and rehabilitation of colonised people.

Colonialism as a Violent System of Expropriation, Alienation and Dispossession of Colonised People

Colonisation as a system of domination is undoubtedly one of the projects of subjugation that has most influenced historical experiences and social practices in Africa. Both its breadth and depth were a powerful marker in the history of the Continent. Maurice Kamto (1987: 207) speaks of historical experiences and particular social practices that 'are still developing their effects today'. To this, we should add: its perverse effects. Even if the colonial policy, from its beginnings to the Second World War, developed in a wobbly balance between the theory of assimilation and that of association, between direct administration and a permanent recourse to traditional hierarchies, all under the iron fist of a highly centralised administration, it has always been clear about the status of African populations.

For the colonial policy, the natives should remain administered willy-nilly. It has never been in favour of the advent of African social movements, let alone the awakening of a political consciousness among Africans. It has always stifled all forms of action, whether protest or other forms of political activity that could lead to revolts or questioning the operating system in place, even in the most trivial aspects. In other words, despite the ideology of its promoters who defended a civilising mission, colonialism in fact has revealed itself as a powerful alienating and expropriating system for subjugated societies. It is from this perspective that Thierry Michalon (1984: 136) writes about the colonial heritage:

> This heritage is surely one of the most serious handicaps that the countries of Africa still suffer. Like a bicycle without half its chain, the state cannot turn because it lacks the political half of the belt. Reduced to a simple administration, the state is surprised at its powerlessness, when this is not surprising: men find it difficult to comply with rules they did not help to develop!

Indeed, in addition to the negation of the being of the colonised, in particular the black person (Fanon 2011), the colonial system denies the existence of specifically indigenous political referents of the subject societies. The Negro does not have the same human dignity as the white settler, but local societies also do not enjoy any political consideration. Thus, the defeated traditional chief and his descendants do not enjoy considerable political recognition. They have mere auxiliary roles that reduce them to mere performers of lesser tasks in the overall management of the company.

Faced with the poverty of the political perspective of the colonised people of Africa that he saw, as The Provincial Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA) ambassador, Fanon worries, gets angry, and takes a firm stand against the internal autonomy proposed by General de Gaulle. This is why, after participating in the struggle for the emancipation of black people through the negritude movement, Fanon takes a new path for the liberation of colonised societies. It is thus part of a Third World perspective that allows it, on the theoretical and practical levels, to take charge of the problems linked to the liberation of people, to racial segregation, to colonialism in Africa, Asia and, South America. This new positioning allows it to go beyond the perspective of the black individual (the 'I' of *Black Skin, White Masks*) to be liberated or de-alienated in order to move towards the collective consciousness (the 'We' of the *Damned of the Earth*) that must promote the advent of the political nation, the one and only liberating framework. This is the meaning of his fight on Algerian soil.

In *Sociology of a Revolution,* Fanon gave himself a well-defined political objective: to bring about a new world through [the struggle for] freedom: 'We want to show ... that on Algerian soil a new society was born' (Mbembe in Fanon 2011: 13). Breaking with the movement of negritude, Fanon is in search of an 'authentic community' and combatant, from which will spring, as Achille Mbembé notes,

an unprecedented human subject capable of inhabiting the world and of sharing it so that the possibilities of communication and reciprocity – without which neither the dialectic of recognition nor human language – can be restored (in Fanon 2011:10).

In this new world, the peasantry, as an authentic community and fighting force, is the spearhead capable of destroying the system of domination in place. The revolt thus becomes the creation of a new man, continues Mbembé, 'an almost indefinable subject, always left behind because never finished, like a gap that resists the law, even any limit' (in Fanon 2011:10).

It is this liberation project that allows Fanon to become part of posterity through the creation of this new man who is characterised by creative openness as his life was; he who was born in Martinique and died as an Algerian national hero. Fanon, due to his biography, did not have enough time to dwell on conceptual circumscriptions. Rather, he had strong intuitions that secured his place in posterity in terms of understanding the existing world and exploring the future of colonised societies and colonial heritage. Thus, from Fanon's point of view, one of the most significant aspects of the colonial heritage in Africa is the legacy of a personalised power built around what Yves Bénot (1975: 76) called 'a lower middle class'. This bourgeois woman, made her own the struggle for the independence of the former colonial territories, which, despite her peculiarity, would not escape the problem of class domination. Moreover, it is at this level that Frantz Fanon's analysis takes on its full meaning and vigour through the refusal to reduce the colonial question to the sole dimension of the class struggle such as a certain Marxist vulgate wanted and whose sterile formulation can be found in Lenin's formula: 'imperialism as the supreme stage of capitalism'.

Fanon's Radicalism: A Renewed Bet on the Human

Fanon starts from an observation that founds his radicalism, the Manichean nature of the colonial system, which he describes as follows: The colonial world is a Manichaean world. It is not enough for the colonist to limit physically, that is to say with the help of his police and his gendarmerie, the space of the colonised. As if to illustrate the totalitarian character of colonial exploitation, the colonist makes the colonised a sort of quintessential evil. Colonised society is not only described as a society without values. It is not

enough for the settler to assert that values have deserted, or better never inhabited, the colonised world. The native is declared impermeable to ethics, not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values (Fanon, 2011: 455 - 456). With Fanon there is a form of radicalism necessary to get the colonised people out of the iniquitous system of subjugation and negation in which they are immersed. And for that, all the means are good: 'all the revolts, all the desperate acts, all the attempts aborted or drowned in blood' (Fanon 1961: 142). The power of the outburst of revolt of the colonised is commensurate with 'the aggressiveness which permeated the victorious confrontation of these values with the ways of life or thought of the colonised' (Fanon 2011: 457).

Fanon is part of a form of radicalism that operates within a historical context where insubordination, whatever it may be, becomes a liberating value in that it allows, dialectically through negation, the advent of a new world. For there is a need to supplant the colonial world with a world where the colonised, who discovers the fullness of their long denied humanity, assume themselves as masters of their own destiny through the existence of an independent nation.

With Fanon, the revolution, which reaches beyond socialism in Africa and elsewhere, demands overcoming the opposition/ contradiction between the individual and the common, between the particular and the collective. Because for him, from the point of view of the African, he speaks of the 'African spirit', life and death, the real and the imaginary, the high and the low, the past and the future cease to exist, to be perceived contradictorily. This position allows the revolt to become part of the action by taking charge of a multitude of referents that are contradictory only in appearance. On the contrary, all these references find their ferment and their common basis in the radical nature of the action to be taken to liberate humanity through the struggle of the oppressed people.

Fanon thus justifies his radical perspective by his perception of the colonial system, which he considers to be a framework of total violence where the individual is there only for the need for its perpetuation. In this system, the black person is discredited even in his or her own consciousness, as Fanon (2011: 66) explains in this connection:

> If there is an inferiority complex, it is as a result of a double process:
> - economically first; and
> - by internalisation or, better, epidermisation of this inferiority, then.

Fanon does not analyse, as in Engels, the foundations of violence solely from an economic point of view. It places them in a global and complex framework in which a multitude of factors intertwine without necessarily contradicting each other. Better still, it gives a nodal value to violence in the structuring of dominated societies; it is both 'average and done' (Fanon, 2011: 451−506). For him, the system of violence put in place, which is at the beginning and throughout the colonial practice, must be turned against the latter to overcome it and in the same dynamic bring about a new world. Amadou Aly Dieng (2011: 185) describes this weight of violence in Fanon's analysis, not without criticising it. He notes, as follows:

> Fanon brings very interesting views on the forms that violence takes over the course of history of oppressed countries. During the first phase, violence characterised the colonial period. In the second phase, it is internalised and directed against the colonised themselves in incessant tribal struggles. In the third phase, it is directed against the coloniser.

It is true that Fanon did not take care to go all the way in his analysis of violence to bring out all the consequences in the structuring of colonised societies and in their future. But there is this determination to deconstruct the totalitarian logic of the system, which relies on end-to-end violence. Fanon is not unaware of the question of social relations and its impact on the phenomenon of violence. In all his work, the phenomenon of violence is approached from the many hats Fanon wears: a Martinican, therefore born colonised; a psychiatrist, therefore analyst, phenomenologist, therefore Hegelian dialectician then Marxist and a little Sartrean; an Algerian liberation fighter, therefore Third-Worldist and universalist. All these dimensions of his character meant that Fanon did not have the time for, and also did not want to get bogged down in, theoretical over-determinations that would prevent him from making his pen a weapon against oppression, a tool of liberation, and an instrument in the service of the human cause. Fanon, by setting in motion the phagocyte of revolt and all creative energies, blocked all dark points (alienation, assimilation, the inferiority complex, defeatism, identity withdrawal, racism, reformism) and opened all the prospects for the new man (disalienation, open-mindedness, multiculturalism, Third Worldism, universalism).

For Fanon, everything must be mobilised, including our own being, for the only cause that is worthwhile is that of freedom, as noted by Alice Cherki (2011: 292), who reported this statement by Fanon, made from his hospital bed – in the process of throwing his last pawn in the fight of his life: 'We are nothing on earth if we are not first of all the slaves of a cause, of the cause of the peoples, the cause of justice and of freedom'. From then on with Fanon everything is held together, revolt, rejection, indignation, revolution, liberation, creation; everything refers to freedom. Because man, who has known this world, where people have been oppressed for so long, can only be renewed through freedom.

Socialism as a Means of Struggle for the Values and Cultures Specific to the Dominated People

To understand Fanon's socialist perspective, his work must be read from a perspective that allows for an analysis grid of the 'social question' with theoretical and political tools capable of shedding light on the complex interweaving of multiple social relations between class, gender, background (city centre versus suburb, city versus countryside, workers versus peasants) in a context of colonial domination. Today, with the heavy colonial liabilities, in globalised urban centres as well as in the peripheral suburbs of the former colonies, especially in Africa, social relations of an economic, religious, gender-based and sometimes racial nature (with the regrouping of populations in certain residential neighbourhoods) seem more than ever to fit into this dominant/dominated pattern well circumscribed by Fanon. The characteristics of the situations of domination and the dynamics that are set up give a certain topicality to Fanon, through for example, the process of politicisation of the forms of resistance of subordinate groups (resistance passing through religion, sports, music, popular culture, defence of the land).

Fanon, as an integral thinker in the sense that his writings testify to the desire to decompartmentalise territories, bodies, concepts, and knowledge, allows us to unlock the frameworks of Marxist analysis confined in the prism of bourgeoisie/proletariat schema. There is, thus, the peasantry in the colonies of Africa, which is numerically the most important category and whose combat experience, as was the case in Algeria, can be decisive in the liberation struggle and the constitution of the nation. And beyond the theoretical borders of popularised Marxism, today other lines of demarcation appear that cross urban

areas (city centre/suburbs), bodies (young/old or male/female), territories (cities/campaigns), disciplines (football/wrestling), knowledge (Westernised/ Arabist intellectuals). We can, therefore, speak of new categories with Fanon in the understanding of social reality and unprecedented dynamics, in any case specific to African societies, for political practice on which no dogmatic and rigid analysis of Marxism can shed light.

More than any other revolutionary theory, Fanon's thought is an anti-system surgically directed against the colonial operating system. This, moreover, explains the importance he attaches to the peasantry, as the spearhead of the Algerian revolution, through their numerical importance and their weight in the liberation struggle. We can speak of a new reinterpretation of the eleventh thesis on Feuerbach as Fanon posed it in these terms by postulating a tumble of the 'steps of History': 'It is no longer a question of knowing the world, but to transform it' (2011: 71). According to Fanon, such a situation requires taking charge of a culture, not fixed but relieved of the weight of fixations of identity and oriented towards 'invention in existence' (2011: 250). In other words, as Fanon says in the last lines of *Black Skin, White Masks*: 'it is by going beyond historical, instrumental data, that I introduce the cycle of my freedom' (ibid). The question of freedom is therefore inseparable from the question of social justice and, this, certain social groups (the Algerian peasants in particular) understood well and integrated it in their modes of popular action, through concrete initiatives ranging from: raising awareness for registration on the electoral rolls to lucrative activities organised around urban music; from the struggle through to the defence of human rights, monitoring of the conduct of elections, to villagers who defend their land against multinational corporation and other businessmen.

Through the peasantry, it is in the people that we trust to carry out the revolution and the appropriate reforms for the establishment of the new nation. Fanon (2011: 574) explains and gives the example of Algeria in this regard: 'However, it turns out that the people, when they are invited to lead the country, do not delay but accelerate the movement .… We Algerians, during this war, had the opportunity, the happiness to put our finger on a number of things'. With the revolution, Fanon's goal is no longer just to deal with an insane subject and free him from the bourgeois capitalist system. Now it is a matter of liberating the entire colonised society and building a free nation through the disalienation of the submissive people of all continents. And for this project his only certainty is the path of total revolution, the radical change that will

'break the backs of colonialism'. For Fanon, there is only national liberation which involves total revolution. Because, he maintains:

Colonial domination, as it was total and simplifying, dramatically disrupted the cultural existence of the submissive people. The negation of national reality, the new legal relations introduced by the occupying power, the rejection of the periphery by the colonial society of the natives and their customs, the expropriation, the systematic enslavement of men and women make this cultural obliteration possible (Fanon 2011: 613).

From a materialist perspective, Fanon broadens the question of domination to include relations specific to indigenous societies, giving racial and sexual questions a theoretical dignity alongside that of class struggle. The scope of Fanon's reflection is to have restored, to its proper extent, the political dimension of these acts of domination that run through colonised African societies that are not systematically arranged by colonial logic. Thus, through the formulation of the eleventh Marxian thesis on Feuerbach, from the first lines of *Black Skin, White Masks,* Fanon (2011: 63 - 251) reintegrates the question of the transformation of colonised societies for an authentic liberation of the African who must not come out of the colonial yoke to enter a more underhanded formation, because keeping the inherent flaws of the capitalist system of exploitation without retaining the 'fallout' of a viable formal system. Indeed, the history of social demands, in the former French colonies of black Africa, is incomprehensible if it is not integrated into the general framework of the movements of struggle for political emancipation, even if or when the struggle is not immediately apparent. Because, if the social demands were originally the work of settlers who, although attached to African soil, made no allusion to local autonomy, later, with the arrival of black leaders, they gradually took on a turn of struggle for independence. To understand the importance and role of these movements in the socio-political evolution of Africa, each of these two aspects of the advent of the protest phenomenon should be considered as objectively as possible[1].

However, beyond this double dimension, it is the congenital incapacity of this *bourgeoisie* that attracts Fanon's attention in the liberation struggle. This *bourgeoisie* is characterised by the umbilical link it maintains with the colonial system. It is unable to free itself from the logic of

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[1] On this question, we can cite Girardet, R. 1972. *L'idée coloniale en France.* Paris: Ed. La Table Ronde.

intermediation that made it appear in the colonial context. And in general, the elites from this *bourgeoisie* or the indigenous proletariat remain frozen in the predatory frameworks built by the colonial system to the detriment of a real policy of liberation and national construction. It is 'businessism', through schemes and intrigues, which constitutes its modus operandi and not the entrepreneurial spirit likely to lead a country towards social and economic development. Fanon describes this *bourgeoisie*, which seized power in Africa at the time of independence, as an 'underdeveloped bourgeoisie' essentially oriented towards the economy of intermediaries and not of radical transformation of the economic structure[2]. He sees in this *bourgeoisie* a retrograde and pernicious force in that it constitutes, under the aegis of the imperial powers that provide it with money, arms, technicians, and training, a brake against 'the masses' revolutionary aspirations' (Dieng 2011: 192). For Fanon, it is only a specific social layer, which he qualifies as 'honest intellectuals, without very precise political ideas who instinctively mistrust this race for posts and prebends' (2011). *Les Damnés de la Terre* will be able to carry the decisive combat to the popular masses through a healthy orientation of the nation. Here his approach is close to that of Lenin on the organisation of a revolutionary leadership capable of raising the people, broadening their thinking and organising them (Azar 2014: 84)[3].

Socialism, according to Fanon is therefore not a scientific affair, much less of a political apparatus sclerotic in ideological certainties. Rather, there needs to be an awareness of the need for liberation by a few determined elements that, in doing so, descend on popular ground. Philippe Lucas (1971: 150) circumscribes it as follows:

> It is this real movement grasped by Fanon that socially founds the We-Comrades-of-the-Three-Continents, which designates in the bourgeois castes its immediate enemy and makes the critical unity of Fanon's analysis. The exaltation of the spontaneous means the rehabilitation of

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[2] Without having exact data, we can cite the residential districts of Mamelles and Almadies in Dakar where the presence of large numbers of Westerners and mixed couples is quite visible.

[3] Lenin's text, published in 1917, later published in French in 1925: Lenin, 1925, *Imperialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism*, Paris, Librairie de l'Humanité.

a praxis of struggle against a nationalism without content: that of the traditional nationalist parties, that of the bourgeois castes – even of an opportunist urban proletariat; in doing so, it only represents a moment of Fanon's approach in *The Damned of the Earth.* The final phase, not to say stage, is the movement that allows the intellectual, aware of his historical role, to adhere to the spontaneous revolt of the masses, to achieve self-recognition (by rehabilitating its culture without shutting itself in) and to become a historical subject by bringing about a new humanism around the nation, freedom and independence[4].

Conclusion

In total, it appears in Fanon's work, as Michael Azar (2014: 90) points out, a deep tension between the concepts belonging to the Hegelian-Marxist tradition (alienation, dialectics, fraternity, recognition, the new man, atonement, action, etc.) and notions relating to psychoanalysis (the unconscious, envy, desire, imitation, ambivalence, etc.), all never really well circumscribed. Fanon is a phenomenologist through his strong intuitions and his keen sense of the facts, existentialist through the weight he gives to action, analyst through his profession and his study of the mechanisms of alienation as pathologies of civilisation (Renault: 2012), and dialectical Marxist by the creative role that he confers on the revolution. But above all, a freedom fighter he is, and this is what makes him an integral thinker who will espouse socialism, a socialism that will have as its spear the peasant masses through the revolution. One can challenge this point of view, like Amady Aly Dieng (2011: 195), as weak who protests that 'Fanon cannot quote us a revolution with peasant direction which succeeded in the past or the present'. But once again, as someone very close to Sartre, he inscribes being in the existent accomplished by act, by actions. And Fanon, noting the embryonic and opportunist aspect of the proletariat of the

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[4] On socialism itself, it is more prudent, with Fanon, to speak of a socialist perspective because, as with all the other aspects of his work, his life and his struggle, which are as one, he passes without too much focus on definitional frameworks. The priority for him is action because it is action that determines reality, especially social reality. It is not surprising that he is close to Sartre who, more than a mentor, was an accomplice in this life built around the quest for freedom.

African colonies at the same time, set his sights on the category that is numerically most important to make history and create new humanity. As an integral man, Fanon's political struggle is at the same time his theoretical work and his psychiatric practice. It is about liberating oppressed people, especially Africans. But in his vision, national independence, as it began, was heading straight for a fiasco, emptying itself of its emancipatory and liberating dimensions.

History today seems to prove him right in terms of liberation and the building of viable economic and social structures on a nationwide scale. Indeed, his work, *The Damned of the Earth,* seems to be a premonitory book in the face of the struggles for power, tribalism, and regionalism of all kinds that are in the news in Africa. Fanon is indeed an integral thinker in that his thought and his action are one. If he did not explore all areas that affect man and society, it is because he was in a hurry. He was pressed by the urgency to decolonise minds and facts; he was also pressed by existence, which he knew to be fleeting and brief. He aimed to fully decolonise man through the liberation of oppressed people, a huge and enduring mission. Yet he knew he was dying; he lived for only 36 years. A short life, it could be argued, but a full life. He wrote *Black Skin, White Masks*, at only 25 and his powerful plea for humanity, *The Damned of the Earth*, at 35, an age when the individual is still usually only looking out for himself. Young, he was and has remained, but tall and visionary, he will continue to be by the force of his arguments and his intuitions. Revolutionary, he remains through his testament that constitutes this powerful work which allows today, and certainly tomorrow, to invigorate the revolutionary potential of the popular dynamics of certain social categories, until then left stranded by the locomotive of globalisation: the youth and African women who die by the thousands in the oceans and deserts of the world, the peasant women who continue to collapse under the drudgery of the harsh countryside, the African peasants who are deprived of their land, simply living the fate of the 'damned of the Earth'.

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Fanon's 'The Negro and Hegel' or How to Appropriate the 'Miraculous Weapons' Found in the Oppressor

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Abstract

Hegel is the thinker who has given one of the most decisive philosophical guarantees to Western domination. Yet, Fanon, known to be one of the greatest theorists and activists for the independence of colonised people, found the conceptual tools which enabled him to develop his theory of liberation of people enslaved by and to the West. By relying critically on the Hegelian analysis of domination and servitude popularised by Kojève under the name of master-slave dialectics, Fanon produced a theory of liberation adapted to the system of colonial dependence and, therefore, different in its prerequisites to that of Hegel. While the latter makes labour the main source of the emancipation of slaves, Fanon presented mental decolonisation of the colonised and the violent overthrow of the colonial and neocolonial system as prerequisites to the full liberation of people under Western domination and, in particular, Africans.

Keywords: Alienation, self-consciousness, decolonisation, domination, liberation, labour, servitude

Introduction

Hegel (1939) is the thinker who has given one of the most decisive philosophical guarantees to Western domination. Yet, Fanon, known to be one of the greatest theorists and activists for the independence of colonised people, found the conceptual tools which enabled him to develop his theory of liberation of peoples enslaved by and to the West. By relying critically on the

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Hegel is generally perceived by certain intellectual circles in societies that have been under colonial and neocolonial domination as the Western thinker who gave one of the most decisive ideological guarantees for Western domination; the one in whom the history and philosophy of all mankind have found themselves confused and reduced to those of Europe alone[1]. Therefore, it would not have been incoherent to expect from the thinkers and theorists of the liberation of people enslaved by and to the West, a rejection of this Eurocentric philosopher. When one is a victim of the horrors of imperialism and of the systematic dehumanisation that characterises it, it is only normal that one rejects the system of thought that endorses it or serves as its theoretical justification. Yet, liberation theorists and activists fighting for liberation from colonial dependence approached the official philosopher of Western imperialism, namely Hegel, differently.

To propose a possible path to liberation, Frantz Fanon, the least complacent towards the theories of imperialist domination, clearly relied on philosophical concepts forged by Hegel. Here, I aim to show that Fanon's theory of liberation springs from what I call a subordinate appropriation – *appropriation subalterne* – of Hegel's analysis on domination and servitude contained in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* that Kojève popularised as the name of the dialectic of master and slave.

It was on the basis of these Hegelian analyses that Fanon produced an original theory of liberation which continues to challenge us today as we are still not liberated from the Western imperialist system of domination. Contain-

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[1] In his *Lessons on the Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Gibelin, Paris, 1965 and his *Lessons on the History of Philosophy*, translated by P. Garniron, Paris, Vrin, 1993, Hegel retraces a universal history and a history of philosophy which correspond simultaneously and which are both essentially dominated by the Western civilisation within which they culminate.

ing both the poison of Western imperialist domination and its antidote, Hegel's philosophical system lent itself perfectly to such revolutionary appropriation. Fanon, in line with the inferiorised or the colonised who 'brings into play all his resources, all his acquisitions, old and new, his and those of the occupier' (2001: 54) with a view to his total liberation, did not hesitate to extract from the enemy Hegel one of his most revolutionary philosophical ideas and turn it against the Western imperialist system of domination.

Domination and Servitude in Hegel

It was in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, that Hegel set forth one of his philosophical theories which had the most far-reaching influence. This theory refers to the figure of consciousness corresponding to the phenomena of domination and servitude. The Hegelian Phenomenology is understood perhaps to be defined as the science of experiences or of the experience of consciousness. It is therefore the path taken by consciousness to gain access to truth, to science[2].

In its journey to gain access to truth or absolute knowledge, the spirit goes through three great moments. The first great moment (sub-divided into three sub-parts – sensitive certainty, perception and understanding) is that of the primacy of the object over the subject; the second moment, manifesting itself in the form of desire, domination and servitude and pure thought is that of the primacy of the subject over the object; and finally, the third moment or reason subdivided into subjective reason, objective reason and religion is that of equalisation or coincidence between subject and object.

Fanon was inspired by the second sub-moment of the second part of the work, one that Kojève advertised as the dialectical expression of master and slave. What is it all about? After the impasse of desire where no one was satisfied with being recognised simply on the basis of their sex, that is to say strictly as male or female, there followed the aspiration to be recognised abstractly or metaphysically as true consciousness of oneself, that is to say as a human being whose dignity is above any consideration of a physical or carnal order.

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[2] This approach of Hegel makes his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by Jean Hyppolite, Paris, Aubier, 1941 a propaedeutic or an introduction to science, that is to say in its philosophical system to its *Science of Logic*, trad. Bernard Bourgeois, Paris, Vrin, 2015.

But for Hegel, this desire for abstract or metaphysical recognition as self-consciousness finds satisfaction only in the individual who has put his or her life and that of their counterpart at stake, posing to them a threat of death, physical existence and that of others. This is what he writes about (1939: 159 - 160):

> The individual who has not put his life on the line may well be recognised as a person; but he did not attain the truth of this recognition as recognition of an independent self-awareness. Likewise, each individual must strive for the death of the other when he risks his own life; because the other is not worth more to him than himself ....

By bringing into play its own life and that of the other, self-consciousness proves that it is beyond all naturalness, all exclusive concern for biological preservation, all subservience to the flesh and the body. But if the relationship of combat, of struggle to the death for recognition is carried to the end, the result is not the recognition to which the two opposing consciousnesses aspired but their death. This definitively rules out any possibility of recognition because only a living being can be recognised as having self-consciousness. For there to be recognition, it is necessary that the fight does not go to the end, that is to say that one of the protagonists says to himself at a time that even a servile life is preferable to death and gives up the fight. This is how the relationship of mastery and slave is established; the master being the one who was not afraid of dying in combat, who assumed the risk on his life and that of his protagonist until the end; the slave, on the other hand, being the one who was afraid of dying, the one who did not go through with the risk, the one who begged the master to save his life in exchange for his service. Regarding this way in which the relationship of mastery and slavery came into being, Hegel writes (1939: 161):

> By this experience are [is] posed on the one hand a pure consciousness of self (that of the master, who has been the furthest, closest to death) and, on the other hand, a consciousness which is not purely for – so, but which is for another consciousness, that is to say a consciousness in the element of being or in the form of thingity (Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*).

At the end of the fight, the one who braved death, i.e. the master, is recognized as possessing pure self-consciousness. The slave, who preferred life to death is not a consciousness of oneself strictly speaking but a consciousness for another. But the slave is consciousness for another only in a purely external way. Through his experience of the fear of death, the slave discovers himself, in his interiority, as authentic self-consciousness. The experience of the fear of death is what Hegel says will confer on the vanquished, on the slave, supe-riority over the master. In reality, the fear of death is the result of extreme courage: that of not dodging but of fixing and facing this terrible reality which ends up causing everything that is stable in us to waver.

This exceptional experience of the vanquished in the face of death and which leads him to gain genuine self-awareness is linked to the fact that she has:

> …. Precisely felt the anguish not about this or that thing, not during this or that moment, but she felt the anguish about the entirety of her essence because she felt the fear of death, the absolute master. In this anguish, she was dissolved intimately, trembled in the depths of herself, and all that was fixed wavered within her. But such a movement, pure and universal, such an absolute fluidification of all subsistence, this is the simple essence of self-consciousness, the absolute negativity, the pure being-for-itself, which is therefore in this consciousness. This moment of pure being-for-itself is also for her, because, in the master, this moment is his object (Hegel 1939: 164).

This terrible face to face between the vanquished, that is to say the slave and death marks a decisive turning point in the dialectic of master and slave. Contrary to what one might think, the slave who was afraid of death and who was not as far in staking his life as the master, in reality had a deeper experience than the master. If the slave was afraid of death, it was because he did not avoid it; he faced it. And through this experience, his whole being vacillated, bringing him to an inner awareness of himself. Authentically therefore, being for oneself is not the master but the slave. The other factor that ensures the slave superiority over the one who apparently dominates him and that therefore gives him a decisive advantage in the process of self-consciousness, is that he works, he transforms the world, he imprints on it the mark of his mind by giving it a human and technical form; while the master, on the other hand, only enjoys,

consumes and destroys the products of his laborious activity. The master and the slave have different relationships with nature, with the world. For the master, negativity consists of enjoying and therefore immediately suppressing the object about which he knows nothing, from the process of transformation; whereas in the working slave it always takes the form of a deferred negation. The negative character of *jouissance* (contentment) differs from that of work insofar as the latter,

> … on the contrary [of *jouissance*], is restrained desire, delayed disappearance: work forms. The negative relation to the object becomes the form of this very object, it becomes something permanent, since precisely, with regard to the worker, the object has an independence (Hegel 1939: 165).

In work, negation does not consist of immediately suppressing and making the object disappear, but in transforming it. It is through this form of negation – fundamentally different from that of *jouissance* – that the human world was born, which is according to Hegel a technical world.

Having transformed the world which now bears the mark of his mind, the slave cannot be presented as totally alien to the products of his labour. Strictly, the alienation that we tend to attach to him is only relative because he recognises himself in his products, in his creations. In this respect, his situation may seem fundamentally more enviable than that of his master. The latter, having its content only in the slave, will neither find itself nor recognise itself in the world which now bears the imprint of that which it had subjected to its domination. In fact, a stranger to the world, the master now has only two possible outcomes: recognise that he is dependent on his slave and draw the consequence of accepting the role reversal that is, placing him under the latter's tutelage; or not accept to recognise this real dependence by renouncing to enjoy anything in the world and to commit suicide. Placed in this untenable situation, the master is obliged either to carry the sacrifice to the limit and kill himself or continue to live a life in slavery because he is dependent on the slave. The Hegelian dialectic of master and slave therefore does indeed lead to an inversion of roles and positions. The lesson to be drawn from the causes of this reversal is that the aristocratic but idle master does not progress while the slave evolves by working. Unable to progress, 'idle mastery' ends up being 'a dead end' while 'laborious servitude' asserts itself as 'the only source of progress'

(Kojève 1939: 113).

This is how the phenomenological moment of domination and servitude in Hegel ends, the end of which coincides with the disappearance of the figures of master and slave. With the fainting or disappearance of these figures, only the inner life, only thought, remains. This Hegelian dialectic, the outcome of which was, as we have seen, the disappearance of the figures of domination (master) and servitude (slave), had a flourishing posterity because it was regularly mobilised in the service of the causes of the emancipation of humans. Moreover, it is on this dialectic that a thinker and activist for the emancipation of people under colonial and neocolonial Western domination, such as Fanon in his theory of liberation, relied.

Fanon's Relationship to Hegel or the Art of Using the Enemy's Weapons to Break Free

Fanon's relationship to Hegel is an ambivalent relationship, made both of rupture and of appropriation, as attested to by his critique of Western colonial domination, which draws from the source of the Hegelian dialectic of master and slave. Having come into contact with Hegel through the mediation of Kojève's reading-interpretation, Fanon found in the Hegelian dialectic of master and slave an adequate conceptual framework for not only analysing the relations of domination in the colonial system, but also proposing a possible way of liberation.

There is still an important point of clarification at this level: unlike Hegel who inserted it into the global course of consciousness where it corresponds to a precise moment, Kojève, for his part, disinserted the dialectic of the master and the slave of the phenomenological process by making it a moment independent of the rest of the Hegelian narrative. Kojève's way of proceeding still has an advantage even if it also departs from Hegel's authentic approach in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: by empowering it from the other moments of the course of consciousness, Kojève has conferred on the dialectic of master and slave the most adequate form possible for its mobilisation in the service of theories of emancipation and liberation. This is exactly the reason for which it was used by Fanon.

Given its power of 'formalisation' of the relations of domination which occur between humans, as a conceptual framework, Hegel's dialectic of master and slave compelled Fanon to articulate a theory of liberation to be opposed to

Western imperialism. The Hegelian abstraction of the figures of the master and the slave was therefore not an obstacle for him but rather an opportunity to think about the relations of domination and servitude in a colonial context fundamentally different to firstly, feudal Europe and then Hegel's revolutionary Europe[3]. Fanon's relation to Hegel consists, on the part of the West Indian revolutionary, of applying an abstract general scheme of intersubjectivity – the Hegelian scheme in this case – to a particular colonial situation where the relation between master and slave is translated into the relationship between 'White and Black'.

Taking up again, in the chapter 'The Negro and Hegel' in *Black Skin, White Masks*, the Hegelian analysis of the relations of domination and servitude, Fanon insists on the unprecedented way with which they are experienced in colonial societies. Within these, the dehumanisation and alienation of the colonised are beyond measure. They are total and systematic. Moreover, their magnitude is such that it introduces a real difference between the situation of the Hegelian slave and that of the colonised black Fanonian. For this reason, refraining from completely confusing them in the same situation, Fanon writes ([1952] 1971: 217): 'work the source of his liberation ...'. In Hegel, the slave turns away from the master and turns towards the object. Here the slave turns to the master and abandons the object. If dehumanisation is something common to both the Hegelian slave and the Fanonian colonised subject, it must be recognised that the prospect of liberation, that is to say of a reconquest of their humanity does not appear the same to both. The alienation of the Hegelian slave, we had seen, was only relative inasmuch as his reconquest of himself as self-consciousness was promised to him anyway through his work. On the other hand, such a prospect is not open to the colonised 'negro' of Fanon. A victim of systematic dehumanisation and concretely reduced to non-human status, he can neither hope nor consider freeing himself through work. Access to self-consciousness through work is

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[3] In her book *Hegel, Haiti and Universal history*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009, Susan Buck-Morss defends the idea that it was the Saint Domingue Slave Revolution of 1791 that inspired Hegel's analysis of the phenomena of domination and bondage. This idea seems impossible because it is rather the history of feudal Europe and the French Revolution that seems to form the background of Hegelian analyses of the relationship between domination and servitude.

therefore not valid for all the oppressed. It is only for the Hegelian slave, and not for the colonised Fanonian black person, that work plays a decisive role in the process of awakening self-consciousness. The situation of systematic dehumanisation in which the colonised black person lives, in any case closes off any possibility of awakening self-awareness.

In a colonial context, it is not work that leads to the liberation of the oppressed but rather the violent overthrow of the system of domination in place. In the colonies, Fanon writes 'the Negro is not a human' ([1952] 1971: 179). What Hegel therefore considers as 'surrender to the object' on the part of the working slave is nothing more than pathological desubjectification projected onto the colonised by colonial society. For Fanon, a free subjective experience is not possible in all situations. When Hegel affirms the reality of such an experience by writing 'to embed this freedom in the content, to let this content move according to its own nature (...) and to contemplate this movement' (1939: 36), he seems to just ignore or omit what makes this possible only if the agent of this movement is himself unconstrained. In reality, there is a great contrast between the formal Hegelian context of the emergence of self-awareness and that of societies under Western colonial rule. In the context of West Indian colonialism, for example, the subject – unlike the Hegelian slave – is systematically alienated: language, culture, economy, politics, etc. He cannot therefore, for this reason, recognise the objective world as the product of his own labour. In a colonial context, the reversal of roles between the dominant and the dominated cannot be achieved through work as was the case in the Hegelian dialectic of master and slave. If work had enabled the Hegelian slave to free himself from the domination of his master, it must be recognised that he is not in a position to play such an emancipatory role among colonised blacks. In the latter, the breadth and depth of alienation is such that it is only through a revolution resulting from total disalienation that it is possible to break free. *Black Skin, White Masks* reveals, through the critique of ideology, the extent of this alienation by analysing the blockages, both psychological and material, that a dominant colonial society projects on its subjects.

If, for Hegel, the relation to the other can be either a relation of domination and servitude or a relation of equal and reciprocal recognition, for Fanon such an alternative does not exist in colonial societies. In a colonial context, the relationship to others is exclusively a relationship of domination and servitude. For the colonised black person says Fanon ([1952] 1971: 112),

'the White is not only the Other but the master'. There is nothing abstract about the relationship of domination and servitude in colonial societies. It is not only massive but it is also experienced concretely and daily by billions of natives as Sartre already indicated in his preface to the *Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon 1961, 1991: 17). Fanon could not therefore, like Sartre interpreting Hegel in *Being and Nothingness*, adhere to the idea that the relation to the other is fundamentally a relation of servitude (Sartre 1996: 307). It matters little whether Sartre interprets Hegel correctly or not on this particular point: such an idea has the particularity of presenting a phenomenon like slavery not as 'a historical result capable of being 'overcome' but as 'a fundamental condition of human existence' (Sartre 1996: 412). To this dehistoricising approach of Sartre, which he rightly or wrongly imputes to Hegel, Fanon opposes a rehistoricising approach of the dialectic of the master and the slave which in no way consists of reproducing Hegel who projected the entire responsibility of his situation on the slave but to present this dialectic differently by adapting it to the system of domination at work in the colonies. If the dialectic of master and slave has been the subject of variations between Hegel and Fanon, its end is however the same with both thinkers: it is recognition. It is useful to remember that for Fanon ([1961] 1991: 66), it is the negrophobe who makes the 'negro'; it is 'the colonist who made and continues to make the colonised.' It is therefore the negrophobe and the colonist who deprive the black person and the colonised person of recognition. By fixing the negro in his 'race' while 'the fate of man is not to be fixed but to be let go' (Fanon [1952] 1971: 228) colonial society condemns him to be not for himself but for the white person. The white person's 'other absolute' presented as an absolute standard and reference, the black person is not only deprived of recognition but is also judged as naturally incapable of fighting for it. The Hegelian slave, even when he was not yet recognised, was nonetheless engaged in a process of recognition. The Hegelian slave's engagement in a process of recognition contrasts with the situation of the colonised Fanonian black person, totally excluded from the field of white subjectivity-otherness. When Fanon writes: 'We hope we have shown that the master here differs essentially from that described by Hegel. With Hegel, there is reciprocity, here the master makes fun of the slave's 'conscience'', he does nothing other than highlight the fact that, structurally, the colonial system excludes the colonised black [person] from the field of mutual and reciprocal recognition of self-consciousness (Fanon [1952] 1971: 179, note 9).

Reserved exclusively for white people, the reality of recognition as self-consciousness in the colonies departs from the universal vocation conferred on it by Hegel. In a passage from *Black Skin, White Masks* cited above, Fanon expresses himself on the corollary induced by a situation where recognition is not granted to all but only to white people. If 'in Hegel, the slave turns away from the master and turns to the object', in a colonial context it is rather the reverse which occurs because 'the slave turns to the master and abandons the object' ([1952] 1971: 217). What explains this different attitude of the 'negro' is that he 'wants to be like the white master' ([1952] 1971: 217). Detecting among the colonised a very strong desire to identify with white people and aware that this desire for assimilation is the main obstacle to any serious project of liberation struggle, Fanon draws the consequence by working to deconstruct the alienated perception that the colonised have of themselves. The latter, incapable of judging for themselves because mentally enslaved to the idea that the colonist has on them and on himself, deprived of his own and autonomous point of view because having adopted that which the colonist makes for himself of them and of himself, can only undertake a struggle to reconquer their denied humanity if they are completely free from the prejudices which have long dominated them. As long as the colonised (dominated) identifies with the colonist (dominator) and feels love for him, he will not perceive him as an enemy and therefore will do nothing to break the colonial and neocolonial system that keeps him under domination. While it is obvious that there is a need for a violent liberation struggle in Fanon, it cannot but be preceded or carried out at the same time as a mental decolonisation of the colonised. It is only after this mental decolonisation followed by the necessary violent struggle founded in Hegel as the relations of domination, which will lead, in Fanon's view, to the total liberation of the oppressed, *the damned of the earth*.

As a Conclusion

Fanon's work, which we can situate from a 'decolonisation of knowledge' perspective preceding and leading to the true emancipation of people under Western imperialist domination, has borrowed some of its theoretical weapons from European philosophers who nevertheless strived to theoretically justify the hegemony of their continent over other parts of the world and particularly over Africa. Such an approach, clearly attested to in his report to Hegel, consisted of his part in mobilising the dialectic of master and slave in the

service of the struggle against Western colonialism. But this critical appropriation of Hegelian philosophical concepts was not an abstract nor an out-of-context appropriation. By appropriating them, Fanon transformed them somewhat by articulating them in the colonial context, the mechanisms of which had to be understood and unravelled in order to lead to an emancipatory revolution of the colonised people. If Fanon relied on concepts from Hegel, he refrained from reproducing the identical Hegelian diagramthat led to the disappearance of the figures of domination (master) and servitude (slave).

In Hegel, the liberation of the enslaved individual necessarily requires work, while in Fanon it first requires a mental decolonisation by the colonised and a violent overthrow of the colonial system of European domination. The Fanonian theory of liberation therefore boils down to the mental revolution of the alienated colonised and the violent and revolutionary overthrow of the system of oppression put in place by colonialism. But what has been the political impact, especially in Africa, of this Fanonian theory of liberation? A simple observation of the current situation in Africa allows us to say that this African continent has still not yet freed itself from Western imperialist domination. Perhaps the cause of such prolonged dependence on Africa is to be found in the recurrent attitude of its leaders to always postpone radical and perhaps painful choices capable of freeing them/us from Western imperialist domination. Analysing the notion of crisis and extending it to the political field in an interview with Hourya Bentouhami in 'Fanon, critique of 'methodological fetishism', Lewis Gordon states (2014: 50):

> Likewise, when we talk about ... 'political crises', it points to the fact that many of us try to escape these vital decisions. There then occurs a futile effort to postpone the timing of the decision, which maintains the state of crisis. Taking responsibility, making a decision, is a way out of this critical state.

What can we take away from these words of Lewis Gordon if we interpret them in the light of Africa's prolonged dependence? Basically, the idea that the indecision of African leaders would be the main obstacle to the African revolution and therefore to the independence of the continent. Hence the urgency to return to Fanon and his revolutionary project to complete the process of total decolonisation of Africa. As this does not accommodate the slightest indecision, you must immediately resolve to:

• Continue the Fanonian work of building a decolonised subject who is truly aware of him/ herself and of the issues of the moment;

• Rebuild, on revolutionary bases, a strong Africa capable of defending its children on the continent and in the diaspora; and

• Be ready to defend and protect at all times the revolution that will bring this project against the inevitable assaults of the current system of domination and exploitation.

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Black Bodies on South African Beaches:
Lus en smaak jou lekkerding[1]

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Abstract
This article examines the outbursts of Penny Sparrow and Vanessa Hartley on social media, both of whom directed theirs at the Black beachgoers of South Africa in late December 2015 and the early days of January 2016. The article recognises the events of #KingGeorgeMustFall at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and later #RhodesMustFall, which began in March 2015 as one of the

[1] *Lus* en *smaak, jou lekkerding*, as per the subtitle of this paper, contain four distinct words that are not of the English language, and have their particular meaning outside of its culture, expression and discourse of desire; they are expressions in *Kaaps*, a vernacular that developed during the period of the enslavement of people forcibly brought to the Cape by the Dutch from Java and Malaysia in the 1600s and the Xhosa from the Eastern Cape, and is still spoken today by people from this previously enslaved community. Both *lus* and *smaak*, as expressions of desire are unpacked in the second part of this paper. For the present, it is important to note since the article is written in English – one of the two colonial languages in South Africa – that *lus* when translated in English as *wish* especially with regards to one's appetite for food (wishing for a piece of freshly fried snoek…) and yet not limited to it can never find full expression in the English language. Likewise, *smaak* is used to refer to *the desire* for another . . . of the sexual and libidinal kind. *Jou*, addresses the person, as in 'you' and 'your' as one would direct oneself to another in the English language. *Lekkerding* does not exist in the old Dutch dictionary and was retained by the previously enslaved community to refer to a person who one is sexually attracted to and who one finds sexually arousing. One could translate it in more colloquial terms in English, if one must, as 'you sexything'.

backdrops of this discussion on physical space as politicised space and assert here the crucial components of flora and fauna such as the sea, sand, and the beach within a larger discussion on decolonisation. Discussions on decolonisation in South Africa have to include a critique of beaches as sites of enjoyment, which considering its colonial and apartheid history has since South Africa's transition towards a democracy[2] brought about an annual outpour of racist outbursts on social media, more particularly in the past decade, that foregrounded its racism by attacking Black bodies. In unpacking the content of Sparrow's first posting, mainly, and her subsequent published apologies during interviews with journalists, the article moves towards a discussion of the Hegelian master and slave dialectic with a focus on desire, enjoyment and pleasure. It follows on with Lacanian *jouissance*, which is merged through the use of a South African language of desire drawn from the

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[2] I take exception to the notion that one person, one vote, which took place on the 27th of April 1994, after 342 years of settler colonialism, constitutes a democracy. *Demos* – the people, and *kratia* – power, rule, as such, *the rule of the people*, did not happen, and is still not in operation in South Africa. Likewise, I have similarly spoken against the concept of 'freedom's children', that is, the common expression that April 27th, 1994 heralded in the era of freedom and children born then, and shortly after, were born into freedom. Various scholars refer to the period immediately after April 27th, 1994 as the period of transition; others assert that one vote offers democracy its definition. Not only does South Africa's Constitution not hold its usurpers and colonisers accountable for four centuries of plundering and unlawful extraction of minerals to accumulate wealth, but the land also has not been given back to the Indigenous people and those colonised in the process through different forms of enslavement. Currently, the material conditions under which the coloniser and the colonised live remain unequal, with the former constituting ten percent of the population and still maintaining eighty-nine percent of the country's wealth. Equality under the law suggests personhood is granted and equality extended across the designated region because those to whom he, she or they have been made equal to, in other words, the backdrop of the White experience against which equality has been granted, extended and offered, suggests equality of living conditions. This is the furthest from the truth in South Africa. Settlers draw from their Whiteness as property, forging a disproportionate setting for the colonised to live as equal under the law.

Kaaps vernacular (see footnote 1), with a Fanonian, Derridean and Bikoesque lens in addressing Black bodies on South African beaches as subjects who are agents and carriers of pleasure, surplus pleasure and orgasmic pleasure.

Penny Sparrow
These monkeys that are allowed to be released on New years Eve And new years day on to public beaches towns etc obviously have no education what so ever so to allow them loose is inviting huge dirt and troubles and discomfort to others. I'm sorry to say I was amongst the revellers and all I saw were black on black skins what a shame. I do know some wonderful thoughtful black people. This lot of monkeys just don't want to even try. But think they can voice opinions about statute and get their way dear oh dear . from now I. Shall address the blacks of south Africa as monkeys as I see the cute little wild monkeys do the same pick drop and litter.

Sat at 1:30 PM · Like · 👍 15

Vanessa Hartley
They like stupid animals. We should tie them to a rope. To many Africans flocking to Hout Bay. Draw up a petition. Soon there will be nothing left of Hout Bay.

Introduction

This article forms part of a collection of essays from my forthcoming book, *Black Consciousness and the Politics of the Flesh*, where a more elaborate account of some of the contents discussed here can be found. It examines the outbursts of Penny Sparrow and Vanessa Hartley, on social media, both of whom directed theirs at the Black beachgoers of South Africa in late December 2015 and the early days of January 2016. Sparrow commented on Black people on the beaches of Durban and Hartley regarding Black people on beaches in the Hout Bay area, a seaside town on the Atlantic seaboard of the larger Cape Town area. Due to the limitations of papers of this kind, Vanessa Hartley's

social media postings and subsequent action is not offered here for critique but have been drawn into the discussion to show the liberty with which White women have exercised their 'freedom of speech' when it comes to Black bodies. This article recognises the events of #KingGeorgeMustFall at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and #RhodesMustFall, which began in December 2014 and March 2015, respectively, as two of the backdrops of this discussion on physical space as politicised space and assert here the crucial components of fauna and flora such as the sea, sand, and the beach within a more extensive discussion on decolonisation.

The University of Cape Town (UCT) student, Maxwele Chumani, took it upon himself to bring human faeces from Khayelitsha, which he threw on the Cecil John Rhodes statue. The statue stood as a reminder of Rhodes' actions as a colonial, displayed with reverence at higher learning institutions and constructed by slave labourers drawn from the Cape, which students did not want to see. Discussions on decolonisation in South Africa have to include a critique of beaches as sites of enjoyment, which considering its colonial and apartheid history has since South Africa's transition towards a democracy brought about an annual outpour of racist outbursts on social media, more particularly in the past decade, which focused on attacking Black bodies. In unpacking the content of Sparrow's first posting and her subsequent published apologies during interviews with journalists, the article moves towards a discussion of the Hegelian master and slave dialectic with a focus on desire, enjoyment and pleasure. It follows on with Lacanian *jouissance,* which is merged through the use of a South African language of desire drawn from the *Kaaps* vernacular, with a Fanonian, Bikoesque and Derridean lens in addressing Black bodies on South African beaches that the reader is acquainted with the *Kaaps* discourse, as utilised herein.

The White Woman Subject Declares her Written Text as Reason

The deconstruction of the White woman subject who offers her speech as text, as the location of reason, must take place most methodically. What makes Sparrow a White subject is her relationship to the system of White domination as agent, beneficiary and reproducer of White domination: upon being racialised within the family context of her birth and socialisation that set the material conditions of her existence, she enacts, maintains, and reproduces the

system of White domination through her agency – physical, bodily, fleshed ability to act, intervene, interject, through speech, writing, bodily presence, and convey thoughts and ideas that she enacts. Whilst a grotesque outburst, Sparrow, the author of the first inscription (hereafter referred to as Sparrow 'Post One') and Hartley, the author of the second posting noted above, declare their public writing as a necessity by revealing the anatomy of their thoughts. In this article I focus primarily on Sparrow's posting: it is one of discontent – a disgruntled, displeasure – that starts with the depiction of Black people as monkeys then unfolds as a discourse of disgust by situating the presence of '... dirt and trouble and discomfort...' Sparrow's White subject identity, much like Hartley's, is affirmed by the photographic display of an image of herself beside her name as per the protocol of Facebook and privileges her discontent to her White readers; it also acts as an accomplice to her outburst as a performance of reason besides her reasonable White face, which seals the assertion. For one, such reason appears, as it does above, forcefully, piercingly because one can see who exactly the disgruntled White subject is. One cannot by the content of the White subject's text above, riddled with grammatical and syntax errors assume that it is not worthy of the attention of decolonial scholars and as such irrelevant for any form of philosophical inquiry because it does not resemble the inscriptions we have been taught to value as scholarly. I undertake a revelation of Sparrow's careful wording with precision – grammatical errors included – not only because it made the headlines and sparked country-wide debate but due to its content. Sparrow's 'Post One', displayed above, went viral and received more than 200 000 citations within 24 hours after it was posted.

In March 2020 I presented some of the work noted in this article at the African Phenomenology conference held in Chintsa, some 35 kilometres outside of East London on the east coast of South Africa. One of two of the White women who were asked to read and comment on my article (who incidentally holds a senior position in a philosophy department at a former Whites-only university in South Africa), noted that it was difficult for her to read it, and that she was bothered that I had cast all White women as 'Penny Sparrows'. In questioning the organisers of the conference about why they sent my article to the abovementioned White woman, I was told of her benevolence and how, of late, she has started to do work on race. The alleged work for which they praised her, which marked her as a worthwhile reader of the kind of work that I produce, I read as textual work – the kind where the white woman scholar applies herself to the text and wilfully removes herself from any form of

responsibility for racism, especially under the watchful eye of critical race scholars. White women did not organise mass protests to take a stand against Penny Sparrow's racism. Instead, Sparrow was ridiculed for her lower-middle class sensibility and mocked for not being sophisticated enough to hide her racism.

Sparrow's 'Post One' has to be understood word for word – as it offers insight into the anatomy of her thought process, her consciousness of self and consciousness of the other – Black people – as is revealed in her vocabulary of choice. The approach I employ here as a philosopher who merges Black Consciousness, Derridean deconstruction and psychoanalysis, is to address the relationship between text and meaning, between consciousness and politics, between the scene of the crime – the sea, as both the site of usurpation and uninvited docking of carrier ships performing their enslavement and transport of the very Black bodies now reviled – and the shores, the beach, the space between the sea and the land, between the waves that allow frolicking permitted by the law, and the sand that allows a site for gathering, a space to enact leisure with friends and family, where the labourer, the enslaved, the colonised, of interlocking identities, are transformed from worker to sunbather. Biko's Black Consciousness focused on the mind, as did his predecessors, Sobukwe and Lembede. 'Man is body, mind and spirit with needs, desires, aspirations in all three elements of his nature' (Lembede 2015: 129). The mind is part of the body; the mind is the seat of consciousness, and the body the stage upon which consciousness exerts itself.

The attempt undertaken here is to reveal the salient features of Sparrow's text; a text that sought to inflict cruelty, tried but failed to curb the enjoyment of Black people on South African beaches, which up until 1989 only the coloniser had been privileged to enjoy. I now revisit the opening sentence of Penny Sparrow's 'Post One'.

These ...

A declaration, a dissociation from the self. The depiction of the 'the other' . . . a thing, a nameless item that does not deserve a name. *These* – the word – is usually accompanied by 'them' and 'they'... the words depicting distance from the speaker. The subject who speaks, distances, scoffs, calls people *these*. We see the full sentence, the criminal sentence, the line of punishment, as the speaker utters *these* at the start of her sentence... at the start of the writing from

left to right that says, not me, not I, and scoffs, scolds, laments. We take out, extract, and examine it before we place it alongside the words that come after it. The word *these* when declared against other subjects, subjects whose identity, we learn, will be uttered shortly after. The word *these* is the start of her scolding words, scathing words, her words against the law, against the law of expected human civility towards the previously enslaved, the previously oppressed... her words are spoken against the burial of apartheid. *These* – the subject, term, phrase, expression that says 'you are not me'... I keep you away from me.

These monkeys ...

To repeat the first word – *these* – and place it with its accompaniment – *monkeys*. This is the subject of her text, a subject that is written as a concern. *These monkeys ...* Sparrow begins. Sparrow addresses her readers and informs them of the subject of her discontent. We know that she is not addressing the vervet monkey species of Durban. There is a photo of Sparrow beside her text. The pairing puts any reader of the text who is Black in the picture immediately. You are now in the frame. You move from reader to being read. You are being looked at as a monkey. There is a frame; you are within it and Sparrow as your uninvited gazer has now invited her ilk into a viewing. If you're a Black person, you are *these monkeys*. You are the monkey – the object of her gaze; the gaze of this White woman and her White Facebook friends who she draws upon as viewers and listeners. You are being looked at. As you read, Sparrow's words draw the picture. You are looking at Black people; you are looking at an image of yourself. You cringe in anticipation of what is to come. As a Black person reading, you know that Sparrow is referring to you, to Black people whether they look like you or not. You are in the know because experience determined this kind of knowledge; the experience of being called a monkey and being witness to family members – your uncle, your grandfather, your sister, your friends – being called monkeys. You are not only in the know because you have information of this act of cruelty but this kind of taunting remark, accusation, clear and outright no-need-for-a-dictionary-interpretation-of-racism has come knocking at your door and hit you in the stomach before, twisted your colon, spat in your face, reduced you to a breadcrumb, kept you from the dinner table, kept you in anticipation of what was to follow... The bile in your stomach became more acid, you could not control the anatomical reaction of your body, much as your thoughts and your command of the English language begged you

to. Reviled, angered, you spoke out in defence of the cruelty, but your trips to the toilet could not be contained. You are familiar with it because it forced itself onto you before, uninvited, it now thrusts itself upon you again – just like that. The last time, the stamp of racism, yesterday, the day before, last week, has not faded. Your memories of racism are retrieved; they return, in an instant. You remember. You recall. You retrieve again from the trace of the last memory. The images flash upon your mental screen. You are, in that very moment of the reading of the phrase ... *these monkeys*, the animal, the vile animal, the unintelligent non-human animal. You know that Sparrow is not writing to Black people; she is writing about Black people with the understanding, however peculiar, that she is writing to White people, who are not *these monkeys*. There are only two sides to the phrase *these monkeys*, and if you are Black, you are on the side where scrutiny is about to fall. And as such, you continue with the reading.

that are allowed ...

To be *allowed* means that someone had to give permission for you to gain entrance, be permitted to a place; someone who had ownership of your whereabouts, of your existence. To exist as a person who needs to be *allowed* means that you exist under erasure, having been cautioned, you live under *kanala[3]* – a word from the *Kaaps*[4] diction that asks [with the word] please, and

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[3] The word *kanala* is used among the Cape Malay and Cape Coloured population and resembles the English expression of 'do me a favour'. Most people at the Cape credit the word as one that is Cape Muslim. The word *kanala* has Indonesian origins, where it was formerly expressed as *Karna Allah*. Before District Six got its formal name in the middle of the 1860s, it was affectionately called *kanala town* due to the term *kanala* being in regular use among the enslaved population. It is as such a word considered to be part of the *Kaaps* vernacular.

[4] *Kaaps* is a language that developed quite distinctly from Dutch, although most of the language can be traced to a 17th century Dutch injected with various diction brought into the language by the previously enslaved, spoken among the enslaved from Java and Malaysia primarily then the KhoiSan, enslaved people from Madagascar and coastal African countries. It is still

does so under protest. Sparrow situates the prohibition – the apartheid laws of ownership, who is *allowed* and who is not, who will be *allowed*, and who will do the *allowing*. *Allowed* speaks of granting permission to movement, of being permitted to go somewhere, of transporting your forbidden body to a place because someone other than you had access to it, to land, to space and had the ability to situate Black presence within it. The allower was your master; the *allower* reminds you and other masters... masters who *allowed* you. The notion of *allowed* is brought into the opening sentence of Sparrow's complaint. It is a reminder of what was before – what was a state of disallowance, of prohibition, of impossibility and restriction of movement being a law created first under slavery at the Cape in 1709 where the enslaved carried passes, then close to the end of the 1700s the Khoisan were forced to carry permission documents. Thereafter, over the decades, into the 1900s, old laws were amended, and new laws were designed, into the formal period of apartheid to keep Black people out, away from, barred; the objective: to prohibit, to throttle the possibility of movement. The only *allowance* for the enslaved and Indigenous people of South Africa was that of servitude[5].

By 1948, when the National Party came into power, three strategic acts of prohibition paved the way for apartheid: the Population Registration Act of 1950 Act, the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and the Group Areas Act of 1950[6]. When Black women were *allowed* to enter the city-centre, it was to work as domestic workers – paid subordinates. The *allower*, was the master, and the master mastered the law. Just two months after assuming the presidency, F.W. de Klerk *allowed* Black people to swim at previously classified White beaches. The desegregation of beaches was part of his gesture of goodwill, and on the 16th November 1989, the apartheid negotiator declared that beaches were no longer to be segregated. The *allower* who *allowed*... this

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spoken at the Cape today, and around the country by those who were influenced by it, and now live in other provinces.
http://capeafrikaans.blogspot.com/p/what-is-Kaaps.html
[5] I am here alluding to the history of pass laws in South Africa
https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/pass-laws-south-africa-1800-1994
[6] I am here speaking to the three main laws of apartheid.
https://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/12chapter7.shtml

allower Sparrow indirectly speaks of dates back much further than F.W. De Klerk's 'noble' gesture in 1989.

allowed to be released ...

And I shall backtrack to the start of her sentence. '*These monkeys that are allowed* to be released..'. Sparrow places the responsibility of Black people's presence on something and someone that did both the allowing and the release. The *allowing*, in turn, led to the release. Two acts were brought into play; two acts of illegality were brought into action: one which *allowed*; the latter, led to the second act of illegality – *the release*. De Klerk *allowed* for Mandela to be released; de Klerk did the *allowing*, only on the condition that Mandela promised not to fight his master. Mandela had to negotiate his freedom from his *baas*, his master . . . the master who owned him. The middleman, between God and 'the Natives', Bishop Desmond Tutu, was called upon to ensure that the previously enslaved 'behave' and agree to the *baas*' terms established during negotiations so that he *allows* the release of Mandela into the hands of God, into the hands of forgiveness – with no resistance. *Allowed* – is as such, an act, an event, which was righted from a wrong but as Sparrow determines, was wrong. And since it was wrong there must have been a reason for it to be wrong. It was wrong because Sparrow suggests that the allower (De Klerk and his political party) have been proven wrong. There is the *allowed* (the act) and there is the released (the objects); the latter as though the *allowed* were in captivity, secluded, isolated, damned. *Damned* – there it is again. The Fanonian damned, Césaire the poet, Fanon's mentor used the term on several occasions – *damnés*. There have been many translations of the French word, but I shall venture to assert condemnation, a sentencing, a lifetime condemnation, the ultimate punishment for being Black.

For Sparrow – *allowed* is an act, an event, an allowance, a gesture of goodwill only because the decision-maker of the released acted on behalf of the captive and released them! It is both a gesture and a decision that only an *allower* can make... allowed to be released... let it ring in your ear... *allowed* to be released ... to be permitted, to have your permitter – the one who rewrites the law, removes the shackles around your body, and issues you the permit prescribing your movement – allow you to escape from the prison of your home, your ravished land he sentenced you to ... you are permitted to leave your confinement. You may leave. Do not be mistaken – you have not been

set free – you have only been released. There is no freedom, there is only the memory of enslavement, until. . .

on new years eve and new years day ...

Written with grammatical errors, with little care for the rules of her colonising language, Sparrow notes the days that mark the event. Here the days of the year, the precise dates, their significance, is key to the disgruntled Sparrow. Sparrow indicates the significance of the holiday dates – *new year's eve* (sic) *and new year's day* – considered the most significant of the entire year for holidaymakers and vacationers. These are days marked by the knowledge of holiday, a celebration, an opportunity for leisure. Sparrow could easily have written or abbreviated the dates as December 31st or January 1st. For it is the significance of the days most noted for holiday celebration – masters and the enslaved, masters and the previously enslaved – that she situates as reason one, the first reason for her discontent: the days marked as leisure that she is disgruntled about because those two days were taken away from her; she has to celebrate in her home. The paid subordinates, the factory workers, the mineworkers, the supermarket workers, all of the exploited and downtrodden who do not work on this day have been *allowed to* be *released* onto the beach.

Sparrow did not stop with her first written post; she did several interviews with local newspapers thereafter, each time offering justifications for the content of her first post (Sparrow 'Post One'). On each occasion, she supplemented them with various forms of reasoning, some of which included backtracking, and only seconds later as though unrelated to her earlier remarks, she reinforced the very act of racism for which she had just sought pardon. In an interview with *News24* on January 4th, 2016, Sparrow revealed several sets of details, which allow us to understand the extent of her disapproval of Black bodies on beaches. Following the initial quote, four segments of Sparrow's response are cited here as a means to unravel both the journalists' critiques of Sparrow's 'Post One', and to unpack Sparrow's responses to their questions .

Reporting on the matter, the *News24* journalist introduced the matter as follows:

> Embattled KwaZulu-Natal realtor Penny Sparrow, at the centre of a race-row that has gripped the country, has said that she was merely 'stating the facts'. She had taken to Facebook and described black

beachgoers as 'monkeys', in an apparent reaction to litter left behind after New Year's celebrations. There has been a mass reaction to her statement across social media platforms, as well as from political quarters. Speaking to *News24*, she revealed what had driven her to compare black revellers to monkeys.

Every year it is the same story; it's their [black people's] day and we don't go in [to] the beach, we don't interfere, we let it be. We all know it and there is nothing wrong. We stay out of the way and stay at home', she said. 'It is their day'.
https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/its-just-the-facts-penny-sparrow-breaks-her-silence-20160104

i.   Sparrow, as though in reverence to the colonial frame of the 1800s, reminds us that the enslaved have been given the day off from their masters. In the Cape, it is coon carnival time – treated by many ignorant White liberal scholars today as contentious due to interpretations of the history of Blackface that was popular in the United States of America (USA); it is easier for modern-day White liberals in South Africa to be acquainted with the history of Blackface in the USA than the history of slavery at the Cape. In the Cape, the coon carnival started as a celebration to commemorate the end of slavery. In the Cape, we have *Nuwe Jaar* (New Year), and we have *Tweede Nuwe Jaar* (Second New Year, the day after New Year), since the middle of the 1900s and has been in operation and with more than 13 000 people in attendance at this celebration. Under colonialism, slaves got the day off on the 2nd of January and were allowed to celebrate in a manner of their choosing. Slavery was officially abolished in the Cape on 1st December 1834 but the first carnival was only hosted in 1887. The official abolition of slavery at the Cape did not prevent White colonials from drawing the enslaved into building the Whites-only UCT, where recently the remains of bodies that date back to the middle of 1800s were found. Ancestral remains as evidence have a way of slapping the face of the colonisers just when they think they have rid themselves of their history as enslavers... their Whites-only university is turned into a crime scene, yet again.

        Sparrow's condescending historical reminder is her means of referencing the past where Black people form part of the previously enslaved,

previously oppressed, previously colonised. 'It is their day', speaks to the knowledge of Black people's timely exercise of pleasure – that it is reserved, planned, calendarised, contained, limited, timed, like so many aspects of Dutch coloniality including the surnames (also known as last names), of so many of us at the Cape forced upon us to note our month of enslavement, mine included, which are both September and Maart. Even the word carnival, from the Latin expression *carne levare*, the removal of the meat, later adapted to the Christian guilt-laden expression of 'indulgence of the flesh', the 'pleasure of the flesh', before the month of Lent. As such, carnivals were generally held in February or March, before Lent, as in Brazil, and *Mardi gras* – in French already utilised in English as 'Fat Tuesday', the Tuesday before Lent. It is on these dates where indulgence of food and flesh are allowed, as celebrated in the French quarters around the globe, particularly in New Orleans but also in Cape Town, where it is usually held in February. From 6th April 1952, to commemorate 300 years of settler colonialism in honour of Jan Van Riebeeck, the whole country was given the day off to celebrate the man who robbed us of our land and plotted our demise. We were expected to celebrate our colonisation, enjoy it with a braai, enjoy ourselves with alcohol, the remuneration offered to farmworkers' under the *tot system*[7] – our pleasure had to be linked to our enslavement and our colonisation. Thereafter, from 1980 Van Riebeeck's day was called 'Founder's Day' until 1994.

In the second segment of her response, Sparrow notes the following:

ii.   'I am sorry that it has taken such a viral turn, but it was just a statement of how it was. I made the mistake of comparing them [black people] with monkeys. Monkeys are cute and they're naughty, but they [black people] don't see it that way, but I do because I love animals ... I wasn't being nasty or rude or horrible, but it's just that they [black people] make a mess. It is just how they are'.

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[7] The tot system, also known as *'die dop stelsel'*, referring to how alcohol is consumed, with a glass known as a tot, legally allowed wine farmers to pay their workers in alcohol, with little to no money, certainly not a living wage. Although the tot system was outlawed in 1960, the practice was carried out for more than 30 years into the 1990s, with warning letters to farm owners that the practice had become illegal.

Rozena Maart

Sparrow justifies her comparison and partakes in the history of simianisation of Black people – From *King Kong* to the *tokoloshe* and the *boogeyman* (Maart 2014). Simianisation infantilises. It also exaggerates: the Black man is usually the target, both the creature of depravity where he wants the White woman, and where he cannot control his animal lust. Sparrow's deep-rooted racism by far outweighs any possibility for reason. Sparrow does not read the newspapers, she has not read the responses by members of political parties; she speaks as though apartheid is alive and well, and her frame of reference in offering both an apology and a reason for the ill-fated text, all points to the Trump-style racism that got the latter elected in 2016 as president of the largest democracy in the world. The belief was, and remains, that Sparrow's ignorance, much like Trump's, is in fact, the voice of the [White] people. There are two particular sympathetic approaches: a. the voice of the joker, and b. the voice of the underdog. I proceed here with the former before addressing the latter.

A. **The voice of the joker.** Sparrow's 'Post One' was posted on Facebook, where a photo showing a younger, slightly glamorous Sparrow stood boldly beside her outburst. Newspaper articles one week later constructed Sparrow as the 'old White lady' with her 'funny wig' and a 'funny hat' both of which were noted to convey her age and to convey to readers that she was in hiding. We had walked straight into Freud's *Jokes and the Relation to the Unconscious* ([1905] 1966 led by Sparrow's actions, and the actions of Trump. A joker's appearance – hair, facial features, and general appearance – speaks to the seriousness of their actions, and here both Trump and Sparrow, with the focus on their hair, seal the deal. Sparrow's appearance was meant to force us into pity or mockery rather than tackle the content and magnitude of her grammatological dissemination and the harm it had done across the country. Two years after Penny Sparrow's 'Post One', which had the country talking for months on end even after she was found guilty of hate speech by the Equality Court and instructed to pay R150 000 to the Adelaide and Oliver Tambo foundation, and later charged with *crimen injuria* (under South African common law

defined as unlawfully impairing the dignity or privacy of another person*)*, Adam Catzavelos, while on holiday in Greece, gave his family and friends a weather and surrounding report: 'Let me give you a weather forecast here. Blue skies, beautiful day, amazing sea, and not one k***** in sight, (it's) f****** heaven on earth, you cannot beat this', he said in the video. In a nutshell, Catzavelos took delight in being at a beach without Black South Africans but used the historically loaded word to refer to Black South Africans. In 2016, like Catzavelos in 2019, Sparrow had not entered the gates of democracy, even after a 'one person, one vote' was put in place and the country's constitution hailed as one of the most liberated in the world.

https://www.iol.co.za/the-star/news/soweto-pensioners-lend-support-to-racist-adam-catzavelos-in-court-42646472

B. **The voice of the underdog.** The underdogs in the context of South Africa at the time of Mandela's release were the Afrikaners, who consider themselves the underprivileged and have drawn a similarity with the Québécois in Canada, thus asserting the need for land allocation within which their culture, language and history can survive. The Québécois assert their 'right' against the English coloniser, who they see as overlooking their rights for self-determination in the province of Québéc. This is still the voice of 'the poor White' in South Africa, and the voice of 'middle America' in the USA (where the term working class is considered an insult), that scholars are chastised for criticising. There is an assumption that the underdog, that is, the unintelligent, ignorant, uneducated, uncouth Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging [AWB] supporter, the Ku Klux Klan supporter in the USA, who often suggest that they are poor because Black people are taking 'their jobs'; in the South African case, the enjoyment of Black bodies on 'their beaches' drove the underdog to racism.

Sparrow continues:

iii.   'I put an apology up to say I didn't mean it personally. That day on that beach it was all black people, I'm sorry to say it, but it is a fact of life. I said it as I felt it and I know it was wrong to do it on a public thing [Facebook]

like that. I don't know how it got out and we were all saying it', Sparrow added.

https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/its-just-the-facts-penny-sparrow-breaks-her-silence-20160104

Sparrow apologised for her post being public; She remained oblivious to disseminating words and ideas through social media and the fact that everyone around the country had access to her words, Black people included.
Reason: Sparrow establishes the presence of others.
White reason: reason by racial affiliation to, and membership of, the system of White domination.
Sparrow exclaims: 'we were all saying it'.
Sparrow seeks out her ilk in producing her reasoning.

iv.   'I realise now that they [blacks] obviously hate that. I don't recall putting it like that. I just remember saying that there were so many black people like monkeys dropping things everywhere... making love in the bushes is, you know, fine if that is what they want to do, but the dirt was just terrible', she said.
https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2016-01-04-penny-sparrow-breaks-her-silence-monkeys-are-cute-and-theyre-naughty/

We see here, Sparrow referring to 'making love in the bushes', and the plot thickens. Sparrow offers another component for us to understand the reason(s) for her discontent.

But it is the closing statement below, as part of the lengthy interview that was conducted by *The Witness*, that puts the full range of her colonial upbringing into the frame, and Sparrow as the one seeking familiarity with Blackness as a means to redeem herself. The latter, a gesture whereby we see many White women these days try to claim kin – suggesting their emergence within Black culture, that they have Black heritage, a Black language, an affinity to Blackness, a Black paid subordinate such as a nanny who was 'like a mother' to them, and they are therefore, not as White as their White privilege suggests.

Sparrow continues:

v.   'It was an absolute mistake. I didn't mean to hurt anybody or to be racist. In fact, I am very good and kind to black people and help those in need. I was born in East Africa and I grew up with them. My first language was a black language. Swahili. My post wasn't a personal threat against anybody. It was just a comment on the state of the beaches and town' (*The Witness* 05 January 2016).

And as such, we now learn the following: Sparrow did not mean to be racist. Sparrow is now an East African. Sparrow is now a Swahili speaker. Sparrow wants us to know of her benevolent character – she is the good White settler who is kind to the natives. Sparrow retrieves the domestic, the paid subordinate, takes them out to be revealed. Sparrow now claims Swahili as her language, her first language. Nothing says it clearer: Sparrow's 'first language was a black language'. Sparrow knows Black people more than we know ourselves. When the White woman fails at being White and let out some of the unspoken tenets of racism, reserved for gin and gossip, oftentimes referred to as tea-time and trashing of the natives, that take place in seclusion, at tightly-knit tables in the White suburbs, none of their ilk defend them. Sparrow spoke publicly and betrayed liberal White South Africans because she did not have the political savvy to hide it as well as English-identified Whites. Sparrow, the White woman now digs a place for herself within Blackness. Jacques Derrida's insight into Sparrow's actions says it loud and clear: 'If Being is in effect a process of reappropriation, the "question of Being" of a new type can never be percussed without being measured against the absolutely coextensive question of the proper' (Derrida 1982: xiv).

Unpacking Sparrow's Discontent through Black Consciousness, Psychoanalysis and Derridean Deconstruction

> To enjoy, one needs a body ...
> Even those who promise eternal bliss
> Cannot do so without involving the body:
> Glorious or not, it must be there ...
> Because for the body, the dimension of *jouissance*
> Is the dimension of its descent into death.
>   (Lacan Unpublished 1971.)

As a means of thinking through Sparrow's discontent with:

(i)   the Black subject's capacity for enjoyment;
(ii) the enjoyment of Black bodies by Black people;
(iii) the capacity Black people have for enjoyment on previously White beaches – the site of White privilege as White leisure, the very site of exclusion for which legalised White privilege was created in order for White South Africans to perform enjoyment as masterdom over the usurped, enslaved and the colonised – I turn to a psychoanalytic approach that I position within my Black Consciousness lens, both through Fanon and Biko, vis-à-vis Lacan.

The psychoanalysis that I employ traces its fundamental tenets – consciousness, the unconsciousness, consciousness and its relationship to materiality, as such consciousness and politics, language as speech, writing and the imagination, particularly the interpretation of dreams – as key, not limited to but directly related – to Egypt, which much to the chagrin of the empires in Europe and the USA prefer to classify Egyptians as White[8]. Joseph, the dreamer, the second youngest son of Jacob, the son of Canaan who interprets the dreams of Pharaoh and saves Egypt and her people, offers us one of the first psychoanalytic moments in my conceptualisation of psychoanalysis. As such, it forms part of what I consider the ancestral history of psychoanalysis. This moment brings together the history of Black Consciousness, the plight of Joseph who is sold into Egyptian slavery as a young Jewish man, who was when retrieved from prison on the recommendation of Potiphar, interprets Pharaoh's dreams and brings dream interpretation into the realm of politics:

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[8] 'On Aug. 8, 2012, in a public lecture, Dr Mostafa Hefny, an Egyptian immigrant who lives in Detroit indicated that he wanted the U.S. government to classify him as black, not white. The Egypt-born Hefny, 61, says he's easily identifiable as a black man, but when he was admitted to the U.S. decades ago, he was classified on government papers as a White person. Hefny says he's a Nubian, an ancient group of Egyptians considered more African than Arab. According to a government directive, a White person is defined as "a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa or the Middle East"' (AP Photo/Detroit News, Max Ortiz) Detroit Free Press; Huffington Post.

Egypt's people were saved, food rationing and planning were put in place, and the masses did not die from starvation. It is important to acknowledge Egypt's vastness when dream interpretation was installed as a political act, and the foresight of planning prevented hunger, famine, and possible mass death. People were fed along the Nile, and in neighbouring countries outside of what we now consider the African continent's parameters.

It is not to Freud's Vienna that my childhood and adolescent thoughts raced as I try to deal with my psychosomatic hives which appeared annually on the anniversary of our forced removal from District Six in 1973, and for which I had no words to name their annual pilgrimage, which staged themselves on my body – the home of my psyche – as it drew the blood of my being, but to Joseph the dream interpreter who I learnt about at Sunday School. I am not religious in any way; I also grew up with Muslim cousins with whom I attended madrassa and drew from these experiences of consciousness and the unconsciousness as they best describe my psychoanalytic history.

I turn to Jacques Lacan in this segment. One cannot overlook Jacques Lacan's work on desire even if one writes on South Africa. Lacan refers to enjoyment as *jouissance*. There are, however, many layers to *jouissance*, some of which I undress in the process of this paper.

Lacan designates seven versions of *jouissance* and it is my contention that *smaak* – as a word and expression that speaks to and extends beyond the English word desire – a word spoken in *Kaaps* with roots in 17th century Dutch, Malay and the Khoisan languages as a direct result of our history of enslavement, spoken firstly at the Cape then over time due to migration across South Africa, surpasses *jouissance* and extends the limited parameters of expressions of enjoyment within the French language. Despite its weight, the word *jouissance* leans towards enjoyment and desire is always named within its containment. Likewise, the English word 'desire' is fraught with similar limitations never quite capturing the anticipation of enjoyment nor the salivating, lip-licking, mouth gaping effect of the word *smaak* that the mere utterance of the word generates, in a blink of an eye. Néstor A. Braunstein in 'Desire and Jouissance in the Teachings of Lacan, when referencing *jouissance* notes, 'The French word is difficult to translate in English. Lacan himself was aware of this problem ...'. And I will assert, so too was Fanon: 'To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilisation' (Fanon [1952] 1970: 13).

The loose translation of *lus* and *smaak* offered here are crucial at the start of the article as they inform the reader of what is lost in the English language when referring to Black bodies at the backdrop of a language rooted in the history of English civilisation. When I presented a small segment of my work on *smaak* as part of a larger discourse of desire within the Black South African context at the 2020 UNISA Decolonial Summer school, the mention of the word *smaak* had Black women in the room giggling with their entire body. It was not simply that I was talking about sex or sexuality but *smaak*, as all of the women who responded with smiles understood.

In this segment, I will tackle enjoyment: firstly, as *jouissance*: as the concept Jacques Lacan introduces briefly in seminar one and seminar two (Lacan 1991 [1953–1954], and Lacan [1954 - 1955] 1991), where his focus is rooted in the Hegelian master and slave dialectic (still applicable to South Africa today); then over a period of 20 years Lacan shifts his focus to various components of the libidinal economy, leading us to excess enjoyment. This paper's scope limits an in-depth engagement of the said concepts; readers will have a much lengthier engagement of a broad range of case studies in my forthcoming title, *Black Consciousness and the Politics of the Flesh*.

It is the responses that Sparrow offers, limited to two strategic selections noted in this text, where we see the full extent of her discontent, which I suggest, among others, is rooted in her envy of Black bodies. Sparrow is dismayed at how Black bodies take to the sun, sand, and sea – a site from which Black people were legally prohibited, starting from the massacre of the Khoikhoi descended Goringhaicona people after Van Riebeeck and his settlers usurped the Cape and its beaches, to which Black people then, and still today, flock to for sustenance and enjoyment. The eyes of Sparrow, in observing Black people on the beach smack so loudly of the identification of her lack that she calls pleasure to a halt on her Facebook page by debasing Black people. I bring forth the term *lack* here, to suggest that Sparrow identifies a loss when recognising, through the Other, the symbolic loss of a sexuality she does not possess. In Seminar II, *The Ego I Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954 - 1955'*, Lacan speaks of lack for the first time, thankfully not the last: 'Desire is a relation of being to lack. This lack is the lack of being properly speaking. It isn't the lack of this or that, but lack of being whereby the being exists' Lacan [1955] 1991, 223). Whiteness, as the property of her racialised personhood, does not allow Sparrow the ability to exercise freedom over the body and its' senses the way that she sees Black

people exhibit. It is an exhibition to the see-er; it is not an exhibition to the do-er ... not to the Black bodies who express enjoyment.

Whilst examining the presence of enjoyment with connotations that *Kaaps* allows, one has to address the physicality of desire, the manner in which the verbal utterances match the hand gestures, bodily gesticulations, primal sounds that have lived outside of the contamination of European lang-uages. One *smaaks* with your whole body; one does not *smaak* in the privacy of your mind. Thought and expression are paired; expression is the corner-stone of *smaak*.

The English language does not offer its speakers the fully nuanced, suggestive, flavourful, mouth-watering, anticipation of seduction and lovemaking mainly because the English language of desire developed through the tight-lipped dissemination of erotic prose among the upper-class poets who borrowed words from the French language to allow themselves the elevated expression of the pleasures of sexuality that they enjoyed and kept within their class affiliation off the coast of rainy England. Words such as 'debauched' and 'debauchery' were among the most pertinent that brought the act's enjoyment to the actors, who relied on the French language to fill their tongue-tied lips with a more extensive vocabulary. The upper classes had to borrow words that were not within the English language to give expression to desire that they owned but for which words were absent. The 19th century English working classes were referred to as breeders, and they were not afforded a sexuality. Any form of sexual relations that was evident, mainly through the process of reproduction, was viewed against the backdrop of poverty, overcrowding, children with dirty faces working in the soot-ridden environment of London, where class bore the stamp of poverty and lasciviousness (from Middle French and Late Latin), a stamp of illegality. Charles Dickens, writing in the early to middle 1800s notes this with great precision (Dickens 1838), at a time when the poor were criminalised through the New Poor Law of 1834, a year after the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833.

It is as a consequence of my lived experience as a child born in District Six, the old slave quarter of the Cape, where the previously enslaved community who were enslaved by the Dutch and forcibly brought from Bengal, Malaysia and Indonesia, the region of Java in particular, and the enslaved Xhosa from the Eastern Cape, spoke, disseminated and further developed the 17th century language to their own needs, own desires, mostly clandestinely, away from the ears of their masters – Dutch to Kaaps. Over the

years *Kaaps* became infused with the lust and desire that the enslaved maintained for our flavourful food, Javanese coffee, rose water in desserts and the bathwater, and our desire for the fragrances of the flesh. I am, as a consequence of my command of both my home *Kaaps* vernacular, fused with Cape Malay and the formal Afrikaans language, drawn to expressions like *lus* and *smaak*, which by far have more sensual connotations than English words like enjoyment, pleasure, lust or desire. As such, whilst I strongly assert that I do not wish to overlook the scholarly contributions of Jacques Lacan in this regard: I am here cross-referencing a Lacanian type of enjoyment, which spans a larger spectrum of enjoyment as articulated by Freud since Lacan includes, pleasure, desire, surplus pleasure and orgasmic pleasure.

I shall address both Lacan's concept of *jouissance* and my reliance on *lus* and *smaak* in examining Sparrow's 'Post One' and her subsequent responses wherein she references dirt, sex in the bushes, enjoyment, etc.

Lus en *smaak*, jou lekkerding

Smaak – a word of the *Kaaps* language – is referred to by linguists as a colloquial term. *Kaaps* is spoken primarily by the people of the Cape although its meaning, along with particular nuances that pertain to sexuality and desire have been disseminated across the country not in the absence of, or detriment to, a broad range of South African languages and/or dialects, and as such the term *smaak* is known, if not used as part of a verbal expression, by Black people all around South Africa to suggest, as per its derivation – libidinal desire. *Smaak* is a word spoken with particular delight, a word that makes you as a speaker of a language that traces your history, your spirit, your desire that lingered despite the infringement of enslavement, live forever on the tongue that speaks and performs this *smaak*. The Afrikaans word *smaak* suggests taste and crave, as would be its formal English translation, and used in the latter much like it is used in English, with particular civility. *Begeer*, in Afrikaans is more formal and does not have the carnal voracity of *smaak*. In formal Afrikaans, *smaak* is also a term of regularity to express a taste for food. *Smaak* as an expression by a *Kaaps* speaker refers to urges, desire, libidinal anticipation, orgasmic longing. Saying the word *smaak* arouses your lips, your mouth, your tongue, you salivate the minute you hear the word used in relation to a lover – yours or another – and smile when you hear the word used in reference to someone expressing their desire for another. You know it, you've been

there, you know exactly what *smaak* can do, and so did Penny Sparrow. *Smaak* is to be tasted, the knowledge of it shared, told to another, delight taken in your desire for another, and the knowledge that the word has no brim, no border, for it overflows, and thus exceeds all notions of desire as expressed in the English language. You never have to say I *smaak* you with [something] or [because] ... or [like] ... there is no need for similarity or comparison. There is no reason to be declared because *smaak* is *smaak*. It says everything, and it says more than everything. If you *smaak* someone, it is often with a sense of hunger, 'I *smaak* you like a piece of bread',... bread being your primal source of nourishment that conveys the depth and the intensity of the hunger you have for that person.

Lus, also an Afrikaans word, used to describe a desire for food and a craving for a particular food, permeates from all your pores the minute you utter the word. If you're a *Kaaps* speaker your desire for food cannot be expressed in English as well as in *Kaaps* nor as intentionally as when expressed in Afrikaans. *Begeerde* being more directly a translation of the English word desire, speaks to your urges, but can also be used to describe cravings. In the local *Kaaps* vernacular, you are permitted to lick your lips, make soft murmurings, primal sounds ... mmmmm, mmmmm, low and deep, matching the object of your *lus*. *Lus* can also be lust; it is lust that is declared, not hidden. It is demonstrated; you are allowed actions, gestures, to make your *lus* known. Sparrow is looking for a reason why Black people can enjoy ourselves – especially at a historical crime scene – the sea and its beaches – whereupon the previously enslaved were transported, where the usurpation of the land took place, and from which we were barred, prohibited, and with the same body, through the same body, which enslavement and dehumanisation took place. And yet, our bodily Blackness, still remains a source of enjoyment despite the illogical reasoning of apartheid, the cruelty of coloniality, the forbiddenness of Black flesh as pleasure, the robbing of rights, which could never effectively legislate against desire. How can this be history? Sparrow asks. How can progress of the consciousness of freedom – a rewording of the Hegelian articulation of history – come in this form where Black people disrobe from apartheid and enjoy their bodies, enjoy with such excess, and enjoy to the point of sexual pleasure with orgasmic leisure?

World history, the development of spirit in time, not only as per the articulations put forward by Hegel but as the enactment of a democracy – even if it is White women's fake orgasm – that is declared, that offers the oppressed

the possibility of freedom on the assumption that the oppressed has earned its freedom; that suffering, in the midst of observing the master, learning the ways of the master, that it would provide the basis for imitation as human. Here, however, the master as White madam learns from the enslaved; she learns with her lack (as a bodily instrument), and of her lack (as a loss). The master learns that the enslaved does not contain, suppress, withhold, denounce or bar the very fabric of a sexual identity that was denied – that is, the many qualities of enjoyment, love, desire, pleasure, orgasmic pleasure, and surplus pleasure. We know that reason requires judgement: it is not a pure algorithm that can be set up and left to run by itself to produce true conclusions because one has to produce the content against which one is casting judgment and Sparrow cannot. Sparrow cannot produce true conclusions because she has not offered reasons for its foundation, nor the means to establish it.

Penny Sparrow and Vanessa Hartley draw from their knowledge of the enslaved—along with the knowledge of Black people and Africans to rationalise why Black people should not be on beaches. In their articulations of racism as reason, Black skin is reason enough. In Hartley's articulation – the action to prevent Black skin from expanding on beaches – 'tie them up with a rope', she writes, is her action, her justification: to save Hout Bay, the bay that was never hers, the bay along with many bays that were usurped so that she could experience masterdom as enjoyment and deny it to the 'African' as referenced in her posting. It is, after all, the settler who wants what the Indigenous inhabitants have as a lifestyle; it is the settler who has to usurp, rob, steal, maim, massacre, legislate and isolate ... to have what the Indigenous has as life, living, continuity, enjoyment, sustenance. It is the envy of the settler of the enjoyment of the native that drives coloniality.

In Lacan's seminar seven (Lacan 1998), *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959 - 1960*, we see a much more extensive elaboration of *jouissance*:

i. In seminar seven, Lacan discusses *jouissance* as inscribed within the law. I shall here bring forth South African writer Lewis Nkosi's *Mating Birds*, set in early 1980s apartheid South Africa, to further Lacan's articulation. In *Mating Birds*, the White woman has desire for the Black man whose only transgression is the apartheid law of prohibition, which does not allow him to be on the legally assigned 'Whites Only' beach. *Mating Birds* is apt when examining this component of *jouissance* and the law. Nkosi's book draws attention to a young Black man who wanders about the city

of Durban, jobless and aimless, strolls on the beach and crosses over into the Whites-only section, where he sees a scantily clad young White woman lying on the beach and observes her body with bewilderment, only to find her playing along. Not only did Nkosi choose a topic such as the segregated beach as the plot for his first novel, the beach and its mapping of segregation with the undercurrent of forbidden desire placed under the rule of the body politic of the 1980s, the law seemed to be begging for sexual and literary transgressions. *Smaak* is articulated here as the desire that emerges out of transgression ignited when the Black man demands that the White woman recognises him and recognises his physical presence instead of ignoring him. 'She lay there in my path like a jibe, a monstrous provocation, and yet she was not really aware of my presence. People like her never are' (Nkosi 1987: 7). In the novel, it is the White woman who when caught in the illegal act turns to the law for she cannot admit her desire for the Black man, and calls out rape. She has to justify the law of apartheid, which is the law of forbidden desire. She denounces her desire and relies on the law of racism to punish the man she has just had consensual sex with, in order to punish him for letting her see ... see herself, with him as her lover, and experience her desire for him. It is after all his fault. If he did not show himself, she would not have broken the law or known why it was there – which I contend was designed to protect herself against herself; that it was designed to protect her against seeing the Black man and coming face-to-face with her desire for him. In the chapter titled, 'The Jouissance of Transgression' (Lacan [1986] 1992: 191ff), Lacan makes this clear. 'The resistance to the commandment, 'Thou shalt love they neighbour as thyself' and the resistance that is exercised to prevent his access to *jouissance* are one and the same thing' (Lacan 1992: 194). Indeed, we learn much about psychoanalysis from the architects of apartheid who would not allow White women to have Black men as neighbours!

ii. What Lacan describes as 'uninhibited jouissance which is not threatened ...'. Lacan suggests that it is the law's *jouissance*, in other words *lus* and *smaak* have to be put under the law, which as we know, was legislated across the colonised world as part of the containment of the native, the Black, the African, the Indigenous. The South African Immorality Act of 1927 (Act No. 5 of 1927) forbade sexual relations between White people

and Black people and was amended by the South African Immorality Amendment Act of 1950 (Act No. 21 of 1950) that forbade sexual relations between White people and people of other races; the Population Registration Act No 30 of 1950 ensured that racialised identities were classified and registered; the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, Act No 49 of 1953, the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the forced removals based on the latter, among others, were all attempts by the law of the land – at the time, the Apartheid regime.

iii. Lacan's second argument in seminar seven asserts that *jouissance* is evil. As such, 'the jouissance of the enslaved causes the master his suffering'. The master suffers because the master is not able to contain, suppress, deny, what the enslaved brings to the landscape of recognition. The master, in order to assert and convince herself of difference, conceives of the slave as the personification of lust and desire. Sparrow has given us an indication of this in every argument she articulated in her many responses. It is therefore evil because it cannot be circumscribed to any law, any God, any religion, and speaks to an animality that speaks *Kaaps*, that speaks Zulu, that speaks Xhosa, that speaks the language of the people – and as such this language of desire cannot be translated into English, for the English coloniser. Sparrow's monkey is not just one that litters, it is an animality that shows its *lus*, spreads its *smaak*, unashamedly, everywhere, food, fornication, imagined bushes, flora, are part of Sparrow's imagination; it is forced outside of the apartheid mapping, the geographical fake orgasm of the White woman and into the libidinal economy of the Black person who feeds and fornicates with a pleasure that haunts the settler.

iv. The second articulation is linked to the first, quite strongly, in the sense that the master suffers when there is face-to-face with the *jouissance* of the formerly enslaved and previously disadvantaged. I use the latter with some contempt because the colonised has been disadvantaged, cut off from, *smaak* as the mastery of desire. The master's suffering is the lament but also the freedom, rapidity, omnipotence, of the *lus* and *smaak*, for which the laws of the superego do not apply. *Lus* and *smaak* defy history, because it cannot be spoken or written in the language that prescribes its limitation or its prohibition.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have drawn on Penny Sparrow's outburst on her social media page to examine how Black bodies are treated when on South African beaches during the summer months, and the cruelty of these narratives, which have come from White women, primarily. In foregrounding Sparrow's post over Hartley's, which received less coverage as her engagement was shorter on the subject matter, I unpack the vocabulary with which Sparrow engraved her discontent as a White woman who has to share the lily-white KwaZulu-Natal shore with Black people on new year's day. The unpacking of Sparrow's post raised questions about the White gaze upon the Black body when Blackness is revealed in acts of enjoyment and pleasure, not labour or servitude.

Part of doing this unpacking of Sparrow's text, and setting the broader context by referencing Hartley from Hout Bay and Catzavelos from Gauteng, is to show how narratives of cruelty become 'master narratives' – racists speeches, in written texts, shared and disseminated, directed at Black bodies by White people who still consider this outpour of disgust as their right, their 'right to ridicule'. Thus, these narratives of embodiment and disembodiment that appear on public platforms that decolonial scholars have to face, as we come to terms with the larger and perhaps more personal landscape of the decolonial project, are crucial for unpacking as they define social discourses on race and coloniality in ways that the academy does not. None of the work that we do as scholars of decoloniality can overlook embodiment or disembodiment nor can we overlook public platforms such as social media where these are expressed and reproduced.

In South Africa, with #KingGeorgeMustFall, at UKZN, #RhodesMustFall, which started at UCT, the students at the time asked: how can we be in a space, a supposedly post-apartheid space, with grotesque statues that drive home the point of colonial embodiment in stone, a reminder of the memory of colonisation that lasted longer than flesh or time itself? Students, the small group that I saw protesting and defacing King George V's statue, did not want to be reminded of all the things King George V had done in their province – indirectly to some, directly to others. Not only does South Africa have the highest population of people from India on the African continent, many of whom were brought to the KZN province as indentured labourers, King George V was the last emperor of India, and Natal (the name of this province during apartheid) was the last pillar of the British empire. The

defacing that I speak of is one that saw King George V's face strewn with paint, mocking his presence on a now primarily Black university, where the entrance to Memorial Tower Building just a few feet away, the arch under which I walk to enter this tower of memory, still has the names of the World War II 'heroes' neatly inscribed on the marble that engraved their victory for the British empire. The embodiment of King George V and Cecil John Rhodes, now deceased, come in the form of statues: they are reminders of colonialism, conquest, subjugation and usurpation. The coloniser needs the statue to mark a victory for itself and for the colonial who stays. The coloniser wants to see, with deeply narcissistic interest, the reflection of the coloniser in the eyes of the colonised who are forced to look, to gaze, to practice the memory of defeat each time they walk by and gaze up at a statue. Statues speak to the engravement of acts of cruelty into stone with the head of the victor as the main emblem of pride for the coloniser. This preoccupation with statues made of stone is very much an act that not only seeks to memorialise colonisation but one that seeks affinity to a religious act such as Moses receiving the commandments, carved in stone, therefore making the statue as though an act of divinity compelled by God. Statues of colonisers are not only acts of embodiment but acts of memorialised fantasies, put on display, so that we the colonised are reminded, daily, of our defeat.

As scholars embroiled in the decolonial project of learning to 'undo' and learning to understand *what* there is to decolonise, we have to pay attention to our surrounding, to our minds and bodies, and also to what our minds and bodies have been robbed, have been forbidden to enjoy.

It is the process of understanding the layers of apartheid, the beaches and its prohibition of Black bodies that lead us to the significance of laws that barred and prevented, and the purpose they served. In doing so, we come face to face with a politics of desire, of an outpour of lack and envy that parades as disgust, because the oppression, subjugation and humiliation of the Black body still emerges, after more than 400 years of coloniality, as a body that smacks of *smaak*, drips with desire, and lingers with *lus*, long after the shackles have been removed.

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Decolonising the 'Eye' within the 'I' – Heterotopias of Self: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Visual and Material Relationships among and between Space, Body, Memory, Identity and Place

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Abstract

This paper operates in conjunction with the creation of, and responses to, a set of creative works conceptualised by myself, operating together as a research process towards investigating the concept of 'heterotopias of self' in relation to positionality, memory, identity, place, space and body. The creative work is in the form of film pieces, which, respectively, engage with dissociations between social memory and history in Cape Town ('*Rootless*', Gibson 2013a); the relationship between the gendering of toys, land, war and violence ('*War Play*', Gibson 2013b); and the projection of ethnic identification in relation to visuality and geographical location ('*Wish You Were Here*', Gibson 2015[1]).

Keywords: Heterotopias of Self, Mono-disciplinary approaches, Ethnic identification, Art, Film, Literature, Visual Anthropology, Identity, Practice-based Research, Embodiment, Body, Gender, Space, Culture, Violence, History, Geography, Autobiography

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[1]   https://objects2015.wordpress.com/2015/06/18/wish-you-were-here-the-artist-as-ethnographic-object/

Introduction

This article works in conjunction with the creation of, and responses to, a set of creative works conceptualised by myself, operating together as a research process towards investigating the concept of 'heterotopias of self' in relation to positionality, memory, identity, place, space and body. The creative work is in the form of film pieces, which, respectively, engage with dissociations between social memory and history in Cape Town ('*Rootless*', Gibson 2013a); the relationship between the gendering of toys, land, war and violence ('*War Play*', Gibson 2013b'); and the projection of ethnic identification in relation to visuality and geographical location ('*Wish You Were Here*', Gibson 2015[2]).

The films and article bring together concepts of self, memory and visual materiality in relation to historical and personal dissociations and displacements within society, to challenge mono-disciplinary approaches, and thus open up questions concerning interdisciplinary approaches, in particular to explore how often invisible structures of power within social and urban spaces infuse what is 'seen' and 'not seen' in the 'making visible' of selves.

The combined works become vehicles for theoretical exploration, as a means of considering alternative ways of engaging with multiple and seemingly disparate disciplines, from medical – as in memory, body and trauma – to gendered, psychological, conceptual and spatial perceptions of the self's interrelationships with society, to examine the 'Eye' within the 'I' within different modes of embodied representation.

Despite their flows of constant renewal and interaction (Mbembe &Nuttall 2004), urban spaces are fraught with difficulties. Frictions often emerge – disparate gaps and clashes between communities, contestations over spaces and histories, and disputes over rights to spaces of the city.

South Africa, for example, has undergone xenophobic attacks (Nyamnjoh 2007; Neocosmos 2006; Hadland 2008; Dodson 2010; Tafira 2011; Solomon & Kosaka 2013; Mlambo 2019; Marumo *et al.* 2010; Solomon 2019; Asuelime

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[2]   https://objects2015.wordpress.com/2015/06/18/wish-you-were-here-the-artist-as-ethnographic-object/

2020; Chenzi 2020) while violence in general – including gender violence and abuse (Boonzaier & de la Rey 2003; Gqola 2007; Abrahams *et al.* 2009; Muluneh *et al.* 2019) – continues to infuse city spaces.

Spaces of memorialisation such as the Rhodes statue have been interrogated and removed alongside #RhodesMustFall and the ensuing #FeesMustFall protests (Nyamnjoh 2016; Griffiths 2019; Murris 2016; Naicker 2016; Pillay 2016; Ndlovu 2017; Bosch 2016; Chaudhuri 2016), alongside calls for decolonising tertiary education institutions in South Africa (Mbembe 2016; Becker 2017; Muswede 2017; Fomunyam & Teferra 2017; Xaba 2017; Duku & Salami 2017; Mampane *et al.* 2018; Mahabeer 2018; Sathorar & Geduld 2018; Shefer 2019), while sites of slave memorialisation remain relatively invisible (see later regarding Prestwich Street – Rassool 2011; Shepherd 2007; Finnegan *et al.* 2011).

More recently, Cape Town has seen the rise of a 'Coloured nationalism' (Jacobs 2018; IOL News 2020). Tied up with these interactions are disputes around notions of identity; their histories, their visibilities, and their negotiation, in what Hall (1990) terms is a fluctuating production, 'never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation'. (222). Key to such processes are issues of inclusion and exclusion – a sense of belonging, access and voice, in which notions of culture, gender and racism intersect (Maart 2004; 2014a; 2014b).

The spaces we live within, are not neutral, but are imbued with power relations, social perceptions, and bodily interrelationships (De Certeau 1984; Foucault 1986; Soja 1989, 1996; Lovell 1998; Butler 1990; Lefebvre 1991; Nast & Pile 1998; Mbembe & Nuttall 2004; Pile 2005), within sites and desires of the imagination which infuse scripts of being, and 'being seen' to the extent that, 'we do not live in a homogenised empty space, but on the contrary, in a space thoroughly imbued with quantities and perhaps thoroughly fantasmatic as well' (Foucault 1986:23), 'an expression of an aesthetic vision' and 'a site of fantasy, desire and imagination', (Mbembe & Nuttall, 2004: 354 - 355) rather than 'nothing but the spatial embodiment of unequal economic relations and coercive and segregationist policies' (ibid.: 353), a 'phantasmagoric' space of dreams, hauntings, fantasies and desires beyond the visible and tangible – a 'psychogeography' (Pile 2005), and 'an oeuvre, closer to a work of art than to

a simple material product … a 'production and reproduction of human beings by human beings, rather than a production of objects' (Lefebvre 1991: 101).

There is a concern that, 'the particular ways in which spatial relationships come together to make bodies and places, through the body and through places, needs to be exemplified, demonstrated and clarified, in places, through the body' (Nast & Pile 1998: 4), in which urban spaces operate a 'conjunction of seemingly endless possibilities of remaking' where 'bodies constantly are 'on the line' to affect and be affected, 'delivered up' to specific terrain and possibilities of recognition or coalescence' (Simone 2004: 9).

This article incorporates an exploration of three short art films by the author, incorporating a praxis-based research approach, in an exploration of the interwoven-ness of the above issues in relation to representation, to open up questions around 'seeing', and 'being seen' by the author – ('*Rootless*', see Gibson 2013a); engaging with dissociations between social memory and history in Cape Town; '*War Play*' (Gibson 2013b), examining the relationship between the gendering of toys, land, war and violence; and '*Wish You Were Here*' (Gibson 2015)[3], exploring the projection of ethnic identification in relation to visuality and geographical location. Each film engages with a different aspect of embodied experience – at times seemingly surrealistic, at others, disturbing, and also drawing on the auto-ethnographic. Previous articles (Gibson 2013a; Gibson 2013b; Gibson 2015) have described, to varying extents, aspects of the creation process of these films. This discussion also draws on the concept of heterotopia in relation to the concept of self – as dissociative[4] yet embodied aspects of selves that form part of the negotiation of self with society.

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[3]   https://objects2015.wordpress.com/2015/06/18/wish-you-were-here-the-artist-as-ethnographic-object/

[4] In this sense, I use 'dissociation' as a metaphorical term, implying its psychiatric definition as the 'separation of normally related mental processes, resulting in one group functioning independently from the rest, leading in extreme cases to disorders such as multiple personality' (Oxforddictionaries.com, acc. 090815). 'Dissociation' is a medical term now used in preference to 'multiple personality disorder' as the many selves that are presented are seen to link on a deeper plane and although performed

Rootless

Figure 1: *Rootless,* Rhodes Memorial Figure 2: *Rootless*, Blouberg Beach

The first film, *Rootless*[5], involves a life-sized skeleton, created from twigs, filmed as if on a one-day tourist visit to Cape Town, touring sites imbued with memory and history but which also, when juxtaposed with the skeleton – which operates like a life-size puppet – evoke aspects of loss and historical dispossession in relation to land, memorialisation, space and heritage. These spaces are nature reserves; Rhodes Memorial; Prestwich Memorial – the site of storage of over 1 000 exhumed skeletons, assumed to have mostly been previous slaves, from a graveyard uncovered during building work near Prestwich Street in central Cape Town (see Shepherd

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separately, are understood to be integrated within the same person. Interestingly, Krüger (2020) has recently argued for culture to be foregrounded in studies of dissociation.

[5] Created in part-collaboration with artist Kitty Dorje (camera and editing) and Meghna Singh (editing).

2007; Rassool 2011) – *Iziko* Museum, which at the time was undergoing restitution processes concerning Khoisan remains kept in the museum archive (see Legassick & Rassool 2000); and Blouberg Beach, with its view of Table Mountain. The issues the skeleton raised are described in more detail in Gibson (2013a) particularly in relation to my previous experience as a medical student, and questions in relation to human remains.

On a poetic and aesthetic level, however, the film also evokes a sense of loss and dispossession – combined with a poem I created based on the concept of loss, and a very effective music track created especially for the film by a local composer/ musician (Dino Chapman Van Rooyen). Effectively, there is a sense of the loss of history and memory – evoked by the familiar figure of the skeleton and its association with the graveyard – already a heterotopic space described by Foucault (1986) – but which the viewer also identifies with, through travelling with the skeleton from frame to frame. The film has subsequently been used as part of District Six Museum's commemorative 'Slave Walk' at night in the memory of slaves of the Cape, projected onto the wall of a historic city building as part of a walk through the city, thus contributing to a sense of the phantasmagoric 'haunting' of city spaces as one moves through them, described by Pile (2005) which, for me, was its perfect viewing location, one which evokes Ingold's (1993) claim that 'To perceive the landscape is… to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past' (152f).

Interestingly, people in Cape Town who see the film often connect it with their own personal sense of dispossession too – often describing this as a 'loss' of ancestry, history and living spaces under forced removals during apartheid, along with a consequent sense of loss of 'self'. This is particularly enabled by the skeleton being a non-gendered, non-racialised, ageless and voiceless yet embodied object, facilitating the self-identification of the viewer, as it glides past Rhodes Memorial and looks down at the view of the city the bust of Rhodes 'sees', is served coffee at the commercial café which masks the mausoleum Prestwich Memorial that holds the unnamed remains of the poor and slaves in boxes in a room at the back, and swings merrily before *Iziko*, where the museum's windows appear like eyes looking through the skeleton's head.

War Play – **'No Man's Land'**

War Play

In the film War Play[6], toys of childhood typically associated with gender – girl dolls, male action figurines, plastic army soldiers and guns readily available in South African stores – are assembled, dismembered, reassembled and juxtaposed to explore the associations between embodied notions of masculinity and femininity inculcated and engaged with in childhood, and male violence in relation to women's bodies, land and war in adult life. In the film, toy soldiers and action figurines appear in juxtaposition with often headless or silenced naked female doll figures that operate sometimes as landscape to fight over, at other times as a 'trophy', or in one case, a female figure whose body is made up of toy soldiers, appears to be shooting herself.

In other scenes, the female figures hold guns, as if in self-protection. The works were created and filmed at a *Thupelo* Art Workshop in the Wellington landscape in South Africa (Gibson 2013b), as if randomly found while crawling through the bush. Background music was composed using the

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[6] Conceptualisation, mise-en-scène, filming and directing by myself, editing assistance from Jarrett Erasmus.

nursery rhyme, 'Three Blind Mice' with sounds suggesting a battlefield, and the voice of a young boy.[7]As the origin and making of this film is described briefly in a previous article (Gibson 2013b), I focus here on embodied aspects of the film in relation to the formation of identity in its construction as a 'story of self' (Sacks 1995) shaped by memory, and performed, enacted and felt as a construction through an experiential, embodied and sensory mode of operandi, 'concerned with, and assembled from, sensory and experiential fragments' (Seremetakis 1994: 4). Gender is a continually reiterated practice, sedimented in the body to the extent that it appears naturalised (Butler 1990). But where does this naturalisation start, and how does it then become articulated later in its intersections with violence, race, geography and space?

War Play – **'Chicken-Head Man'**

Interestingly, when *War Play* was shown in the CAS gallery exhibition 'Body: Object: Corpse', deliberately on a small television in a child-sized room[8] women responded very strongly to the images. One declared emphatically, 'yes, we should take up weapons against men!' Others responded by describing the vulnerability they felt as women, particularly in relation to how men treat

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[7] Composed by Mijaou Blech and with the voice of Bailey Blech.
[8] Curated by Meghna Singh in the exhibition 'Body: Object: Corpse'.

them and their susceptibly to gender violence in South Africa, which has a history of gender violence from colonialism through apartheid to the present day, and currently has among the highest domestic abuse and rape statistics in the world (Maart 2004, Maart *et al.* 2014; Boonzaier & de la Rey 2003; Gqola 2007; Abrahams *et al.* 2009; Hutchinson 2013). As Gqola (2007) puts it, 'We know that today women do not feel safe in the streets and homes of South Africa, that women's bodies are seen as accessible for consumption – touching, raping, kidnapping, commenting on, grabbing, twisting, beating, burning, maiming – and control, that women are denied the very freedom that 'empowerment' suggests, the very freedom the Constitution protects' (120), and goes on to describe how 'apartheid capitalised on the physical violence of contestation through the militaristic control as well as the structural violence of the economy … this high militarisation could only take on gendered forms and play itself out along sharply gendered lines… Given its pervasiveness, it finds expression in the academic, business and non-governmental sectors, in culture, language and entertainment and government institutions' (113f).

War Play – **'Plastic Surgery Woman'**

It is interesting how the responses were often highly visceral – in the case of women, a sense of expression of their own vulnerability and fears in relation to the objectification of their bodies, and the need to protect or defend them; and in the case of men, at times an expression concerning the uncomfortableness of what, in the observations I made, they associated the images with pornography, along with the violence of the hypermasculinity that the toys of their childhood suggested[9].

Men also commented on the film's similarity to video games, in which the camera crawled through the undergrowth in a forest landscape, as if aiming a gun at each figure it came across and seemed to respond to what they saw as the overt sexuality of the images.

War Play also subliminally questions how the performance of masculinity in a militarised society might erupt in extreme violence including the abuse of women, often in the form of rape[10] as a key mechanism of power over the vanquished in the face of brute force, and in the sexualised, gendered expression of force, juxtaposing the unstoppable super-hero of male invincibility versus the objectified visualised image of accessible girl dolls[11].

The toys of childhood in *War Play* visually expose the intersections of constructions of masculinity with militarised violence for boys, even prior to the institutional frameworks, playgrounds and societies which are 'constituted by violent interaction in their very fabric' (Gqola 2007: 114).

Through juxtaposing and combining gendered toys, the film consequently evokes links between the 'male' toys given to boys, expression of violence over land and ownership, including of women's bodies, even as spoils of war. Yet these toys also evoke utopias – expressions of ultimate desires – male power, invincibility and physicality, and the desire of women to look appealing yet their vulnerability in becoming objects of sexual objectification.

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[9] The soundtrack, by musician/ composer Mijanou Blech, was based on the children's song, 'Three Blind Mice' as an underlying auditory motif for the film.

[10] This does not exclude male rape as an expression of power in war.

[11] Notably, 'white' dolls, are easiest to obtain cheaply in South Africa.

Intersectionalities of race and gender are also apparent in the ready availability of dolls that, notably in a South African context, are fair-skinned[12] and would inculcate a racialised 'difference' and utopian desire of 'Whiteness' for local children 'of colour' who play with them. Consequently, *War Play* connects the disconnected; brings to awareness those dissociated elements within the gendered self that extremes of human behaviour become evident within – the brutality of violence, the racialised divides of the gendered every day, the imaginaries of childhood; and enactments of militarised male violence – that play out in the adulthood of society[13].

Wish You Were Here

Wish You Were Here **– Film Still 'Not Inuit'**

The film, *Wish You Were Here,* is an exploration of another aspect of identity; the ethnic localisation of self in space and place. In this case, the film draws

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[12] In the shop, housed in a small shopping mall in Wellington from which they were obtained, there were no dolls 'of colour' available.

[13] Hutchinson (2013) for example, sees parallels and draws attention to enactments of violence in times of conflict and dispute in contemporary South Africa, as a consequence of South Africa's history as a militarised state in the past.

from personal experience, as someone of mixed ancestral origins – as far as I know, Filipino, Scottish, Irish and Spanish – in relation to how others have ethnically identified me over the years[14] despite the fact that my identity does not typically fit into a 'category', particularly standard 'ethnic category' boxes one ticks on forms.

Narratives of these mis-identifications in people's efforts to 'locate' me as from different global spaces are presented as if in a black and white 'silent movie' – mimicking Robert J. Flaherty's classic *Nanook of the North* 1922 ethnographic film depicting the Inuit, for which I have repeatedly been mistaken.

These multiple identities and 'emplacements' projected by others– as seemingly from 'everywhere' – Inuit/Chinese/Uzbekistani/ Peruvian/Native American/Japanese/Thai/Malaysian but interestingly not as European – even at one point being congratulated by a Chinese lady as having the 'eye operation' (Kaw 1993; Aquino 2017; Nguyen *et al.* 2009; Ouellette 2009) to look more Western – explode the nature of the idiosyncrasy and constructedness of stereotyped racial identities and their intersections with geographical space.

Casting myself as an 'ethnographic art object', and in collaboration with cinematographer Gareth Jones as cameraman, I play out these different ethnicities through reconstructions in my own contemporary clothes to emulate the poses of anthropological and tourist images of the past and present. The soundtrack is mostly segments of *Nanook of the North* soundtrack played backwards – suggesting the reversal of time, and its flattening through the spaces of ethnic categorisation, in an exploration of where these might come from.

The power of the camera as 'gaze' is also evoked, as I move from plinth (as a museum object), to interior, to outdoors.

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[14] See conference blog entry, Gibson (2015).
https://objects2015.wordpress.com/2015/06/18/wish-you-were-here-the-artist-as-ethnographic-object/

The story is told using a selection of autobiographical experiences over my life, included as written text in the 'silent movie' style, followed by the images as juxtapositions, while I remain muted. [15]

Some of the quotations from the film are:

> *I am in a shopping mall in a poncho. A woman runs up to me. 'Oh, you're Peruvian, she says. 'How lovely, I got back from Peru yesterday'.*
> *'We thought you were Native American', some anthropologists tell me at a conference.*
> *I am in a museum. A woman comes up to me. 'Oh, you speak English, I thought you were from my village. I'm from Uzbekistan, she says'.*
> *An old man refuses to serve me at a vegetable stall. 'I was in a Prisoner of War Camp', he says. 'I don't serve the Japanese'... 'But I'm not Japanese', I say... 'You look Japanese', he says. I won't serve you'.*
> *'*&%*$*!,' say men to me in salsa clubs. 'Oh, don't you speak Thai/ Filipino? Malaysian? It means 'I love you'. I learnt it on holiday in a bar'.*
> *I am in Mozambique and the village children follow me around shouting 'Jackie Chan, Jackie Chan'.*
> *'In this country we have very strict security regulations', says the customs official in Heathrow [International Airport, United Kingdom].... 'I am from this country', I say.*

I come back to the 'I' within the 'eye' here. Is the gaze I project myself within that of the subjectivity of myself, or the objectivity of the outsider gazing in? In our social interactions, and engagements with the world, it is difficult to step outside of these external representations, as projections of how the world has categorised ourselves and others over historical time, particularly so with the history of a colonial science and ethnic 'stereotypes' that site the body's phrenology, skin colour and hair, as a representation of personhood.

The intersectionality of this with gender, sexuality and geography is evident; as someone who enjoys salsa dance, men in salsa venues in the past have

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[15] See Gibson (2015) for more detailed information on constructing the piece.

sometimes approached, talking slowly evidently to make sure I can understand their English. Their patronisingly gentle tones are as if directed to a child, no doubt drawing on their experience of the portrayal of Asian women as childlike, passive and willing to please (Wang 2012; Shim 1998) as exemplified in Hollywood films and other forms of media of the 'Oriental fantasy' from the period of 16-year old Afong Moy, the first recorded Chinese woman exhibited in America, in New York and Brooklyn Museums, with four-inch-long slippers on bound feet (Wang 2012[16], and no doubt which the 'bar girls' in East Asian tourist venues play into as equivalent exhibits, for the exploitative desires of male consumption. At the same time, in the film, I quote from a 19th century children's book, 'A Peep at the World and a Picture of some of its inhabitants' which in its very brief discussion of China, emphasises the very small bound feet of Chinese women.

In the film, I deliberately contrast this quote with myself sitting upright on a plinth, with a cap and high-necked, dark belted jacket, which is suggestive of a uniformed photograph of a woman from Communist China; then continue with the fact that Mozambican village children identified me as Jackie Chan, with pseudo poses of myself in the film with martial arts poses with a ponytail[17].

The film was an expression of curiosity, and an attempt to understand what others might be 'seeing' when they projected their assumptions and my ethnic 'phenotype' onto me; an ironic 'projecting back', utilising only my own day clothes and minor props. Much of the suggestibility came from my drawing on 'tourist' and old ethnographic photographs from the different parts of the world I had been identified as, and merely positioning myself in similar bodily stances; such as stroking a cat in my dressing gown in the same pose I had seen a geisha lighting the cigar of a male tourist. In being none of these 'identifications' culturally, the film ends with the officious 'white' United Kingdom (UK) Heathrow International Airport official telling me the rules of 'his' country, which I have to tell him I was also born in, and am consequently

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[16] This was followed shortly after by the second Chinese exhibit at the circus of P.T. Barnum, bringing 20 000 spectators in only six days (Prasso 2005; quoted in Wang 2017).

[17] See Gibson (2015) for image.

a national of, as much as him. In my mind, these images become resources, repeated time and time again throughout history, and becoming part of a cultural subconscious, drawing from the ever-pervasive media stereotypes and simulated tourist 'encounters' with manufactured ethnic stereotypes at tourist venues. At the same time, they reinforce a geographical stereotype – amplifying the link between 'the geography of the world and the geography of the imagination' (Wang 2017:195). The fact that I was also identified in London as Uzbekistani by an Uzbekistani villager perhaps also shows the role that desire plays, possibly in the expression of an immigrant in London to connect with an image of home.

The bigger question might lie with who is projecting onto who, and to what purpose, and the role that memory, history and imagery plays within these. On a more ominous note, I was refused to be served at a market stall by a man who had been in a Japanese prisoner of war camp because he decided I looked Japanese. This also foreshadows the idea of being identified as a 'type', regardless of one's own cultural, social or historical associations, at its worst – in the form of xenophobia, racial prejudice and ethnic genocides that permeate the earth.

Wish You Were Here – **Not Peruvian/ Native American**

The film also suggests how media, tourist and ethnographic images from the past and present constantly situate the body in – often seemingly timeless – spaces of 'otherness' – in its exoticisation, rejection, acceptance and objectification – and to what extent the body negotiates its existence and self-identity amongst the impositions or assumptions of others.

The intersectionality[18] of these negotiations played out in irony, were also apparent when I offered myself as a 'toy' to be dressed up by visitors at Greatmore Studios Art gallery in Cape Town at the 'Till it Breaks' exhibitions in 2012, where visitors dressed me in my own clothes and could create their own 'photograph' alongside the film playing on a screen to the side, with an anonymous hand-drawn landscape background and pot plant.

Here they constructed 'the gaze' and imagination took riot. Some slipped into enacting childhood games; hunting polar bears as an 'Eskimo' (their words); or pretending they were on holiday; or making me 'pretty' as an imagined geisha. Others claimed affinity; a woman from Delhi, India, declared I looked like a North Indian woman and dressed me likewise, and a Palestinian living in Cape Town decided I looked 'typically Cape Malay'[19], created a headscarf for me and posed beside me.

In these 'makings' of ethnicity, I was attempting to understand the fallacy of the 'constructedness' of a 'racialised' or 'ethnicised' identity stereotype, as well as the stories such projections cannot tell, of the individual subjected to them. At times, the projections of others resonated with the perspective of the paradigm of a historical 'cultural gaze' that constructed me, and by playfully constructing myself as the 'art object', the irony resonates with Maart's words,

> We are not artists, we are simply what art or artists sometimes represent … if Black people or people of colour come into focus or appear on the canvas, it is as the Coloured subject of the White gaze – the slave, emancipated slave, exotic, trivialised, creature, or object as the backdrop representing time and place - in other words, servitude and subordination (2004: 3).

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[18] See Crenshaw (1991).
[19] I have often been told this in Cape Town.

The film has since 'travelled' to Cambridge in the UK (Gibson 2015) and to a conference in Paris at the request of an attending academic. It is interesting that, in Europe, the question was raised by attendees that I might, possibly, be re-ethnicising myself and playing into racial stereotypes by depicting myself in such ways. Interesting, also, persons of colour in Cape Town who have seen the film have generally laughed in collusion at the recognition of the many subjectivities they themselves feel objectified by. My personal response is why, if I choose to wear my own poncho, or clothes, or stand in a particular way, or lean against a wall as if attending a salsa club, should I be re-ethnicising anyone, or become an ethnic 'type' in other's eyes, as I am merely representing myself?

Perhaps we need to dig deeper; to unpack and uncover the plethora of representations to which we are all subject, and to ask how we might rethink, reconceptualise, and re-represent them, to get to a basic humanity of where we wish to go, and be, to look for the 'I' within the 'Eye' that constructs all of us, if we really believe in a world that collectively claims to work together against genocides, poverty, and racial prejudice.

'*Till it Breaks*' Exhibition 2013, Greatmore Studios – 'Not in Japan'

N. Jade Gibson

Conclusion, and Non-Conclusiveness: The 'Eye' within the 'I'

These three films, in association with this article, have explored, through primarily visual means, the material aspects – the embodied negotiation – in the construction of identity and self. It is interesting to note that, in all three films, the body itself – the skeleton, the reconstructed girl and body toys; and the body as 'ethnographic art object' – is silenced, despite the soundtrack and written narratives, none have an audible voice, thus emphasising their embodied-ness and the extent to which these are unarticulated. How then, do these social 'bodies' of self – often difficult to articulate or contest, silenced by society, or even unrealised by persons who engage with them, exist and intersect within the corpus of the social geographies and city spaces on lives within? Theorists such as Taylor (2006; 2007) extend the material socialisation of the body to suggest that 'critical attention to repertoires of lived behaviour might illuminate very different versions of past events, enable alternative mappings, and generate other models of scholarly interaction' (2007: 1418) in her argument that studies of ritual and social performances provide insights into histories that have been 'written out' of more formal sources.

However, the negotiations of the body are complex and play out differently in different spaces – as memory, identity, gender, history, community and self; as well as through dis-articulation and dissociations – that of the erasure of history and what is memorialised in *Rootless*; the gendered desires reflected in boy and girl toys played out in challenging and sometimes destructively extreme scenarios in *War Play*; and also in *Wish You Were Here,* in relation to the assumptions, desires, and impositions of others, who play out our identities for us. These to me are the heterotopias of self – the spaces of 'otherness', 'dissociation' and 'difference' within one's own experiential, remembering and enacting body, that one might occupy, yet feel a discomfort in belonging within, or which only become apparent in brief moments of reversal or possibly insight, aptly, and beautifully, summed up in the following excerpt from Foucault, in his description of a mirror, as both a utopia and a heterotopia,

> … I see myself where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it

is also a heterotopia, in so far as the mirror does not exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there (Foucault 1986:24).

Despite the fact that the films do incorporate aspects of utopian desire – the tourist on holiday; the desirability of 'gendered' ideal bodies; the exotic, often vicarious 'elsewheres' engaged with in our own connections with others – I focus on the films as primarily depicting heterotopias of self – in that the films are more likely to be viewed as focusing on moments of deviance or crisis – the dead, unacknowledged histories; dispossession; gender violence; the idealisation of the hyper-masculinisation and brutality of war; and imposed notions of race and locality. How, then, does one reconnect and integrate the body, within its web of negotiated, sometimes challenged, interrelationships in city spaces, to find points of cohesion and the acceptance of multiplicities within the constructed nature of self, rather than the disjuncture of different heterotopias within the in-between spaces of personhood.

Calls for decolonisation extend beyond an academic syllabus, a written text, a rethinking of history; they extend to a reshaping of experience, of lived memory and embodied interaction, the search for the 'I' within the 'Eye'. All three films indicate, to some extent, traumas on and of the body – even if not immediately apparent – the infliction of power relations onto selves as the ethnic or gendered 'other'; the dissociation of ownership over memory and history; Rhodes Memorial 'psychogeographically' jostling with the suggested image of exhumed slave skeletons in central Cape Town – these are all felt traumas that may exist consciously or unconsciously within those who sense their dislocation and dissociation from society. Furthermore, how does one engage theoretically with such 'heterotopias of self', in their disconnect

between the 'here' and 'there', 'past' and 'present', and 'reconnect' indivi-duals, within the many negotiations, conscious and unconscious, that they encounter as they 'walk' their phantasmagoric, heterotopic, sometimes trau-matic and other times illusionary 'elsewheres', not just through the street and walkways but also museums; hospitals, play areas, shopping malls and other material landscapes of cities that 'are not simply material or lived spaces – they are also spaces of the imagination and spaces of representation' (Bridge & Watson 2004: 7). When '*Rootless*' was used for the District Six Slave Commemoration walk in 2012, projected onto the walls of the Slave Lodge, did it help 'close' those gaps or dissociations? Does *'War Play'* enable a reconnect between those images of femininity and masculinity inscribed from early childhood; an embodied familiarity with their presence juxtaposed against the unfamiliarity of their associated social violence?; does *'Wish You Were Here'* enable a reconnect with the disciplines of a connected humanity with the 'divide and prosper' tool not of apartheid only, but the act of the modernist project of colonisation in its working of history? Recently, I have engaged with the creative text – a literary novel, *Glowfly Dance* (Gibson 2015), encompassing a memoir/autobiography, documenting childhood experiences of domestic violence, from personal experience. The book has been accredited by the South African Department of Education as useful for education on domestic violence, and has been used in diverse university courses, from Medical Humanities to Anthropology, to Psychology, Literary and Gender Studies. The story encompasses themes of identity, childhood, girlhood and emerging womanhood, migration, domestic violence, abuse, abduction, and the devastating impact of intimate partner femicide on children.

It was written to make people feel, in the voice of the child, and its impact is designed to occur through the embodied and emotional impact of reading the story, yet other activities – public and educational talks, workshops and media events – are what brings it to public awareness. Interestingly, as a speaker, I find myself 'performed' on various 'trauma' rather than 'thriver' panels, in auto-ethnographic documentation (University College of London, University of Cape Town) seminars, even on a men's *indaba* (discussion) for ex-offenders.[20] The book has taken me on a series of journeys and encounters that themselves would require extended contextualisation and discussion in an exploration of the complex platforms for, and giving voice to,

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[20] *Glowfly Dance* also appeals to men who were children of domestic violence

'representations', and 'performances' of domestic violence in society by those who tell their story. Interestingly, in its production, the publisher's representative initially produced a book cover with a Caucasian girl on the front. 'The cover looks great', I said. 'But the girl's eyes have to be slanted. Racism is part of the book'. 'The readers won't mind', said the representative. 'The book constantly refers to slanted eyes', I said. 'Can't we find an image of an Asian girl?' 'That will be too difficult', said the publisher. 'You wouldn't accept it if it was the other way around', I said. After some insistence, the representative 'saw the light' and agreed to Photoshop a photograph of my own eyes into the image of the girl on the cover and, finally, I had my own eyes within the 'I'.
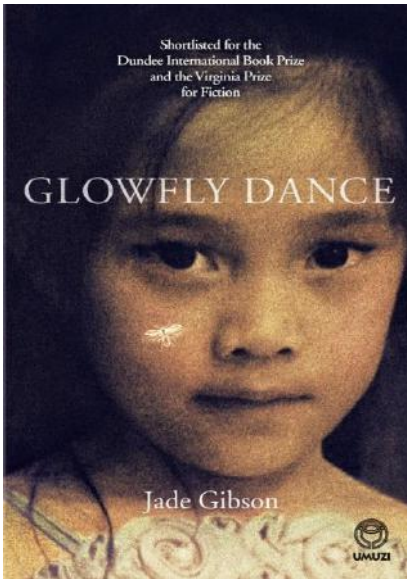
The aim of this article is to establish a sense of the complexity of the self's embodied negotiation of spaces and society, and the multiple frames and environments in which the embodied self, often on an unconscious or articulated level, is produced – and furthermore, dissociations in its sense of production or expression as an identity, and as a consequence, raise questions for further engagement and raise a challenge. How does one move from heterotopias of excluding 'others' (even aspects of our own selves) to inclusive multitopias of self, in past and present?

'*Glowfly Dance*' front cover

How does one create a mobile, flowing, effective urban space that incorporates multiple histories and engagements, gives space, voice and visibility to the economically and/or socially dispossessed, deal with xenophobia and displacements through and in relation to the material spaces and images that

people engage with and are subject to? What makes a formerly inaccessible space become accessible? How does one create changes within the status quo when embodied aspects of self may be buried or dissociated to some or full extent from consciousness? And where does the emotional and emotive lie within this; is there a theoretical approach for what is felt rather than spoken, to unpack what might be taken as 'understood 'within a perceived racial, gendered and social stasis that may have set in, within a space and time of institutional and structural change?

Is there a way to research and rework these relationships; either by exposing them through juxtaposition, making visible the invisible seams of South African society, one that previously operated through the categorisation, spatial and psychological exclusion of bodies? What is the habitus (Bourdieu 1977) of such a society and how does one gain theoretical insight?

Instead of building along the same gridlines, how might one might one rework referents of inclusion rather than exclusion, in relation to the materiality and spaces that bodies inhabit from childhood onwards; and in recognition of the multiple ways in which selves engage with the world through practice, in order to integrate alternative modes of living and connection for a future city, through spaces understood as embodied, physical and imaginal? Ideally, I would present this article with the films, as they work in conjunction, to work in an interdisciplinary mode across text, emotion, vision and as an embodied evisceration of the objectified objectivity of a racialised and gendered past. Perhaps it is only when one connects disciplines to find alternative modes of interdisciplinary engagement that one might find alternative research approaches and theoretical languages for engaging with some of the above questions.

The role of interdisciplinary centres at universities is growing worldwide. Such centres require a means of working *across* disciplines, to establish a new or common language of engagement, rather than the disengagement and specialisation of disciplines as discrete parallels behind interdisciplinary facades. Such an approach might involve moving beyond a unilateral thinking towards a polysemic inquiry that maintains academic rigour yet incorporates the material and physical, as a poesis of engagement concerned with the evocation and construction of materiality, place and space. Otherwise, despite a rhetoric of inclusion and multiplicity, one might exclude rather than include; re-traumatise rather than amend, and continue power discrepancies rather than equalise, repeating past frameworks of restraint.

This then is an article, and yet not a article, incorporating films and stories in its presentation, to engage thinking on multiple levels and open up interdisci-plinary engagement, utilising tools such as creative process, history, auto-ethnography, gender and place. It invokes a need for further research into embodied modes of inclusion and exclusion, trauma, and the construction and negotiation of identities, in relation to the flows and constraints of urban life.

The presentation works spatially, bodily, and materially, in relation to disconnects or 'heterotopias' of self, to present a research approach that I hope is felt and experienced as much as merely written, and to provide insight into how one might, returning to Foucault (1986) 'discover my absence from the place where I am' and, in turn, 'begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am' (24), to unpack the 'Eye' within the collective 'I' that subsumes selves within representational practices and absences that fail to see who and what is really there.

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'Coloured' Consciousness:
Reflecting on How Decoloniality Facilitates Belonging

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Abstract

This article undertakes an existential journey by exploring the author's experience of being classified as a 'Coloured' woman in South Africa, as per its legislation pertaining to classification, and the reflections that have emerged from it. The author's lived experience during post-apartheid South Africa has demonstrated that there ***are*** damaging internalised knowledges pertaining to her identity as a 'Coloured' woman, some of which require active decolonising. These reflections were particularly important after attending the 2020 Decolonial Summer School at the University of South Africa in Pretoria, South Africa. It was through the identification and recognition of her layered oppression and her complicity in this oppression that she found the courage to dismantle practices of subordination that were not serving her purpose of being in the world. Through the use of a dialogue format, she reflects on the inhumanity she encountered with her legal classification and how it has shaped experiences she has had in different contexts in South Africa. She also contrasts these experiences with the experiences she has had with the UNISA conference (noted above) members that transitioned their thinking and understanding of her. The replication of coloniality and apartheid through the 'Coloured' classification demands that we become conscious of practices that dehumanise us, lest we become second-hand agents of colonisation ourselves. Through engaging with decoloniality, she terms 'Coloured' consciousness as a form of critical awareness of her legal classification as 'Coloured' and how this consciousness allows her and others classified as such, to take back their agency and shift their agency in more constructive ways. More importantly, this 'Coloured' consciousness speaks to decolonising and re-humanising 'Coloured' women whose intricate 'Blackness' has been shaped by colonialism, apartheid and

violence. It is hoped that this engagement with 'Coloured' consciousness will offer a critical awareness of 'Coloured' identity in South Africa and internationally.

Keywords: 'Coloured', consciousness, colonising decolonial, decolonising, humanity, women

Introduction

> All our present struggles with respect to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity ... the sharply unequal distribution of the earth resources … these are all differing facets of the central ethno-class Man vs. Human struggle (Wynter 2003: 260 - 261).

When reflecting on Sylvia Wynter's quote above (2003: 206 - 261), her emphasis on the humanity of those deemed as inferior is evident. In her work, Sylvia Wynter demonstrates that those that have been racialised as inferior to the white man, who is considered the standard embodiment of humanity, would always be caught up in a struggle to assert their humanity. This struggle to be recognised as fully human is still evident in present day South Africa. Although colonialism and apartheid has 'ended' in South Africa, those that have been racialised as non-white continue to engage in struggles to reclaim their humanity. This struggle is multidimensional in nature and is interlocked in the race, class, gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity intersections of non-white persons. During the colonial period in South Africa, many enslaved people from Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Madagascar, East Africa and West Africa were forcibly brought to Cape Town by the Dutch and Portuguese colonisers for labour power (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Maart 2014b; Adhikari 2006, Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003; Martin 1998). These enslaved people were also coerced into sexual relations with European and Portuguese settlers and this resulted in what became termed as miscegenation. Miscegenation refers to the offspring from sexual relations between different race groups. This form of sexual relations was not limited to the enslaved but also included coerced sexual relations between European and Portuguese settlers with the indigenous population of

South Africa (Khoisan, Griqua, Namas). The offspring resulting from the latter were considered racially mixed and thus a need started developing to limit such people from multiplying. It is also worth noting that there were sexual relations between the enslaved populations and the indigenous Khoi, San, amaXhosa, Griqua and Namas that also produced offspring with varied racial features. Since these sexual relations became a concerning trend, the visiting commissioner of the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) to Cape Town in 1685 made a ruling that white men caught engaging sexually with enslaved women would be punished to work as slaves for a period of six months to a year. During 1795, the British, having fought against the Dutch, succeeded in governing Cape Town and continued this racial segregation. In the 1900s, there were several practices of excluding black people from entering the cities, two of which took the form of the Native Reserve Location Act of 1902 and the School Board Act of 1905. In this manner, racial segregation was encouraged. This historical build up in South Africa of racial segregation led to the formation of the National Party's victory and the start of the formal apartheid government in 1948. Apartheid was premised on separating the races and furthering White supremacy (Maart 2014a; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003).

In South Africa, although apartheid had legalised racial segregation and created a system of legal classification for races, colonialism was carried out by keeping races separate and ensuring white settler domination. Apartheid therefore sought to extend and formalise the previous forms of racial segregation observed during colonisation. The offspring of miscegenation had multiplied and created a racially mixed group of people whose physical features were diverse and varied. Since the apartheid government was focused on social control, they devised a 'divide and rule' strategy that sought to divide all the races formally and legally. Their only difficulty was with the racially diverse offspring of miscegenation that was too complex to categorise as a race group. This led to several attempts at racialising those with racially diverse features into racial categories. The then government's final attempt took the form of homogenising the racially diverse group into a single category labelled 'Coloured' and this became the legal classification of a group of people who were descended from the previously enslaved, from Malaysia, Indonesia (the region of Java, in particular), Bengal, neighbouring countries such as Angola and Mozambique and various indigenous groups of people. Since the apartheid government legalised racial segregation, any sexual relations between different racial groups were prohibited and thus, the very existence of the legal classi-

fication was scorned and met with disapproval. To discourage further sexual relations and to ensure minimal growth of the 'Coloured' population, the racially diverse physical features exhibited by those belonging to this group were regarded as negative and inferior (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Maart 2014b; Adhikari 2006; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003; Martin 1998). Through this, the apartheid government effectively separated the black and 'Coloured' groups from forging solidarity as the 'Coloured' population was plagued with psychological indoctrination that they were inferior, pessimistic and essentially less than human. This caused the 'Coloured' population great turmoil which is still evident in post-apartheid South Africa today.

Methodology

This article offers a reflection of my existential questions and concerns pertaining to my 'Coloured' identity, which become evident during and after attending the 2020 Decolonial Summer School in Pretoria, South Africa, organised by a team from the University of South Africa (UNISA). The presenter team was composed of, among other, professors Gordon, Maart and Ramose, whose work I engage with in this article (Gordon 2020a, b; Maart 2020a, b; Ramose 2020). The UNISA Summer School allowed me to reflect on experiences I have had because of my legal classification as a 'coloured' woman in South Africa.

The methodology used in this article takes the format of a verbal and written dialogue. This allowed me to reflect on specific questions posed to me by my mentor, Rozena Maart. These questions were designed to elicit my thoughts and knowledge on 'Coloured' identity in post-apartheid South Africa. In this dialogue, I specifically draw attention to how I as a 'Coloured' woman have become subject to acts of inhumanity through the persistent enactment of the legal classification of 'Coloured' upon my being by my colonisers.

This article is also focused on examining the emergence of a 'Coloured consciousness' within me. I define 'Coloured consciousness' as an awareness of being legally classified as 'Coloured', the impact of that awareness and the racial tropes that were created to inflict a false sense of humanity assigned to those legally classified as such, in other words, racial tropes that perpetuate a false consciousness of a people yet dependent on the labour of those very people to build a city for the settler colonials and take care of their offspring. For the purpose of this article, the term, 'coloured' has been written in inverted

commas to draw attention to it as a legal classification assigned to persons identified as neither white nor black. I endeavour to create a consciousness of the racist classification of 'Coloured' and how insidious the construction and continuation of 'Coloured' reproduces sub-humanity. The awareness of this reproduction of inhumanity should create what I have termed, 'Coloured' consciousness. This consciousness advances the critical use of 'Coloured' in scholarly avenues where we have witnessed the careless use of racial classifications in publications (such as we have in Niewoudt *et al*. 2019) in South Africa.

I attribute 'Coloured' consciousness to the learning and teaching experienced at the 2020 Decolonial Summer School in which I observed how decoloniality facilitated a sense of belonging. The discussions on decoloniality created a consciousness and an understanding that transcended the restrictions of racial classifications towards a black unity, thereby embracing our innate humanity (Gordon 2020a; 2020b; Maart 2020a, 2020b; Ramose 2020; 2019). It is my hope that my reflections on my legal classification of 'Coloured' opens further debates on race, the continued process of racialisation and the plight toward humanity in post-apartheid South Africa. I now turn to the dialogue segment of this article.

Being 'Coloured' can be Problematic

MAART: Danille, can you share with us what your identity means to you?

ARENDSE: I believe that as one grows into oneself your identity becomes more important to one. To me, identity means how I define myself. When reflecting on who I am during the Decolonial Summer School, an important event occurred to me. Regardless of who I thought I was, what I was being perceived as has had a greater impact on me compared to who I defined myself to be. This was imperative to me, as people tend to respond to one based on what they see. This has been true for me in South Africa as I have been instantly recognised as 'Coloured' in most contexts; I utilise the phrase recognised not because I was known to the seer but because my physical features were known. However, there have been instances when I have not been recognised as 'Coloured' and these instances have provided me with food for thought. Perhaps, my appearance was not after all, just 'Coloured', I thought on occasion. This led me to think of why being or not being 'Coloured' mattered

to me. Having said this, I believe that my identity has not been static but has evolved as I have grown in different areas of my life and in terms of the knowledge I have been exposed to regarding myself and the history of South Africa. In essence, I don't believe I can separate my identity from South Africa – the emergence of my identity – as its history has impacted on how I understand myself. The history of South Africa has influenced how I understand my physical appearance and the way I speak. There are so many aspects of my identity that I believe are tied to my South African heritage.

MAART: What does it mean to be 'Coloured'?

ARENDSE: I only truly started thinking about being 'Coloured' when I attended a historically black university. It was the first time I was taught by black and 'Coloured' educators. It was also the first time, besides the neighbourhood where I lived that I was surrounded by black and 'Coloured' people as the majority. My interaction with specifically 'Coloured' individuals during my university allowed me to rethink my racialised identity. In previous spaces of learning, I was educated by white people and they had not taught or allowed me to question my identity as a 'Coloured' woman. In my university space, I felt more accepted and this allowed me to feel connected. There was a sense of familiarity with the 'Coloured' people in this space that I had not known but felt instantly [connected to]. So to address your question, prior to university, I had not really thought about my identity as 'Coloured'. I accepted it as a fact of life. I was 'Coloured' and that was it, nothing more.

MAART: When did you become conscious of what being 'Coloured' means to you?

ARENDSE: It was only at university that I truly became conscious of what being 'Coloured' meant to me. Through the development of my years of consciousness over the years, the meaning I attach to 'Coloured' has changed. For me, in this present day, 'Coloured' does not signify a race group, instead it signifies an ethnic variety and a plurality. 'Coloured' speaks to a culture of people that are so varied but similarly share a history of colonisation and oppression through the suppression of their varied ancestry. I love that when I speak of 'Coloured' now, I mean plural heritage.

MAART: Can you talk a little about when you first understood what the term 'Coloured' meant?

ARENDSE: When I was young, I understood 'Coloured' as my race group and the way in which I identified myself on all documents both at school and anywhere where that information was requested; it was usually asked for demographic reasons. Then there was also my consciousness of 'Coloured' during my university years when occasionally reading material on 'Coloured' identity. I started to form a clearer idea of what the term 'Coloured' actually meant. As such, if I had not endeavoured to read further on 'Coloured' history and identity, I would have only thought that it was a race group. After my readings, I now understood the term 'Coloured' to mean that I belong to diverse ancestry. The term originated during apartheid when the regime tried to classify people born from diverse ancestry where offspring was considered to be of a different race group. In this sense, I have come to understand 'Coloured' to mean racial diversity and the combination of different cultures and racialised identities.

MAART: Has it been a problematic term for you? If so, can you tell us why?

ARENDSE: When I relocated to a different region than where I was raised and took my undergraduate degree, I felt more invisible and simultaneously highly visible because of my appearance. In Pretoria I hardly saw 'Coloured' individuals. At work I was one of two 'Coloured' individuals depending on the year, as sometimes I was the only one. Over time, I became accustomed to the absence of 'Coloured' people in the region. It was however in this region, due to the lack of 'Coloured' people, that some people struggled to place me into a race group. It was also in this region that I became conscious of my appearance in a very different way. My acknowledgement of my legal classification, 'Coloured' then became a means through which people would communicate the stereotypes and false truths they had heard about 'Coloured' people. This would place me in the awkward position of having to either deny these stereotypes or accept them and laugh them off. On the first few occasions, I would laugh and acknowledge that there were such stereotypes but I did not believe in these stereotypes. Later, when the occasion arose, I felt the pressing need to resist any acknowledgment of 'Coloured' being tied to specific stereotypes. I also felt a growing frustration towards people placing and

restricting my identity according to 'Coloured' stereotypes. It also became part of my defence that I could and would not speak for all 'Coloured' people when I appeared to be the only one in the room or in the conversation. Against this backdrop, I have become conscious of my appearance and how people perceive me. I have also become aware that due to stereotypes and my appearance, some people will not gravitate towards me but instead see me as a potential opponent. I say this in light of being unable to find solidarity with fellow black women, as my appearance and the stereotypes of my legal identity at times, appear to hinder solidarity with black women. It is through these experiences that 'Coloured' has become problematic for me, especially since it is a legal classification used for all legal documents. The legalisation of the term 'Coloured' obscured the fact that it was a social construction and not an actual racial classification. This has resulted in the persistence of negative perceptions and increased the uncritical use of the term 'Coloured' in various contexts in South Africa. The very existence of people labelled as 'Coloured' are still considered to be problematic due to colonial and apartheid-informed notions of what it means to be human (Gordon 2010; Wynter 2003; Fanon 1986). This allowed me to question why being a 'Coloured' woman complicates the expression of my humanity. Are we not still perpetuating degrees of inhumanity in South Africa by condoning the use of 'Coloured' as a racial classification? More importantly, why were white men and white women able to deem our humanity as sub-human by labelling us as 'Coloured' (Ramose 2019; Gordon 2010; Wynter 2003; Fanon 1986)? Why did they feel they had this authority to name us (Ramose 2019)?

The Dangers associated with Coloniality in post-Apartheid South Africa

MAART: Having listened to you talk about your journey, what kind of history does the term Coloured carry for you? I want to be clear in how I utilise the term Coloured. It is a politically charged word for some: to me it signifies a racial classification that was imposed but became an ethnic and cultural identity that people from my community came to embody and give life to. I identify as Black. I also identify as Coloured. I regard my ethnic and cultural identity as Coloured and I do not place it in inverted commas as unreal, false, imagined, or non-existent. I think people have various reasons for placing the term Coloured in inverted commas, some of which are to indicate that it is a

social construction. I am not here to doubt or cast judgement on those reasons. I prefer to state what mine are, from the outset.

ARENDSE: The history associated with 'Coloured' is related to two particular laws ratified during apartheid, namely: The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and The Immorality Act of 1950, which prohibited interracial relations and thus those born from such sexual relations, were negatively perceived by White supremacists. Since 'coloured' men and women were born from this miscegenation, they were automatically regarded as illegal and negative traits were associated with their appearance (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Shefer *et al*. 2018; Josias 2015; Maart 2014a; 2014b; Erasmus 2011; Adhikari 2006; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003*;* Martin 1998). The apartheid government created the 'Coloured' category to maintain social control and further divisive politics among black men and women of different skin pigmentation (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Erasmus 2011; Adhikari 2006; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003*;* Martin 1998). As a result, the racial classification of 'Coloured' was legalised during apartheid through the Population Registration Act of 1950 (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Maart 2014b; Erasmus 2011; Adhikari 2006; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003*;* Martin 1998). The apartheid government ensured that those classified under the category of 'Coloured' were made to feel inferior and their morality questionable (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Maart 2014b; Adhikari 2006; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003). The injustice and contested morality associated with those classified as 'Coloured' during and post-apartheid continues to be interwoven in law and part of the justice system (Ramose 2019; Adhikari 2006; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003). These laws formally introduced and legalised during apartheid have directly impacted on the term 'coloured' and how it is presently understood in post-apartheid South Africa. Although colonisation was responsible for the initial formulation of racial segregation, apartheid had legalised it and legally classified various people as 'Coloured'. In post-apartheid South Africa, the continued use of apartheid classification emphasises the importance of understanding history, particularly in relation to the complex history of how 'Coloured' was termed during apartheid.

MAART: When you look back at the history of racial classification in South Africa, what does it evoke?

ARENDSE: When I think of the history of racial classification in South Africa,

it evokes emotions of unfairness and injustice. The racial and legal classification of 'Coloured' in South Africa has subjected those with this classification to a questionable humanity. More importantly, the apartheid government succeeded in exposing 'Coloured' people to fictitious narratives so that they would internalise these narratives and believe them. For me, this took the form of how I did not question my identity when I was young. I knew I was 'Coloured' and I knew this was my race group. This has been the long-lasting effect that the racial classification has had in South Africa. Having said this, racial classification has impacted on the conditions under which 'Coloured' people have been racialised which have determined their materiality. The racial classification can therefore be viewed as a system of oppression through which the humanity of those deemed non-white were constantly contested. These racial classifications feed into racial tropes that have become inescapable. The premise of colonisation and apartheid was to ensure the separation of races, and consequently, this racial divide was justified and promoted the dehumanising of those viewed as objects (non-white), because only the 'settler' (white) or the 'coloniser' could be subjects and fully human (Boswell *et al*. 2019; Snaza & Tarc 2019; Maart 2020a; 2020b; 2014a; Josias 2015; Mendez 2015; Lugones 2010; Adhikari 2006; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003; Wynter 2003). For this reason, the history of violence is an inescapable reality for 'Coloured' men and women in South Africa. Although colonisation and apartheid have ended and we are in a democratic post-apartheid period in South Africa, 'Coloured' men and women still face violence, but in the form of epistemology and ontology (Ramose 2019, Boswell *et al*. 2019; Snaza & Tarc 2019; Shefer *et al*. 2018; Mendez 2015; Maart 2014a, b; Gordon 2010; Lugones 2010; Adhikari 2006; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003; Wynter, 2003). This epistemic violence is particularly rife in the continued use of racial classifications in South Africa that still unconsciously feed into the hierarchical position of races and that 'Whiteness' is still superior and 'Blackness' inferior.

MAART: You and I discussed the research undertaken by a group of scholars from the University of Stellenbosch. What are some of your critiques of that process?

ARENDSE: The research published by the University of Stellenbosch scholars caused quite a stir in both academic and media circles. To me, the research was

framed in a manner that endorsed historically pessimistic connotations associated with 'Coloured' women. The title, *'*Age- and education-related effects on cognitive functioning in Coloured South African women' (Nieuwoudt *et al.* 2019), alludes to the classification of 'Coloured' as an actual racial category and ignores the historical and contextual factors associated with the social construction of 'Coloured' (Boswell *et al.* 2019*;* Dalmage 2018*;* Shefer *et al.* 2018). To be honest, when reading the title, I was already alarmed. This was further supported by the abstract that made conclusions based on a small sample of 60 women. There were other aspects such as the following quote, 'Young to middle-aged Coloured women present with low cognitive function and which is significantly influenced by education' (Nieuwoudt *et al*. 2019: 1). This quote suggests, as does the title, that 'Coloured' women, on the whole, as race group are problematic. It furthermore suggests that they are cognitively delayed and that their education has impaired their cognitive functioning. In just this short quote, the race, gender, legal classification, cognitive functioning and education of 'Coloured' women are interlocked in their oppression. The research also echoes previous narratives associated with 'Coloured' women as inferior to the white norm. This research did not account for the historical effects of colonisation and apartheid on 'coloured' women which deliberately disadvantaged them in terms of how they were racialised, their education, physical location (forced removals), relationships and freedom of movement. For me, this empirical study emphasised the need to critically engage with the social construction of 'coloured' women. It demonstrated that in 2019, there were still prevailing racist and sexist notions of 'Coloured' women in South Africa and this knowledge was being presented as scientific evidence. This motivated me to engage with my legal racial classification as a 'Coloured' woman. The research by Niewoudt *et al*. (2019) highlighted how 'Coloured; women had been essentialised through racist ideology and this to me, was highly problematic, considering the inherent heterogeneity from my varied ancestry (Boswell *et al*. 2019; Shefer *et al.* 2018; Maart 2014b; Adhikari 2006). I was pleased that the article was eventually retracted after a petition was sent to the publishers of the journal. This research, however, presented me with an opportunity to dismantle harmful knowledge practices that persistently perpetuate racism and sexism onto 'Coloured' women in post-apartheid South Africa. I did not want to justify my existence or humanity to the oppressor; instead I wanted to challenge prevailing knowledge on 'Coloured' women such as myself.

Danille Elize Arendse

MAART: You noted how the Decolonial Summer School of 2020 got you thinking about your Coloured identity. Can you share some of those thoughts?

ARENDSE: The Decolonial Summer School raised a consciousness within me and allowed me to ask myself a few questions related to my identity as a 'coloured' woman [most of which I have tried to cover in this article]. It allowed me to get a greater understanding of what decoloniality means and its application in my life. I understood decoloniality to mean that there are colonial remnants still evident in the modern world. Moreover, our knowledge and way of being has and continues to be influenced by coloniality. For this reason, there needs to be an intentional interrogation of colonially informed knowledge and its impact on identities today (Gordon 2020a; 2020b; Maart 2020a; 2020b; Ramose 2020; Mendez 2015; Lugones 2010; Wynter 2003). In my case, I solely focus on how coloniality continues to permeate the identity of 'Coloured' women such as myself and why decolonization of 'Coloured' as a legal classification is imperative. The experiences I had during the Decolonial Summer School were instances that allowed me to revisit my legal identity as a 'Coloured' woman. In the first instance, there was a colleague of mine (black woman) that attended the school with me. We had talked at work previously but never to the extent that we could go beyond the surface. It was through the talks and the discussion of issues raised during the Decolonial Summer School that we started to form an actual connection with one another. She indicated to me, 'I didn't really know who you were but during this summer school, I am realising that we have a lot in common'. It was in this instance that I realised that we were separated by appearance but not in social justice. It also occurred to me that she was able to look past my identity as a 'Coloured' woman and see me as a black woman.

In the second instance, there were men and women from Brazil in attendance at the Decolonial Summer School. It was strange that although I had nothing in common with them, I had noticed their appearance and felt that there was something similar among us. During one of the discussions, the one Brazilian woman noted, '*I see myself as a Black woman*'. This was striking to me because I realised how easily she had said it. It then occurred to me that perhaps I had internalised that I could not claim being black because of my appearance and how people had positioned me outside of the construction of black. In my interaction with the Brazilian people, they had also noticed my appearance and wanted to know where I was from. After informing them that

I am South Africa and legally classified as 'Coloured', they understood, because they had heard about this racial classification. In later interaction, the Brazilian man however uttered something to me in Portuguese. I indicated that I did not understand, and he responded, '*I am so sorry. When I see you, I keep thinking that you are Portuguese and then I speak to you in Portuguese. It is amazing how much you look like us*'. I agreed as I had also noticed the similarities in our appearance, and I understood that I meant Portuguese as one of the main spoken languages of black people from Brazil. Although these incidences are different, the interaction I had with fellow participants were important and essential for forging a decolonial future. And whilst the UNISA Decolonial Summer School of 2020 was over it was definitely not forgotten.

MAART: You once noted that being Coloured is inescapable. Can you elaborate on that statement? Is there a difference between a legalised identity, a socialised identity, and a politicised identity, which as per the latter, you take up yourself, wilfully, with the awareness that you've chosen it for yourself?

ARENDSE: I feel that in many experiences that I have had, being 'Coloured' has been inescapable. In most spaces in South Africa, I have been identified as 'Coloured' by others as well as self-identifying as 'Coloured' when people were confused by my physical appearance. This meant that wherever I went in South Africa, my legal classification as a 'Coloured' woman was a description I could not escape. In terms of the differences between my legal, socialised and politicised identity, I will elaborate on each of these. Previously, I had no need to question my legal identity as 'Coloured' because I had internalised that I was 'Coloured'. What this specifically meant to me is unclear, although it would be fair to deduce that it meant that this race group was legitimate. My internalisation of 'Coloured' also translated into the fact that I knew I could not be white or black. These racial categories were not available to me. I had learned to recognise my appearance as an integral part of being 'Coloured'. In this way, I was socialised into my legal identity. Another aspect that contributed to my internalising of 'coloured' was that I had been educated by white institutions and thus they were upholding White supremacy (Mendez 2015; Erasmus 2011*;* Lugones 2010; Adhikari 2006; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003; Fanon 1986). My legal identity was thus upheld through my socialisation of continuously identifying as a 'Coloured' woman and others recognising and confirming my legal identity as a 'Coloured' woman. This is contrasted with

my education at a historically black institution where I experienced belonging and the need to rethink my racial identity. Due to my education at white institutions, I had internalised the apartheid category of 'Coloured' as truth and a signifier of my identity. It was only when I was confronted with alternative learning and education that I was able to identify my internalised oppression. In other words, I had not only become 'Coloured' in my appearance but also in thought. I had internalised my oppressive self as an oppressive way of being that was inherent in my origin. This, I believe, is the very danger of coloniality, as it seeks to encourage your acceptance of being dehumanised (Gordon 2020a; 2020b; 2010; Maart 2020a; 2020b; Ramose 2020; Boswell *et al*. 2019; Mendez 2015; Lugones 2010; Wynter 2003; Fanon 1986). Through this consciousness, I became aware of how 'Coloured' as an identity has always been used for political reasons. When identifying as a black woman, my identity becomes politicised because it acts in contradiction with my legal and socialised identity. It is, however, an identity I choose. Being black does not mean that I have not been influenced by my legal and socialised identity and for this reason; I regard 'Coloured' more as an ethnic identity.

MAART: What are some of the stereotypes that you were confronted with in the new location outside of the Western Cape and how did you tackle them?

ARENDSE: Since moving away from Cape Town to Pretoria, there has been a transition in my emotions towards how people have racialised and gendered me as a 'Coloured' woman. Stereotypes such as my hair being 'bushy' or 'very curly', and my body being stereotyped as 'you have hips and bums (sic)' were used to racialise me and gender me as a 'Coloured' woman. Through these stereotypes, my hair and body features are interpreted as negative. Interestingly, these same features are also used to separate me from black women, as my hair is 'too straight' or 'You don't have a bum' or I am 'too light'. My skin colour, hair and body shape therefore become the means by which I am both separate from blackness but still exhibit enough blackness to not be mistaken for white. There is thus an ambiguity forced upon me by others who do not know how to make sense of my physical appearance (Adhikari 2006; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003). I experienced some frustration towards the persistence of stereotypes towards me and this created a shift in me wanting to actively dismantle those perceptions and stereotypes. I felt that there was an internalised stigma that men and women were projecting on me because of my

racial classification. I become visible in spaces where there are not enough women with ambiguity and thus, I complicate the accepted racial binary of white and black. My experiences with confronting stereotypes have allowed me to identify with feelings of inferiority, oppression, shame, doubt and a lack of belonging (Dalmage 2018; Isaacs-Martin 2018; Shefer *et al*. 2018; Adhikari 2006; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003). Consequently, these negative stereotypes had also facilitated experiences of 'Other-ing'. Through this, I constantly fluctuated between belonging and un-belonging in a context I called home (Gordon 2010). Trying to address the stereotypes meant that I needed to address knowledge of 'coloured' that was projected onto me. There was no point in upsetting myself when I realised that those who projected did not know any better; they did not fully understand how the term 'Coloured' came about nor did they comprehend the complex and varied ancestry of 'Coloured' people. For this reason, when I was irritated or frustrated by stereotypes placed on me, I would respond, saying: 'You do know that Coloured is not an actual race group, right?' It would then be up to the person to engage me further if they were interested in understanding my history and ancestry. I feel that this has been a more productive way of responding to stereotypes instead of merely opposing the use of stereotypes.

MAART: Has there been a marked difference in the way in which you experience your identity after 1994? Have you spoken to your parents and/or family members about this and do they feel that there has been a shift in the way that they see themselves or what they believe others see them?

ARENDSE: After becoming conscious of my identity as a 'Coloured' woman, I engaged both my parents and my grandfather on their experiences during apartheid and how they were treated during this period. I remember my grandfather saying that he loved swimming, but many beaches close to his home were not open to non-whites. He could alternatively swim in the very early hours of the morning as 'Coloured' people were only permitted to swim at certain beaches and during certain times. This was quite significant for me, as I love swimming, and having been fortunate enough to swim at any time or at any beach in post-apartheid South Africa. When speaking to my mother, I remember her recalling how she was paid the least [in her job] because she was both 'Coloured' and a woman. When thinking of my own employment, I have been fortunate because black and 'Coloured' women fought this oppression so

that women such as me could have a better future. In speaking with my father, he recalled how they were all treated differently because of their racial classification. It was also because of these classifications that they were limited in where they could work and in how much they could earn. Thus, as a young man, he needed to leave school and start working for his family. These remnants of poverty I can still see today, as there was no money for school and the possibility of further education was not an option my father felt was available to me. This I have come to understand by understanding the historical, political and social consequences of apartheid. After completing my Masters' degree, I saw a change in how my family members see themselves. I think they had perhaps held onto notions of apartheid that some spaces were not available to us, as 'Coloured' people. My postgraduate education symbolised that in a post-apartheid society we were able to do things not previously permitted during apartheid. Although there are more opportunities available to me as a 'Coloured' woman in post-apartheid, and I am able to re-imagine my identity, I am aware that being 'Coloured' remains contentious. Thus, how others see me continues to be problematic and this is why we still battle with stereotypes that are mistaken for truths in the post-apartheid era. Post-1994, there are definite differences in the way I experience my identity compared to my parents and grandfather, but there are also similarities in how we are perceived and understood. Based on this similarity, I feel that it is necessary for me to engage with the 'Coloured' identity in our current post-apartheid society.

Decoloniality Dismantles Stereotypes

MAART: What has decolonisation meant to you?

ARENDSE: Decolonisation has become non-negotiable for me as a 'Coloured' woman because it assists me in emancipating myself from the dehumanising practise of my legal classification. Decolonisation will further promote black solidarity instead of furthering the separation of the races. I believe that a prerequisite to decolonisation is a consciousness of the fictitious nature of the racial classification of 'coloured' and how it has only been employed for social control (Isaacs-Martin 2018; Erasmus 2011; Adhikari 2006; Ahluwalia & Zegeye 2003). I draw on Maart's definition of decolonisation (2020b) in which she indicated that to decolonise, means '... to detach yourself

as the colonised subject from the coloniser'. It also involves removing yourself and your behaviour from being regulated by the coloniser. As such, by de-colonising myself as a perpetual victim of 'Coloured' identity, I was removing the negative emotions (inferiority, oppression, shame, doubt and a lack of belonging) associated with accepting this regulation over me. In my refusal of this legal classification as a signifier of my racial identity, I was not only decolonising myself, but actively transforming who I wanted to be. I envision my process of decolonisation to take the form of 'Coloured' consciousness. I define 'Coloured' consciousness as an awareness of being legally classified as 'Coloured' and being conscious of the artificial tropes of inhumanity assigned to this legal identity. This 'Coloured' consciousness as I have termed it, calls for the critical use of 'Coloured' and the rejection of this legal classification as bearing no truth but promoting stereotypes. More importantly, 'Coloured' consciousness speaks to the rejection of 'Coloured' women as homogenous and having questionable humanity. Since 'Coloured' is automatically tied to colonial and apartheid evils, the need to decolonise ultimately speaks to the eradication of the legal classification and allowing men and women suppressed under this classification to be liberated. This is why decolonisation is imperative for me and my identity. Based on this, 'Coloured' con-sciousness is an essential part of the decolonization process for me and serves to liberate 'Coloured' women such as myself, from racialisation and inhumanity.

MAART: What is the way forward for you as a psychologist in the country and as someone who is existentially grappling with the aftermath of apartheid classification on your personal being?

ARENDSE: In reflection on my identity, the construction and use of 'Coloured' as a legal classification has not only hidden the moral and injustice on which colonialism and apartheid was built but created justification for dehumanising those under this classification. The apartheid government created a system of dehumanisation and legalised who was considered human. Those deemed as less than human needed to be policed and controlled. Within this, even my gender as a 'Coloured' woman was racialized and policed. Although apartheid ended, the racialised and gendered attributes from apartheid still inform how men and women respond to me as a 'Coloured' woman. The reproduction of apartheid notions of me as a 'Coloured' woman is how oppressive systems continue to exist and are perpetuated in society. The

entire premise of creating the 'Coloured' classification was therefore to ensure that those classified as such would know that they are not fully human. They may have acquired some features similar to those deemed as humans (white men and women) but this did not translate to humanness (Snaza & Tarc 2019; Mendez 2015; Lugones 2010; Wynter 2003). As Ramose (2019) points out, the justifications and apparent truths informing our history is burdened with morality. The justifications for apartheid and creating the 'Coloured' classification should therefore also be viewed as the concealing and suppression of truth. In essence, the continuous legalisation of 'Coloured' disregards our equality as humans and communicates the refusal of seeing those labelled as such as human beings (Ramose 2019; Wynter 2003).This does not mean that new meanings and values cannot be attached to 'coloured' but only in as far as an ethnic identity. In truth there is no race such as 'Coloured' and there never was prior to the interpretation, constructions and labelling of colonisers and apartheid-enforcers. The way forward for me as a psychologist in South Africa is to think about the importance of 'Coloured' consciousness. My consciousness through decoloniality requires me to question the knowledge that had been presented to me as truth and that had never truly served me. It only served to silence me and make me complicit in my own oppression (Gordon 2020a; 2020b; Maart 2020a; 2020b; Ramose 2020 Wynter 2003). I believe that it is important to grapple with your identity and how you wish to be identified. 'Coloured' women are then free to decide their identity and not be subjected to predetermined stereotypes incorporated under a fictitious legal classification. This would be the start of re-humanising, which would involve learning to be human after suffering under dehumanising practices such as the 'coloured' classification (Ramose 2019; Wynter 2003). As a result, I see myself as entering a journey of decolonial thinking and as constantly evolving in how I think about myself and my identity. I don't believe my way of seeing 'coloured' should be seen as universal, but it should offer a perspective on the aftermath of the apartheid classifications. In my personal capacity, I want to continue to engage in dissecting 'coloured' identity and the different nuances prevalent in South Africa.

MAART: Has the Decolonial Summer School assisted this process in any way?

ARENDSE: The confidence with which Professors Gordon, Ramose and

Maart communicated their knowledge of decoloniality spoke to their wisdom and innate nature of teaching. The concepts were not prescribed but rather offered for interpretation. There was no uniformity in how one should decolonise or to what decoloniality should be because our context is the determining factor when deciding to engage in decoloniality. This was perhaps the most profound aspect for me, as I had become accustomed to prescriptions of how theory should be used and that deviating from this, renders it useless. They advocated the notion that I was a producer of knowledge instead of a perpetual student (Gordon 2020a; 2020b; Maart 2020a; 2020b; 2014a; Ramose 2020; Ramose 2019). In my experiences during the Decolonial Summer School, there are obvious parallels with previous experiences I have had because of my 'Coloured' appearance. The difference between these experiences was that there was no need for me to dismantle the stereotypes or perceptions at the summer school interactions. There was something in the teaching and education of the Decolonial Summer School that had allowed the [previously mentioned] black woman to recognise me as a fellow black woman. We had been colleagues for a while and somehow, she had never regarded me as a black woman or as someone that she shared mutual struggles with before the summer school. In this instance, decoloniality had facilitated belonging. It had created black solidarity among us merely by being part of the summer school. What was it about the Decolonial summer school that allowed her to see me beyond my appearance? I had not changed in terms of my appearance, but her interpretation of my appearance had changed. This drew me to question the central messages of the summer school. The teachings were not only educational, they were facilitating change. They required us to recognise how coloniality was operating to separate us as black women and more importantly, coloniality was allowing us to accept our sub-humanity due to our racialised and gendered existence. Decoloniality advocated for a shift in thinking that transcended the grips of colonial knowledge. This forced us to question what we had come to know as truths and to inspect how we were upholding colonial notions of humanity (Gordon 2020a; 2020b; Maart 2020a; 2020b; Ramose 2020; Snaza & Tarc 2019; Wynter 2003). Furthermore, critical consciousness was raised and shared during the summer school. The Decolonial Summer School also forced us to inspect how White supremacy had created racial classifications as part of the divide and rule strategy and through our acceptance of these classifications, we were complicit in our own oppression (Gordon 2020a; 2020b; Maart 2020a; 2020b; Ramose 2020). This

also brings me to the separation of black and 'Coloured' women that was enforced by apartheid. There were no substantial differences, only colonial and apartheid laws that ingrained these differences. This corresponds to how my similarity in appearance with the Brazilian men and women did not ostracise but invite belonging and acceptance. Racial mixing and mixed heritage had been labelled with negativity only to discourage interracial relations. Witnessing how easily the Brazilian woman had claimed her Blackness was inspiring to me. It had allowed me to see how I was still subjecting myself to the confines of the 'Coloured' classification. I was black in attitude and thinking but was scared to openly voice it. In seeing how she claimed her Blackness, it facilitated the unshackling of my closeted Blackness because men and women had always subjected me to only being a 'Coloured' woman. There was perhaps a hidden curriculum present in the summer school, that of emancipation and recognition of being already fully human. My Blackness did not need to conform to the colonial conceptions of Blackness, but instead could be a Blackness that was inclusive of my diversity. My Blackness had a language of its own and through decolonial thinking, I was able to celebrate this unconventionality.

Conclusion

This article focused on my personal experiences of being classified as a 'Coloured' woman in South Africa through the legalised system of classification. My reflections, through the question and answer format, were particularly important after attending the 2020 Decolonial Summer School. During and after engaging with the issues raised during the summer school, I felt a sense of agency to redefine myself through decolonial eyes. It was through the recognition of my oppression and my complicity in this oppression that I found the courage to dismantle systems of subordination that were not serving me. I reflected on the inhumanity I have encountered with my legal classification through 'Coloured' consciousness, and why being critical of this legal classification is imperative. I also contrast these experiences with the experiences I had with conference members that transitioned in their thinking and understanding of me. My experiences during post-apartheid South Africa have demonstrated that there are damaging internalised knowledges regarding 'Coloured' women that require active decolonising. It is with this in mind that my intention is not to be recognised or affirmed, but rather to make the

invisible, more visible and in so doing, give a voice to the silenced narratives. I am encouraged to build a future where I belong and that celebrates my difference. I believe that engaging in my narratives as a 'Coloured' woman, whose humanity has been questionable, I am able to challenge the truths forced upon me and reclaim my humanity. The replication of coloniality and apartheid through the 'Coloured' classification demands that we become conscious of practices that dehumanise or else we become agents of oppression ourselves. Through a 'Coloured' consciousness, we become critical of the legal classification of 'Coloured' and allow those labelled as such, to take back their agency and shift their narrative in more constructive ways. More importantly, this 'Coloured' consciousness speaks to decolonizing and re-humanizing 'Coloured' women whose intricate Blackness has been shaped by colonialism and violence.

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Decolonisation and Food: The Burden of Colonial Gastronomy – Stories from West Bengal

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Abstract

This article makes an effort to unpack the ways in which the traditional food customs of precolonial Bengal were colonised by the Europeans, especially the British, followed by the Portuguese. In the course of its unpacking, the article reflects rather elaborately, as the details reveal, on how the colonisation of food customs and culinary practices of precolonial Bengal opened gateways for the Europeans to fragment the traditional society of precolonial Bengal socially, culturally, racially and communally. With scant references to the colonisation of food in Cape Town, South Africa, where the Dutch brought Bengali families in the middle of the 1600s as enslaved peoples to assist them in setting up a halfway station for their continued colonisation of India, this article also explores the various possibilities of decolonising the colonial and capitalistic invasions of European and North American food customs and culinary practices in contemporary West Bengal, in particular.

Keywords: Traditional food customs, precolonial Bengal, colonisation, culinary practices, decolonising food practices

Introduction

This article unpacks the ways in which the traditional food customs of preco-

lonial Bengal were colonised by the Europeans, especially the British, followed by the Portuguese. In the course of its argument, the article reflects rather elaborately, as the details reveal, on how the colonisation of food customs and culinary practices of precolonial Bengal opened gateways for the Europeans to fragment the traditional society of precolonial Bengal socially, culturally, racially and communally. With scant references to the colonisation of food in Cape Town, South Africa, where the Dutch brought Bengali families in the middle of the 1600s as enslaved peoples to assist them in setting up a halfway station for their continued colonisation of India, this article also explores the various possibilities of decolonising the colonial and capitalistic invasions of European and North American food customs and culinary practices in contemporary West Bengal, in particular.

Subject Location: A Political Point of Departure

In introducing this article, we assert our political point of departure as a means to offer our subject location, both in terms of our personal interest and political commitment to the process of decolonisation as a Bengali man born in India, and a Black South African woman, whose heritage stems from the old slave quarter of the Cape: whose maternal grandmother's heritage is directly linked to the enslavement of the Bengali from Bengal, India and the Bengali Javanese from Indonesia by the Dutch and trafficked to the Cape, and whose maternal grandfather's heritage stems from the Xhosa people of the Eastern Cape. We situate these subject identities as part of a larger practice focused on the day-to-day activities of the colonised, of which we are both a part. We wish to assert from the outset that colonisation, which first and foremost stages itself upon the mind and the body of the colonised (Biko 1978: 25) can only fully be addressed upon the full realisation of its multi-layered operation. And, whilst this is a painstaking process for the colonised, for the most part, the consciousness derived during the stages of its unpacking provide a possibility for understanding the social and material conditions that were constructed in order for colonialism to flourish; the knowledge of these social and material conditions, which we take up later in this article, offer us a broad spectrum from which to locate the many ways in which colonisation was staged upon the mind, body and soul, and as this article demonstrates more precisely, the palate of the colonised (*Palates of Pleasure*, Maart & Dey forthcoming).

Methodology

In this article, we examine culture as a key component of the social conditions of usurpation and colonialism, linking culture and identity to food as a practice of being-in-the-world that is central to the daily life of the colonised, which the coloniser seizes and appropriates (*Palates of Pleasure*, Maart & Dey forthcoming). Existentialism allows us the possibility of reflecting upon how we exist in the world, as well as the possibility of understanding our respective contexts through the many relations of our engagement within the world. We will, as such, address some of these existential elements that motivated us to engage with the phenomenon of decolonisation and decoloniality as scholars relaying our experiences, whilst also relying on the social research method of auto-ethnography, which offers us the benefit of a select number of narratives, which simultaneously situate our locations as well as sets up the context from which we draw.

One author was born within a Bengali family in the city of Kolkata and his mother tongue is Bengali. Since his childhood days, he observed that both his parents and grandparents made a concerted effort to introduce him to various forms of writing in the Bengali language. Given the overwhelming presence of the English language across the British colonies, India was, and remains, no exception. The other author was born in Cape Town within a family where her grandparents were the head of the household; her maternal grandmother spoke openly of her Bengali and Hindu heritage. This was not only evident by her dress and physical appearance and the fact that she was racialised and the subject of racial slurs in the street that were directed at her Indian heritage but also because an oral tradition of handing over ancestral information from one generation to the next was an active practice in the old slave quarters of the Cape as it is in many communities on the African continent and in the African diaspora. Her maternal grandfather was a Xhosa man, who married her grandmother after her first husband passed on; that marriage, due to the laws of apartheid, only took place in 1954, when her mother was 16 years old. The combination of their culinary skills was passed on to the said author which she relishes to this day. The knowledge upon meeting her paternal grandmother the week of her 19th birthday, brought the history of her culinary interest to full circle. It was revealed then that her paternal grandmother had met her paternal grandfather in a hotel where she worked as the cook. The love and joy in preparing food and delighting in the

varied cuisine her culture has to offer through its indigenous plants, its sea (knowledge gained from her maternal grandfather who was also a fisherman) and the efforts of the Dutch and the British in acquiring spices from India in their colonising conquest, all of which South Africa has an abundance of, are all drawn into the colourful and flavourful array of the plates that were created in her hotel and in her neighbourhood, which the author reproduces in her home. As such, as co-authors we also cite our collaborative work, *Palates of Pleasure*, which provides a historical journey and critique of food, culture, community, colonisation and desire in our respective locations of Bengal and Cape Town, where we also trace the acts of colonisation by our common colonisers, the British, Dutch, Portuguese and the French.

For the purpose of this article, the Bengali author will centre his experiences, and draw from them when asserting the history of Bengali cuisine that came to define his palate; the South African author does not take the same approach in this collaboration but one which offers an integration of their joint analysis and critique. All forms of expression that refer to 'I' reflect on the Bengali author who centres his family's culinary history throughout the article. The autoethnographic narratives shared and foregrounded are those of the Bengali author. It is our belief, given the parameters of a journal article, that this collaboration offers readers an opportunity to understand the history of colonisation of Bengali gastronomy, which for the purpose of this article, remains our primary focus. This article explores various social, cultural, racialised and communal factors that led to the disruption of Indigenous food customs and culinary practices in Bengal during the colonial era and its continuity in the contemporary modern-day Bengal.

Food, House, Language, Home and Away

For the Bengali author, the persistence of his Bengali parents and grandparents enabled the Bengali in him to remain rooted in his mother tongue, and on the other hand, allowed him to evolve epistemologically and ontologically in a contextual manner, understanding his location, language, culture, identity, food customs and practices, as something that they owned and passed on to him. He understood the latter more profoundly over the years as intellectual property and ancestral property.

When he was admitted to an English medium school for the first time, the British colonial pedagogical practices made him feel very disconnected

from his Bengali identity and rather uncomfortable; he realised, much later, that such pedagogical practices meant to. At that time, whilst he was not acquainted with terms such as colonialism, postcolonialism, decolonialism, coloniality, postcoloniality and decoloniality, he sensed that something was terribly awry. The comfort and ease that he was afforded while reading and learning in Bengali at his home did not happen at his school when he was taught the English language, mannerisms and expressions.

Let me now take a more personal approach, as I utilise the term 'I' and direct the personal impact of my family history. During the latter part of my schooling, I realised that English is not only a language, but an authoritative phenomenon imposed by the British colonisers, that pushed me to act against my social, cultural and historical roots. Such experiences of 'complex social relations' are best expressed by Lefebvre (1991: 18) as they made me feel 'isolated and inward-looking. I experience my individual consciousness split into two (into the private consciousness and the social or public consciousness); it also became atomised (individualism, specialisation, separation between different spheres of activity, etc.)'.

In other words, returning to the memories of my school days as an adult, I recognised this period of early schooling as one that forged a process of contradiction within me by the manner in which I was taught English, and the accompanying mannerisms, relegated my Bengali language as insignificant; it was at this stage that my bodily reaction and not my vocabulary was able to identify colonialism (Fanon 1967: 61).

With the passage of time, I became acquainted with the above-named terms, and gradually understood that the much sought after English-medium school functioned as a laboratory for manufacturing colonial forms of thinking, which acknowledge and celebrate the ideologies of British colonisation in an unquestioning way. As a result, I felt the need to interrogate and dismantle these British colonial forms of knowledge production in daily life, which in turn provoked an exploration of various possibilities for decolonising the everyday patterns of my own thinking, being and doing, many of which are taken up by existentialists world-wide (Thiong'o 1986; Ramose 1999; Maart 2004; Hunt & Holmes 2015; Gordon 2020).

Scholars concerned with self-examination and self-interrogation as part of a continuum of consciousness raising (Maart 2006: 84) have to undertake habitual decolonial exercises; these are crucial to any form of unpacking as a scholar takes charge of the process and accepts that decolonisation begins

with the examination of the self. The scholar then has to ask, 'How do I decolonise myself?' It is important to overcome the existential bad faith of self-centric 'I'-ness and transcend into the collective realm of 'we'-ness, which South Africans describe as *ubuntu* (Ramose 1999: 32). In other words, I felt that the social, cultural, historical, political, epistemological and ontological values of my existence were shaped by the knowledge and actions of the collective socio-cultural environment in which my being was constructed. Therefore, in order to decolonise my everyday thought processes, patterns and actions, it is important to address strategies, one of which is the ability to build networks of solidarities in a transcultural and transnational manner.

It is also crucial to realise that 'there are only points of view, perspectives, masks and roles. Truth is draped in veils; it can be defined only by an endless succession of points of view' (Lefebvre 1991: 17). It is all of the above that provided me with the motivation to attend the Decolonial Summer School at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in 2017, and again in 2020. As such, in order to build pluriversal networks of solidarity and resistance against the toxic ideologies of coloniality, I ventured beyond the geographical boundaries of India, my country of birth, and took up the invitation to attend my first Decolonial Summer School at UNISA in 2017. Amidst the many agreements and disagreements, the two-week summer school at UNISA enabled me to understand the different forms of decolonial exercises that are taking place across the globe, from collective and co-creative points of view.

My understanding of decoloniality as a collaborative exercise received further impetus during the UNISA Decolonial Summer School of 2020. The week-long summer school taught me the theoretical, ideological and the phenomenological differences between 'decolonialism', 'decolonisation' and 'decoloniality' and the many ways to understand them within particular social, cultural, political, geographical and racial contexts. During the engagement with scholars in attendance, I soon realised that the terms decolonialism, decolonisation and decoloniality are not philosophical doctrines but open-ended, de-hierarchical and depolarised exercises whereby one shows regard for learning and also shares with others the diverse constellations of knowledge that exist across the globe. These terms also generate epistemological and ontological ambiguities as essential categories of everyday life. 'It never exhausts its reality; from the ambiguity of consciousness and situations spring forth actions, events, results, without warning' (Lefebvre 1991: 18). The urge to participate, habitually, in these ambiguous exercises motivated me to

investigate the influence of colonisation and coloniality in everyday life. As such, I made a presentation on the burden of colonial gastronomy in colonial West Bengal at the UNISA Decolonial Summer School of 2020.

Colonial Practices and Complicity

The practice of British and Portuguese colonisation, in particular, and its effects are deeply engraved on the psyche of the colonised of past-partition contemporary India. This is seen in the way that physical appearances, body language, food customs, fashion choices and racialised attitudes towards dark-skinned Indians, our own people so to speak, are driven by the colonial social and cultural parameters created by the primary coloniser, the British, and are now perpetuated by the upper classes of India, in the name of modernity and postmodernity.

As such, the acknowledgement of colonial food customs and culinary practices in India is nothing new; the problem, however, lies in the lack of awareness. I am not opposed to, nor do I have a problem with, embracing culinary dishes from different parts of the world as I believe that it is an act of showing appreciation toward other cultures through their food. However, if North American, and a select number of European culinary practices, are promoted at the cost of delegitimising, dehumanising and diminishing Indigenous culinary practices, then it is important to probe the social, cultural, geographical, historical and racist intentions of such acts. Through the criticism of colonially fashioned habitual food customs and culinary practices in this article, 'everyday life also emerges as a critique, a critique of the superior activities in question (and of what they produce: ideologies)' (Lefebvre 1991: 87). The exercise of decolonising and deracialising the taste buds, as discussed in this article, unpacks the 'value of culture as a factor of resistance to foreign domination' (Amílcar Cabral as cited in *BLACKPAST* 2009).

I was born into a family of chefs. My great-grandmother, my grandmother, my mother, my father, my grandfather, my great-grandfather, my uncles, my aunts and my siblings either were or are fabulous cooks. As I was born into a Bengali family, expectedly, my introduction to a broad range of food items were centred on traditional Bengali foods. I cannot deny the fact that apart from traditional Bengali food, I was also introduced to communal cuisines that can be depicted as socially, culturally and racially diverse. This introduction to a multicultural gastronomy was underlined by diverse

narratives, which were shared and confirmed by my parents and grandparents. On the one hand, the narratives enabled me to map the evolution and development of Bengali food culture in the contemporary Indian state of West Bengal across the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial times and on the other, the narratives provoked an interest to investigate the various 'colonial and cultural forces that sought to dominate its creation and dissemination' (Chaudhury 2020: 1).

For instance, during my childhood days when I requested that my grandmother prepare a dish of *chikin chow*[1] or *bhej chow*[2], she would laugh and say: 'You should have taken birth [been born] in a *Cheena bari*[3] rather than in a Bengali household'. I remember how my preference for chicken over lamb was mocked by my grandparents. They would often say: 'You are [a] Muslim born in a Hindu household'. When my friends and relatives came to know that I usually have dinner between 7:30 pm and 8 pm, they would often laugh and say: 'You are born with a Bengali face and a British body'. I often wondered why it was necessary for me to be born into a Chinese household in order to enjoy eating chow mein or why preferring chicken over mutton implied that I needed to be a Muslim, or when consuming an early dinner, I was considered British?

With the passage of time, these ponderings gradually transgressed into phenomenological interrogations that provoked an analysis of the binaries of traditional Bengali cuisine as opposed to modern Bengali cuisine; authentic Bengali cuisine as opposed to inauthentic Bengali cuisine; good Bengali cuisine as opposed to bad Bengali cuisine; and precolonial Bengali cuisine, as opposed to colonial Bengali cuisine. These binaries were shaped by factors such as climate, religion, agriculture, caste, class and economy during the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial times. Therefore, the consumption of food is not only a biological exercise and a process of activating an individual's taste-buds but also a collective and collaborative exercise of understanding the social, cultural, communal, historical, political and economic tastes of different

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[1] *Chikin Chow* is the colloquial Bengali way of referring to the dish 'Chicken Chow mein'.

[2] *Bhej Chow* is the colloquial Bengali way of referring to the dish 'Vegetable Chow mein'.

[3] *Cheena Bari* is a colloquial Bengali way of referring to the house of a Chinese person, usually in a mocking manner.

communities across diverse geographical locations across time and space.

In view of the aforementioned arguments, the following segment analyses how gastronomical practices of the British and the Portuguese have:

i. disrupted the traditional food and culinary practices of the Bengali community in West Bengal;
ii. simultaneously, colonised the culinary practices of the Bengali community in West Bengal.

This article henceforth is divided into four sections:

1. The first section, titled 'Precolonial Food Culture of Bengal' reflects upon the different food and culinary practices of precolonial Bengal and various social, cultural, caste, communal, geographical and climatic factors that have shaped such practices.

2. The second section, titled 'Colonial Influence on Food Customs' explores the various ways through which the traditional food culture in precolonial Bengal was disrupted, dehumanised and colonised by the physical forces of British and Portuguese colonisation and later by the metaphysical forces of American capitalism in the postcolonial era.

3. The third section, titled 'Decolonising and Deracialising Taste Buds: The Aesthetics of Taste' outlines the various possibilities through which the burden of the colonial gastronomy can be dismantled and decolonised in contemporary West Bengal.

4. The final section, 'Not Exactly a Conclusion', thematically and theoretically justifies how this article does not conclude with a definite set of solutions, but rather opens up diverse decolonial possibilities for dialogues, polylogues, agreements and disagreements on re-locating and re-indigenising the traditional food customs of West Bengal in the contemporary era.

Precolonial Food Culture of Bengal

History allows us to know the nature and extent of the imba-

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lances and conflicts (economic, political and social) which characterise the evolution of a society; culture allows us to know the dynamic synthesis which has been developed and established by social conscience to resolve these conflicts at each stage of its evolution, in the search of survival and progress (Amílcar Cabral as cited in *BLACKPOST*, 2009).

In a similar manner, the precolonial food culture not only reflects upon the availability of food materials and culinary practices, but also on the diverse patterns of consumption and its aesthetic values, as detailed in different socio-religious texts. The history of food customs and culinary practices of precolonial Bengal also functions as a reminder of the persistent 'neo-colonial' relations' of the present with the past 'within the 'new' world order' (Bhabha 1990: 6). The food culture of precolonial Bengal was determined by climatic, geographical, aesthetic and socio-religious factors.

Machey Bhaatey Baangali

The Bengali phrase',*Machey bhaatey Baangali'* can be loosely translated as: 'a Bengali cannot live without fish and rice'. This phrase is ambivalently used in contemporary expressions among its community. On the one hand, the phrase is used as a reminder of cultural rootedness by and for the Bengalis and on the other hand, to ridicule the culinary chauvinism of the Bengalis. If, however, the origin of this phrase is socio-historically and phenomenologically investigated, then it can be said there lies a firm geographical and scientific basis behind its origin. Bengal has always been renowned for its fertile land and the cultivation of paddy rice (Arendt & Zannini 2013: 121). The rivers of Bengal also serve as a reservoir for varieties of freshwater fish, and as a result, traditionally, rice and fish emerged 'as the staple food of the Bengalis' (Halder 2016).

It is, however, important to note that rice and fish are not the 'only' authentic food of the Bengalis. Apart from rice and fish, precolonial Bengal has been known for various non-vegetarian and vegetarian dishes. Quite unfortunately, the capitalist forces of reckless profiteering in postcolonial West Bengal have exoticised and tokenised the traditional food culture of precolonial Bengal through universally projecting the state as a manufacturing ground for rice and fish.

As such, the global notion of Bengali cuisine is limited to a set platter, which is often and incorrectly designated as an 'authentic Bengali platter'. Within the said platter, there will be a specific vegetable dish, a fish dish, a lentil dish, a meat dish and a sweet dish. Such dishes have been carefully selected and authenticated in such a manner by Bengalis who have prepared them for centuries that it not only seduces the taste-buds, but as a result also generates a strong profit-making market space. During the era of pre-colonialism and pre-capitalism, when taste-buds were not dictated by the market, geographical conditions aside, the dietary practices in precolonial Bengal were widely influenced by climatic conditions.

Shukhrobarer Sondhey belaye Esho Money Rekhe/Doodh Chere Prothom Ami Khabo Bhaat Mekhey

The above-noted phrase is taken from an invitation card for *Annaprashan*[4]. *Annaprashan* is referred to as the first rice-eating ceremony. The phrase can be loosely translated as: on a Friday evening, you are warmly invited to my first rice-eating ceremony. Usually, in West Bengal the rice eating ceremony takes place in the evening during which guests are invited to partake in the first rice-eating ceremony of a one-year old child over dinner. In India, the rice eating ceremony is celebrated when a one-year old child finishes the breastfeeding period and gradually moves towards the weaning period. The onset of the weaning period is celebrated through the rice eating ceremony. In the ceremony, the gathering is usually organised over dinner instead of lunch as determined by the hot and humid climate of the state. If the ceremony takes place during the summer season, then the hot and humid weather during the day makes it challenging for people to participate in a public gathering. During the evening, the heat and the humidity subsides and as a result the process of gathering becomes more comfortable, as compared to hosting the event during the day.

Apart from the gathering time, one might ask: Why is it always a rice-eating ceremony and not a bread-eating ceremony or perhaps even something else? Two major factors underlie this traditional practice – that is, the socio-religious and climatic considerations. According to a Bengal government report of the 1940s, the weather conditions demanded the daily requirement of

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[4] *Anna* means rice; *Prashan* means eating.

3600 calories per person, for the entire population of precolonial Bengal and rice played a pivotal role in ensuring the supply of these calories (Murshid 2008: 483).

Chitrita Banerji in *Life and Food in Bengal* (2005) notes that around '3500 calories are acquired from rice itself' (Banerji 2005: 76). Besides the consumption of boiled rice, different varieties of rice were also consumed like muri (puffed rice), khoi (flattened rice), and so forth. The high calorie content of rice enables the individuals to cope with health problems such as diarrhoea and dehydration which can be caused by extreme heat and humidity. This practice also interrogates the Western science of modern food, which are widely mimicked in India today. In an article titled 'Weight Loss Secrets: 5 Things You Should Never Eat at Night' (2015), the author notes: 'White rice is just as bad as white bread; in addition, it also has very little nutritional value'. The above-mentioned government report has already proved that this argument is baseless in the contemporary era. Different types of food practices are adopted according to the geographical, climatic, social, religious and economic conditions of a particular place. Therefore, the universalised narrative of 'ideal and healthy food' as propagated by Western science is highly questionable.

Charbya-Choshya-Lehya-Peya

This sub-section of the article unpacks the socio-religious factors that influenced the precolonial food customs of Bengal. According to Pranad Ray in *Banglar Khabar* (1987) and Bipradas Mukhopadhyay in *Pak Pranali* (2007), *charbya*are the foods that are consumed by chewing, such as rice *(bhaat)*, meat *(mangsho)*, vegetables *(shobji)*, fish *(maach)*, and so forth; *choshya*are the foods that are consumed by sucking such as homemade digestive enzymes (homemade probiotic drinks that are made with fruits and spices) popularly known as *ambal*, *tak*; *lehya* are the foods that are consumed by licking such as *chatni* (chutney), *payesh* (sweet porridge), *doi* (yoghurt); and *peya* are the foods which are consumed by drinking, such as milk and juice.

In, *The Vishnu Purana*[5] (Parashara 2015). a definite sequence of eating has been prescribed: 'meals should start with the sweet dish, followed by salty dishes and end with spicy and bitter dishes' (245). One of the major reasons

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[5] *The Vishnu Purana* is one of the eighteen ancient and medieval texts of Hinduism.

behind prescribing such a sequence is that the habit of eating sweet dishes at the beginning and eating bitter dishes at the end eases the process of digestion and guards the stomach against bacterial infections. The *Brihad-dharma Purana* (1915) proposes a different sequence: '… boiled rice and ghee should be consumed first, followed by spinach and rest of the vegetables, and the meal should end with milk and boiled rice' (translated by Banerji 2005: 185). The Bengali author saw his grandfather following a similar eating pattern as outlined in *Brihad-dharma Purana*: he begins his lunch with boiled rice and ghee and ends it with milk and boiled rice. One day, out of curiosity, I asked him why he finishes his lunch with milk and boiled rice on a daily basis? He replied, that a vegetarian meal should always consist of milk and boiled rice because they are sources of protein, calcium and energy. These also supplement the meat, fish and/or egg in a non-vegetarian meal. It should also be consumed at the end of a vegetarian meal because it protects the body against health problems such as gastroenteritis and acidity.

According to *Prakritapaingala*, a 13th century collection of verses in Bengali by Pingalacharya, an ideal Bengali platter should consist of '*mainimaccha lection of verses in Bengali by Pingalach*' (cited in Banerji, 2005: 23). In other words, that it should consist of hot rice with ghee, leaves of the jute plant that are prepared by frying and hot milk. Sriharsa's writing, *The Naishada-Charitaor the adventures of Nala Raja of Naishada* (1836), a 12th century Sanskrit epic, provides a detailed insight into the Bengali eating culture through the marriage of the protagonists called Nala and Damayanti:

> At their wedding feast, different dishes are served, such as cooked vegetables, fish, mutton, deer meat, different varieties of pitha (a sweet variety), flavoured drinks and tambul (betel leaves) (Sriharsa 1836: 450).

The *Brihad-dharma Purana* also mentions the caste-based food of precolonial Bengal. For example, the Brahmins, the upper caste who were notably priests and rulers, widely consumed white-scaled fish like *ruhi* (carp), *punti* (barb) and *shakul*(salmon) because white-scaled freshwater fish were considered spiritually pure and healthy; the Kshatriyas, one of the four *varna*, or social castes that occupied a position on the hierarchy below the Brahmins, and were composed of warriors and rulers, preferred a meat-based diet of poultry, venison, lamb, and so forth because socio-culturally the consumption of meat

was associated with masculine power and warfare; the Vaishyas, one of the four castes that occupied a lower position on the hierarchy after the Kshatriyas, composed primarily of businessmen and traders, preferred a vegetarian diet because their indulgence with trade and commerce provoked dietary purity and spirituality (Dhillon 2014; Agarwal 2016; Waghmore 2017).

In India, generally, dietary purity and spirituality are associated with a vegetarian diet. The Sudras, also known as the outcasts, considered the lowest of the four *varnas* of the Hindu caste system were regarded as scavengers and it was believed that because of their outcast status they were generationally condemned to live on rotten meat (Doctor 2008; Samal 2017). *Tikasarvasva*by Sarvananda sheds light on the socio-cultural differences within the food customs of precolonial Bengal by specifically showing 'the love and passion of the people of east Bengalis for shuktimachh (dried fish)' (cited in Ray 1987).

Even today, *shutkimachh* stands as an epitome of Bengal[6] culture. *Tikasarvasva* also mentions some of the spices that were habitually used in the precolonial traditional Bengali kitchen such as *marich* (black pepper), *labanga* (clove), *jirak* (cumin), *ada* (ginger), *jaifal* (nutmeg), *hing* (asafoetida), etc.

Mukundaram Chakravarti in *Kabikankan-Chandi* (*Chandimangal*) (2011) notes how in medieval Bengal, irrespective of caste, class or regional differences, vegetarian dishes were blended with non-vegetarian dishes. For example, *chingri maach die cholar daal* (lentils cooked with prawns), *chital maach die palang-er chocchori* (chital fish cooked with spinach), *machher matha die puisaaker chocchori* (basella leaves cooked with fish head), *fulbori die macher jhol* (lentils cooked with fish), *chingri die borar jhol* (prawns cooked with a type of lentil fritter), *thod chingri*(prawns cooked with *thod* (a type of vegetable)), etc. It is also important to note that this amalgamation of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes was typically practised by the local residents of the Medinipur district of precolonial Bengal. Although it is widely consumed by the people all across the state, it was adopted from the food culture of those in Medinipur. In Bharatchandra Ray's '*Annadamangal'* around 23 types of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes are mentioned:

> … sarsadi, ghanta, different types of fried spinach, thick soup of gram pulse, arahad, moong, mas, barbati, batul, and matar dal, bada, badi,

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[6] *Bangal* is the colloquial Bengali term, which is used to refer to the original residents of the eastern part of Bengal.

banana, radish, coconut fry, milk and dalna prepared with thod, shuktoni, jackfruit seeds with sugar, bottle-gourd with til and pithali, brinjal, and preparations of pumpkin. Among the non-vegetarian dishes were katla, fried chital fish, koi, magur and shol fish, boiled turtle egg (ganga fal) and the various meat preparations like shikpora (meat burnt in a spit, later known as kabab). Apart from these dishes there were some other unconventional dishes such as preparations with bamboo flower, and dalkachu and odkachu[7] (cited in Bose 2004: 355 - 357).

These food practices of precolonial Bengal underwent a massive transformation with the invasion of Islamic rulers during the 18th century. On the one hand, the invasion introduced several new food items like 'watermelon, pomegranate, pulao[8], biriyani[9], kabab[10], kofta[11] and kaliya[12]' (Halder 2016) and on the other hand, the already existing caste and class divisions were further fractured. Prior to the Islamic invasion, onion and garlic, either in cooked or raw form, were hardly consumed by the Bengalis – certainly not by the Brahmins. However, after the arrival of the Muslims in precolonial Bengal, with the passage of time, onion and garlic were introduced as a daily cooking ingredient in the Bengali kitchen. While the Hindu outcasts, the Sudras, voluntarily adopted the new food practices as propagated by the Muslims, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas firmly resisted the Islamic food practices and strictly prohibited the consumption of their food items. The former also believed that 'the smell of prohibited food could lead to degradation of caste status or expulsion from the religious community' (Halder 2016).

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[7] Types of arum roots.

[8] This dish is prepared either with meat (and sometimes fish) or vegetables and rice. Different varieties of vegetables or meat are fried; spices are added and then mixed with boiled rice. At the end ghee is added for flavor.

[9] This is a rice dish which is prepared by mixing meat, rice, potato and boiled eggs. Unlike *polau,* where the ingredients are prepared separately and then mixed at the end, Biryani is a one-pot meal and it is prepared by putting all the ingredients together in one pot.

[10] A spicy grilled meat dish.

[11] Koftas are fried balls either prepared with meat or vegetables.

[12] Either prepared with fish or meat, Kaliya is a spicy gravy, which is usually served with rice.

There was a time when the consumption of chicken and beef was strictly prohibited in the upper-caste Bengali households because it was incorporated into the mainstream Bengali cuisine by Muslims. An upper-caste Bengali was strictly forbidden to consume any kind of food items that had been touched and/or prepared by a person of Muslim faith. A violation of such a norm resulted in familial or community expulsion. As a consequence, my grandparents laughed at my fondness for chicken. In addition, my friends questioned my Hindu identity when they learnt of my fondness for beef kebab and beef kofta. According to Ghulam Murshid in *Hajar Bacharer Bangali Sanskriti* (2008), apart from the Hindu outcasts, the Islamic food culture was adopted by the Bengali middle-class Hindus and the high-class Hindus who converted to Islam (Murshid 2008: 491 - 492). These fragmentations in the food customs and culinary practices gave rise to multiple forms of social, cultural, communal, class and racial hierarchies.

Panch Phoron

Panch Phoron is a spice that has been an integral part of precolonial Bengali cuisine. The term *Panch Phoron* can be translated into English as 'a combination of five spices'. Usually, the five spices are: nigella seeds (also known as black cumin or *kalonji*), fenugreek seeds, cumin seeds, black mustard seeds and fennel seeds. It is very difficult to trace the historical evolution of the concept of *panch phoron*, but it is believed that the combination of five spices has a spiritual and mythical significance with the number five as mentioned in '*Rig Veda'*. In '*Rig Veda'*, 'the number five may be related to Pancha Bhoota, which is the basic five elements that Hindus claim is the basis of creation. Those elements are fire, water, air, earth and ether' (cited in 'Panch Phoron: Indian Five-Spice' 2020). In the traditional Bengali households, the ingredients of *panch phoron* were thus associated with the Hindu religious notion of *Pancha Bhoota*. Therefore, in precolonial Bengal the use of *panch phoron*in daily food dishes was not only considered healthy but was also used in the cooking of food items during the religious rituals. With the Islamic invasion of Bengal, the binaries between 'authentic Hindu foods' and 'authentic Muslim foods' started developing (approximately during the 18th century), and as a result *panch phoron* became a medium for preserving one's 'pure Hinduness' in the Bengali households. It was also regarded as an apt

substitution for garlic and onion, the consumption of which was believed to be strictly against the Hindu spiritual values. Even today, *panch phoron* is a common spice in the Bengali cuisine.

The Bengali author recollects, two specific *panch phoron* delicacies from his grandmother's and mother's kitchen – *aloo panch phoron* and *panch phoron die musur daal*. *Aloo panch phoron* is prepared with boiled potatoes (*aloo*), mustard oil, salt, *panch phoron* and turmeric powder. Besides, *aloo panch phoron* another delicacy that is highly appreciated in the Bengali author's family is *panch phoron die musur daal*. *Musur daal*, also known as red lentils, are cooked with mildly fried *panch phoron*, salt and turmeric powder. The usurpation and settler colonial presence of the British colonisers gave rise to pseudo-scientific and pseudo-medical narratives, which declared the consumption of *panch phoron* unhygienic and unhealthy in the tropical weather conditions (U. Ray 2012: 710).

The imposition of these illogical perspectives widened the already existing class, caste, gender, communal and economic hierarchies in precolonial Bengal's culinary practices. It also opened gateways for the British colonisers to deculturalise and dehumanise the traditional gastronomic practices of precolonial Bengal in a very systematic manner, relying on what they were able to do best – divide and rule.

Colonial Influence on Food

Valentin-Yves Mudimbe in his book titled, *On African Fault Lines: Meditations on Alterity Politics. Thinking Africa* argues:

> The colonial library is a transdisciplinary space that for centuries transcended axes of separation between natural and social sciences. Its huge knowledge capital was put to the service of absolute aberrations such as the slave trade. The library justified the unjustifiable in deviant ethics, shaming human intelligence (Mudimbe 2013: 19).

The process of animalisation and subordination of food /customs and culinary practices of precolonial Bengal and the appropriation of colonial food ethics played a crucial role in not only justifying the unjustifiable logic of the tropical climatic conditions and the behavioural patterns of the local residents of precolonial Bengal, but also in generating a set of archives that turned to the

past of the oppressed people, and distorted, disfigured and destroyed it (Fanon 1963: 71). In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), Frantz Fanon notes that 'A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language' (Fanon 1967: 59). So apart from trade, commerce, politics and slavery, food functioned as an effective 'language' for the British colonisers to build their physical and ideological empires in precolonial Bengal. However, their process of gastronomic colonisation involved seduction as well as coercion. Seduction's reward was the false promise of recognition by the master. It is believed that the British in India tried to convince the Natives that if the colonised in India chose the British way, they would have the reward of being seen as British, and therefore more civilised.

In order to establish mercantile relationships with India, European ships began to arrive on the Indian shores from the late 15th century. Historical documents reveal that the Portuguese were the first to reach the Indian subcontinent and they were gradually followed by the Dutch, French, Danish, and the British. As the Portuguese arrived, apart from the various precious items they stole from the continents of Africa and the Americas, they brought along with them several new food items, either vegetables or 'processed' food such as 'potato, chili pepper, okra, tomato, cauliflower, cabbage, bread, cheese, jelly and biscuits' (Sen 1997: 95; Habib 2014: 54 - 60).

In the article 'The Portuguese Influence on Bengali Cuisine' (1997), Collin Taylor Sen outlines a detailed table of the different fruits and vegetables that were brought to Bengal by the Portuguese and later on, how these became part of the regular Bengali cuisine from the colonial era. We cite it here to foster further discussion of our main argument:

English Name	Bengali Name	Comments	Use in Bengali Cuisine
Cashew	Kaju	Native of S.E. Brazil, introduced to the west coast of India to check soil erosion. Today India is the world leader in its production.	Snacks.

Pineapple	Anaras	Introduced in Bengal in 1594 from Brazil.	Used fresh in chutney.
Peanut	Chinar Badam	Introduced from America, perhaps via Africa. The Bengali name means 'Chinese nut' which indicates that it could have arrived via Manila or China. However, 'Chinese' is also an adjective used by Bengalis to denote anything foreign.	Snacks.
Papaya	Peypey	Originated in Central America. Came to India via Philippines (where the Spanish had taken it) and Malaysia.	Unripe as fruit, paste used as a meat, tenderiser.
Sweet Potato	Ranga Aloo	Introduced from Africa or Brazil. Bengali name means 'red potato'.	Used as a vegetable, used in sweet dishes to add flavour and in shrimp dishes.
Potato	Aloo	The Spanish brought the first potatoes to Europe in 1570. On the west coast of India, it is called batata (sweet potato). In 1780, a basket of potatoes was presented to Sir Warren Hastings in Calcutta (Achaya 1991: 118). It was grown in the foothills of the Himalayas in the 1830s. By 1860, potatoes had become popular in Calcutta, although orthodox people avoided them until the 20th century.	Vegetable dishes, dried and with gravy; in shukto, poshto. In curries with meat and seafood. Filling for samosas.

Tomato	Bilayati Begun	Originated in Mexico or Peru. Came via England in the late 18th century	Chutney. Flavouring for lentils
Chillies	Lanka	The Bengali name indicates it may have come via Sri Lanka. Originated in Central America. Spread rapidly in India as substitute for long or black pepper. By the mid-16th century, Europeans were calling it 'Calcutta pepper.'	Fresh, dried, and powdered. Used for flavouring and decoration.
Guava	Peyara	May have originated in Peru. Known in Eastern India as early as 1550. Widely grown in Bengal.	Eaten as fruit, Guava, cheese and jelly.
Corn or Maize	Bhutta	Originated in Central America.	Roasted and eaten on the cob, usually purchased from street sellers.
Litchi	Lichu	Native to southern China. The Portuguese brought it to Bengal at end of the 19th century.	Eaten as a fruit, juice, jelly and drunk as wine.
Okra or Lady's Finger	Bhindi	Probably from Africa	Fried, boiled or cooked in stews.

Beside fruit and vegetables, many other food items like biscuits and baked pastries were introduced by the Europeans, particularly the British. K.T. Achaya in 'The Food Industries of British India' (1991) talks about a famous French traveller, Francois Bernier who visited Bengal in 1660 and in one of

the memoirs Bernier mentions that 'the supply of inexpensive biscuits to the crews of European ships was very common' (Achaya 1991:123). This confirms the widespread belief that small-scale biscuit manufacturing units had already developed in Bengal in the 17th century.

Apart from biscuits, the introduction of cheese by the Portuguese brought a major transformation to the traditional culinary practices of Bengal. Several new food items like *chhanar dalna* (cheese ball curry), *potoler dolma* (pointed gourd stuffed with cheese), *rosogolla* (cheese balls soaked in sugar syrup), *pantua* (deep-fried cheese balls soaked in sugar syrup), *lyangcha* (cylinder-shaped fried cheese soaked in sugar syrup), *sukto* (assorted vegetables along with bitter gourd cooked in milk and poppy seeds), *chhanar payesh* (rice cooked in cheese, milk and jaggery) and so forth, evolved in the traditional Bengali kitchen.

The regular use of cheese in the Bengali kitchen changed the place of desserts under the influence of the Portuguese in colonial Bengal. Today, all the cheese-based sweet dishes that are consumed in West Bengal are as a result of Portuguese colonialism. Other than the Portuguese, the French colonisers widely influenced the snack culture of Bengal. For instance, the concept of *mamlet* was drawn from the French omelette. Usually, a French omelette is prepared with eggs, milk, salt, black pepper, unsalted butter and a filling of crème fraiche, herbs, fresh fruits, and so forth. However, a *mamlet* in West Bengal is prepared with eggs, salt, chopped onions, chopped chillies, chopped tomatoes, garam masala and oil. Unlike the French omelette, *mamlets* are made without any filling. Of interest is that the Dutch and the Danish did not have much influence on the food culture of Bengal.

With the arrival of the British, the already transformed food culture of Bengal under Portuguese colonisation underwent further transformation and it had a mixed impact on the local population. In precolonial Bengal, 'Bengali cuisine not only refused to become national, but by remaining emphatically regional, its domestic nature was also kept intact' (Ray 2012: 705). During the period of colonial Portuguese occupation, the regional essence of the food and culinary practices did not change, rather it was multiplied and diversified because, like the British, they did not enforce their food on the local Natives of Bengal. Rather, they acknowledged the amalgamation of Portuguese culinary practices with the local culinary practices in the Bengali kitchen.

The introduction of British food customs in tropical Bengal were underlined with the expropriation of local food and the appropriation of British

culinary practices. This process of expropriations and appropriations was catapulted by the 'colonial medical texts from 1770 until at least 1850' (Sengupta 2010: 82). The tropical climate of Bengal raised the fundamental question: is the heavy meat-based diet of the British suitable in such weather conditions? The British displayed 'a kind of false bravado, and the exhibition of a generous contempt for what they reckon[ed to be] the luxurious and effeminate practices of the country' (Curtis 1807: 280). Such a false bravado motivated the British colonisers to blame the climate for their afflictions, rather than the unsuitability of their diet. In 1775, Philip Francis, the Governor of Bengal wrote: 'I am tormented with the bile and obliged to live on mutton chop and water. The Devil is in the climate I think' (cited in Burton 1993: 7). Disapproving colonial sentiments steeped in Christianity were not an unfamiliar basis of critique by the British of India; the British not only believed that God was on their side as they usurped, colonised and plundered, but when God was not, the devil had to be held responsible (Maart & Dey forthcoming).

Elizabeth Collingham in her book titled *Imperial Bodies: The Physical Experience of the Raj c.1800–1947* (2001) argues that such unhealthy dining 'served well to underline the status of the Company grandee in India' (Collingham 2001:75–77). Collingham also argues that through the racialisation of Bengal during and after the Indian Revolt of 1857 the 'body of the British official in India became an even more powerful signifier of "Britishness", and diet and dress became, accordingly, cultural sites on which a sense of bodily difference between the British and their Indian subjects were maintained' (81 - 84). It is evident from John Beames' *Memoirs of a Bengal Civilian* (1961) in which he talks about the daily food of a British official in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He notes:

> Our chota haziri, or little breakfast, was at five-thirty to six, and consisted of tea, eggs boiled or poached, toast and fruit … Breakfast at eleven consisted of fried or broiled fish, a dish or two of meat – generally fowl cutlets, hashes and stews, or cold meat and salad followed by curry and rice and dessert. We drank either bottled beer – the universal Bass – or claret … Between four and five there was tea and cakes, … Dinner at half past seven or eight consisted of soup, and entrée, roast fowls or ducks, occasionally mutton, and in cold weather once or twice beef, and entremets of game or a savoury, and sweets (Beames 1961: 197).

In the tropical heat and humidity of Bengal it does not require any medical books or scientific experiments to justify that such a food routine is lethal to the body. In the year 1807, even a British surgeon from the naval hospital of Madras named Charles Curtis observed that the 'over-consumption of meat was the root of many of their ills' (Curtis 1807: 280). He also noted: 'They cannot too soon … accustom themselves to what are called the native dishes, which consist for the most part of boiled rice, and fruits, highly seasoned with hot aromatics, along with meat item[s] and sauces, but with a small proportion of animal matters' (Curtis 1807: 281). As such, Dipesh Chakrabarty in *Rethinking Working-Class History. Bengal 1890 - 1940* (1989) rightly suggests that 'eating was a ritualised expression of a colonial ruling-class culture … signifying … excess and plenitude' (Chakrabarty 1989: 167).

The signifiers of excess and plenitude gradually percolated into the food and culinary practices of the upper and middle class Bengali community through the usage of spoons and forks instead of hands, through the pleasure of wasting food items instead of re-using them, or sharing with others, through risking one's health by blindly mimicking the European (especially the British) culinary practices, etc. 'It is not that the Europeans were not aware of the non-suitability of their dining , but to maintain their superior status of "Europeanness or Britishness", through food, they continued to practice "brutal racialisation" and "abusive adjectivisation"' (Dey 2020a).

Besides naturalising such a dietary practice as 'authentic and healthy', the British also used food as a medium to assert their White masculine superiority over the local Natives. As a result, several cookbooks that were published during the period of British colonisation in Bengal portrayed the kitchen and the food items as 'filthy, dirty and uncouth' (Sengupta 2010: 85). Arthur Kenny-Herbert Wyvern's cookbook *Culinary Jottings: A Treatise in Thirty Chapters on Reformed Cookery for Anglo-Indian Exiles* (1885) describes the local Bengali kitchen in the following manner: 'a wretchedly mean, carelessly constructed, go down [outbuilding] … inconveniently far from the house, and consequently open to every passer-by' (Wyvern 1885: 499). The author also criticises the presence of inadequate equipment in the kitchen, noting that 'the cook had to use his cloth for a sieve, and his fingers for [a] spoon or fork' (Wyvern 1885: 499). Another cookbook titled *Indian Outfits and Establishments: Practical Guides for Persons to Reside in India* (1882) characterises the Native food and culinary styles of Bengal as: 'the native ways are not as our ways and the less you see them over their cooking

operations the more appetite you will have for the food set before you' (Wyvern 1885: 68).

It is important to note that the traditional Bengali kitchen was always open to the passer-by because it was not just a private family space to prepare food, but also a welcoming public space to feed a hungry passer-by. This had been an integral part of the traditional culture of precolonial Bengal. The British disapproved of, and rejected, this traditional custom and through the assistance of White European medical men they tried to highlight the perceived degenerated culture of the Bengalis. James Ranald Martin, a presidency surgeon of Bengal who later became the president of the East India Company's Medical Board, in his book *Notes on the Medical Topography of Calcutta* (1837) reflected:

> When we reflect on the customs of the natives, their long misgovernment, their religion and morals, their diet, clothing, etc., and above all their *climate* [e.i.o] we can be at no loss to perceive why they should be what they are (Martin 1837: 43 - 45).

Justifications for colonisation and subordination were inserted everywhere, especially medical journals. If the British could sustain their argument, in writing, of the colonisation of India as a necessity, in the name of goodwill and modernity through which they depicted themselves as saviours of the savages, they could justify the extraction of wealth and the brutal exploitation of the Indian population ((*Palates of Pleasure*, Maart & Dey forthcoming).

In accordance, the disputed thread between food, masculinity climatic conditions and medical science was further entrenched by the 18th century theories of climatic determinism as discussed by Thomas R. Metcalf in *Ideologies of the Raj* (1994): 'heat and humidity were seen as conspiring to subvert manliness, resolve and courage' (105). Sir Herbert Risley in *The people of India* (1908) and Robert Orme in *Of the Government and People of Indostan* (1971) justify that effeminacy of the people of colonial Bengal are directly associated with their 'enfeebling diet' (42 - 45, 57) and habit of consuming 'easily digestible' (47, 58) food such as rice, lentils, sweets and spices. Such problematic narratives received further applause from the high-caste and middle-class Bengali Hindus.

The colonised high-caste and middle-class Bengalis supported such food narratives because it catered to their taste-buds on the one hand and

enabled them to 'be in the good books' of the British colonisers on the other. It allowed them to equate these food narratives with civility and modernity, and to show how much, they as the high caste, had in common with the British. Authors like Pragnasundari Devi and Rwitendranath Tagore felt that the traditional food and culinary culture of precolonial Bengal were narrowly defined. Buddhadeb Basu, in his book *Bhojan Shilpi Bangali* (2004) defines Bengali cuisine as, 'liberal and cosmopolitan, with the potential to incorporate all other flavours and indigenise them, so representing a synthesis of different cultures' (Basu 2004:18).

The support of the high-caste and the middle-class Hindus encouraged the British to use gastronomic narratives as a tool to practice social, cultural, communal, racial, caste and religious-based divisions in colonial Bengal and reduce the traditional food of precolonial Bengal into a 'disruptive, decivilising, dehumanising, exploitative, racist, violent, brutal, covetous and thingifying system' (Cesaire 2001: 71). So, instead of becoming a synthesis of different cultures, the culinary practices of Bengal, under British colonisation, gradually became a glorification exercise of the European food culture, supported by the upper caste Brahmins (U. Ray 2012: 715).

The traditional fried cheese-based sweet dishes, widely adapted from the Portuguese, such as *lyangcha*, Lady Kenny (round shaped shallow fried cheese balls soaked in sugar syrup) and *pantua* and *chhana bhaja* (fried cheese) lost its popularity and was replaced by pastries and baked goods because the black and blackish-brown colour of these traditional sweet dishes made the Bengalis believe that it would darken their skin. They believed their skin would become much darker, which as a result of the 'divide and conquer' strategies of British colonisation that entrenched skin colour hierarchies, had to be avoided. In the postcolonial era, the dehumanisation and subalternisation of traditional food customs of precolonial Bengal aggravated by the Americanisation and commercialisation has a significant effect on individual taste buds.

Today, a large number of people in West Bengal believe that the traditional food customs of precolonial Bengal are 'unmodern' and 'backdated' and in order to develop a cross-cultural and universal food habit one must blindly adhere to the 'European or widely Euro-North American (USA) food practices such as pizzas, pastas, burgers, sandwiches, Tacos, a Mexican food item, different forms of salads, consumption of varieties of meat, etc.' (Dey 2020a).

There is nothing morally wrong with inculcating new tastes; but intentions are important as they more often than not speak to cultural appropriation and cultural imperialism. The practices of cultural imperialism in India (especially in precolonial Bengal) enabled the White European colonisers to disguise themselves under the existential patterns of the Black Natives. Such a form of disguise allowed the colonisers to generate seductive narratives of Western/ colonial superiorities and non-Western/ Indigenous/Native inferiorities. These narratives provoked the local Natives of Bengal to expropriate the Indigenous socio-cultural practices and appropriate the practices of the European colonisers in a voluntary manner.

This is why, the European colonisers through the 'so-called theory of progressive assimilation of native populations' (Amílcar Cabral as cited in *BLACKPOST* 2009), could successfully colonise the food and the culinary practices of the Natives of precolonial Bengal by camouflaging themselves as welfare workers and progressive settlers. European and North American food have further augmented the already existing racial, class and caste hierarchies that existed in precolonial and colonial Bengal. As a result, in the process of trying to be a local citizen, the adaption of such food has decapitated the Indigenous socio-cultural sense of belonging of people in contemporary West Bengal.

In order to counter the colonial/capitalist invasions of European and North American food and culinary practices in contemporary West Bengal and to revive the traditional precolonial food cults, multiple initiatives are being undertaken by individuals, government institutions and private institutions, which will be discussed in the following section.

Decolonising and Deracialising Taste Buds: The Aesthetics of Taste

The process of challenging, countering and dismantling the colonial and capitalist invasions of European and North American food and culinary practices is what Lewis Gordon argues as a movement from 'double consciousness to potentiated double consciousness' (Gordon 2014). In other words, double consciousness can be understood as 'seeing yourself through the hostile other' and potentiated double consciousness can be understood as 'seeing the contradictions of the system' (Gordon 2014). It is important to expose the contradictions of the mimicked gastronomic patterns of

contemporary West Bengal by pondering on a basic question: What does our heart desire? Alexandra Jamieson, in her book Women*, Food and Desire: Honor Your Cravings, Embrace Your Desire and Reclaim Your Body* (2015), elaborates:

> I'm a big believer that aside from providing us with the nutritional fuel we need to function at our best, food should make us happy. That's right: food should delight us, ignite us, and make us feel good. Really, really good. But, for most of us, the way we approach food does just the opposite … It makes us feel ashamed. It makes us feel ugly and undesirable. It makes us feel wrong and unwelcome in our own bodies. And when we lose our knowledge that we have power over our relationship to it, it allows us to hide out from life (Jamieson 2015: 3 - 4).

The globalisation, commercialisation and capitalisation of European and North American food and culinary practices have manufactured a toxic and false hierarchy of 'undesirability' and 'desirability' that are based on class, caste, communal, social, cultural, geographical and economic belonging. In order to dismantle such toxic and false colonial and imperial European and North American influenced gastronomic desires and hierarchies in contemporary West Bengal the initiatives addressed below, are being taken.

Khadya Mela or Food Fests

The Bengali term *Khadya Mela*[13] can be loosely translated into English as a food festival. In order to revive the traditional Indigenous food cultures of precolonial Bengal, the government of West Bengal, in collaboration with local municipal organisations and private sponsors organises various food festivals across all the districts of West Bengal every year. These are organised across the state broadly for two reasons – firstly, organising it across all the districts of West Bengal ensures social, cultural, geographical, communal and economic representation; and secondly, such an organisational pattern brings together the local diversities of the traditional food and culinary practices.

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[13] *Khadya* means food and *Mela* means fests.

Allow us here to note the food items that were prepared and sold at the food festival: 'Dum Dum Nale Jhole 2019'. The geographical place Dum Dum is located in the northern part of Kolkata and has historically been a residential area of the original residents[14] of West Bengal. Therefore, the food items prepared for the festival catered to the traditional food and culinary practices of the residents there. The festival also displayed a cross-cultural and a cross-national approach by blending local Bengali ingredients with those acquired from the Europeans in the colonial and the postcolonial era. For instance, some of the local traditional dishes that were prepared were: fish and chicken *kabiraji*, *chhanar salna*, *basanti polau*, mutton *kosha*, *niramish pathar mangsho*, *maccher dobhaaji* and N.C. Das-er *rosogolla*.Fish and chicken *kabiraji* is prepared by removing the bones from the chicken and fish, mincing it and then mixing it with finely chopped onion, garlic, ginger, salt and turmeric. After mixing it thoroughly the mixture is flattened and then it is coated with biscuit powder. Thereafter, it is deep fried in mustard oil. It is then served hot as an evening snack or as a starter to meals that follow. The concept of *Kabiraji* was brought to the region by Muslim invaders of Bengal.

Chhanar dalna is prepared by making cheese balls that are deep fried in either mustard oil or butter. After the cheese balls have been fried, they are kept aside and a curry with ginger, garlic and onion paste is prepared. While the curry cooks, the cheese balls are soaked in it then served hot with a portion of rice. This is a common delicacy for the Bengalis, especially for vegetarians. This item is a blend of traditional Bengali and Portuguese cuisine. *Basanti polau* is prepared with rice, ghee, cardamom, cashew nuts, raisins and basanti colouring (a deep yellowish colour). This food item is a regular in the Bengali household, brought forth from the royal kitchen of Sova Bazar Rajbari[15].

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[14] I have used the phrase 'original residents' in order to denote the Bengalis who have remained in West Bengal after the partition of precolonial Bengal into East Bengal (currently Bangladesh) and West Bengal in the British colonial era. During the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, several refugees from East Bengal arrived in West Bengal and settled widely in the southern parts of Kolkata, whereas the northern parts of Kolkata widely remained in the hands of the original residents of West Bengal.

[15] Sova Bazar is a historically reputed place, which is located in the northern part of Kolkata. The 'Raj Bari' or the royal palace of Sova Bazar is believed to

Mutton *kosha* is another delicacy that was brought forth by the Muslim invaders and rich ingredients are used for this spicy preparation. The mutton is cooked in a pot on a low flame; ginger, garlic, onion, tomato and red chilli paste are added to the mutton. It is usually prepared in mustard oil and is served with a portion of rice, *paratha*, *roti* and *luchi*.

The evolution of *niramish pathar manghso*[16] took place in the kitchen of the temple of Hindu Goddess Kali at Kalighat, Kolkata. The name of the dish in Bengali, when translated into English, is 'vegetarian mutton curry', which sounds quite peculiar. Though the term '*niramish*' is translated into English as 'vegetarian', it connotes more than that. In Bengali culture, the term '*niramish*' is used for dishes that are specially cooked without onion and garlic. As previously mentioned, the Bengalis believe that the use of onion and garlic were introduced into the Bengali cuisine by the Muslims, therefore they signify non-vegetarianism and anti-Hinduness; they are not the only cultural and ethnic group who adhere to this belief. With respect to this belief, still today, several Bengali households prefer to cook vegetarian dishes without onion and garlic. As such, in the temple of Hindu Goddess Kali at Kalighat, a special mutton curry without onion and garlic is prepared by the chefs at the temple's kitchen as an offering to the goddess, on a daily basis. Today, this item has become a special delicacy in many Bengali households.

Maccher dobhaaji is a traditional food item of precolonial Bengal. The Bengali word '*macch*' can be translated into English as 'fish' and the word '*dobhaaji*' can be translated into English as 'double fried'. The *dobhaaji* is usually prepared with fish like *Rohu, Bhetki* and *Pomphret*. A paste of salt, turmeric, onion, garlic, ginger, hand prepared garam masala, tomato, red chilli powder, cumin powder and ginger powder is prepared, then uniformly applied on the pieces of raw fish. The battered fish is double fried in mustard oil, which means that after the fish is fried for the first time, it is taken out of the frying pan, more spices are added and then it is put back in the frying pan to be fried for the second time. Usually, it is served with a portion of rice and lentils.

N.C. Das-er *rosogolla* deserves special mention because historically it is believed that N.C. Das or Nobin Chandra Das discovered a white spongy

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be the heart of North Kolkata because of its strong social, cultural and gastronomic impact on the habitual existence of the people there.

[16] In the Bengali language, '*Pathar Mangsho*' means goat meat.

sweet, which is made of cheese and sugar syrup, and he named it *rosogolla*[17]. Therefore, Nobin Chandra Das, which is also the name of a well-acclaimed sweet shop in Kolkata established by his family members, holds a significant social, cultural and historical place in the heart of the Bengalis. Some of the cross-national and cross-cultural dishes that were prepared at the food festival at Dum Dum were *nolengur* mousse and *nolengur* cupcake. *Nolen gur* translates to 'new jaggery' and it is extracted from date palm trees using deft skills during the winter months in West Bengal. In the festival, the local flavour of *nolengur* was integrated with the flavours of the European bakery items like mousses and cupcakes.

In a similar fashion, every year, several food festivals across different parts of West Bengal are organised to showcase the diverse social, cultural, communal and religious gastronomic patterns that are practised in a non-hierarchical and pluriversal manner in the contemporary era[18].

Aesthetical Marketing by Street Hawkers

In order to de-racialise and decolonise the taste buds, the street food hawkers play a pivotal role through their tactics of aesthetical marketing. Aesthetical marketing is a phenomenon in which the sellers advertise their objects through their 'self-created, rhythmic and rhetorical punchlines' (Dey 2020b). On the one hand, their punchlines attract the attention of the customers and on the other it interrogates the racial prejudices that were once cultivated by the European colonisers of the traditional food of precolonial Bengal. For example, while travelling on a public bus a hawker would often sell black-coloured digestive capsules that are popularly known as *hajmi golis* with a Bengali punchline – *Dekhte Kaalo/Khete Bhalo*. The punchline can be loosely translated into English as – 'It looks black and tastes good'. These punchlines have been used several times in this sub-section because the street hawkers shout it in a rhythmic manner to gain the attention of the customers on the one side and to dismantle the racial prejudices and 'pigmentocracy' (Maart 2014:

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[17] In Bengali language, the word '*Ros*' means sugar syrup and '*Golla*' means round.

[18] All the information that has been shared in this section is a part of the first-hand experience of Sayan Dey. He has gathered this information after attending various food festivals in the city of Kolkata.

15) of the individuals towards the Native Bengali food dishes on the other. The second author stresses this point very directly when she asserts that the 'extent to which a hierarchy of pigmentation operates in black communities, … where divide and conquer strategies, as a consequence of our troubled relationship to White supremacy, gave rise to narratives of light skinned/dark skinned dichotomies escalating to a point to determine logic that can only be described as perverse and traumatic' (Maart 2014: 15). Such pigmentocratic narratives of light-skinned and dark-skinned dichotomies widely influence the food of West Bengal. For instance, during my childhood I was often warned by my elders that I should avoid drinking tea and coffee because it would darken my skin. When I asked why, they would say that tea and coffee are either black or brownish in colour, therefore it has a direct impact on the colour of the human skin. So, a punchline like *Kalo Chaa/Bhlao Khaa*, which can be loosely translated into English as – 'Black tea tastes good', counters such illogical and colonially mimicked narratives by focusing on positive aspects.

In order to lure customers, many roadside sweet sellers will use the punchline – *Kaalo Lyangcha Dekhe Mukh Bhyangchaben Na/Akbar Khaben Konodin Bhulben Na*;loosely translated into English as – 'do not make a face by looking at the black colour of the *lyangchas* because they are so tasty that if you have one, you will crave more'. As previously mentioned, a *lyangcha* is a cylindrical black coloured sweet and many people continue to believe in contemporary West Bengal that black coloured sweets should not be consumed because they darken the skin.

Back in my hometown of Kolkata, there is a roadside hotel close to where I live which uses the following punchline: *Jokhon Kalo-Shada Mishey Ak/Tokhon Khabarer ki Shwad Dekh*.The punchline, when translated into English, reads as 'the combination of black and white enhances the taste of different foods'. In other words, in order to meet the desire of your taste buds it is important to liberate them beyond the narrow confinements of social, cultural, political, racial, communal, religious, geographical and economic binaries. This appears to be a very effective recipe for de-racialising, decolonising and de-capitalising the individual taste buds from the European and North American gastronomic influences in contemporary West Bengal.

Food blogging appears to be a very effective method of decolonising and de-racialising food and culinary practices and has become quite a phenomenon. Today, the practice of food blogging is growing at a fast rate in

West Bengal. It is not only introducing people to the traditional dining places, snack joints and sweet shops of West Bengal, but also making an effort to remember the dismembered food and culinary practices of precolonial Bengal. As an example, let us explore the food blog titled 'Mohamushkil – a bongfoodie's quest about best foods in India', which was developed by an entrepreneur and avid food blogger named Indrajit Lahiri. Amongst several aspects of traditional Bengali cuisine, one of the most significant aspects of Bengali food culture that he elaborates upon in the blog is the culture of the 'pice hotel' in Kolkata. So, what then is a pice hotel?

According to Indrajit Lahiri, the concept of the pice hotel evolved around 1930s–40s when 'things were available in paisa and then a full meal here (the basic ones) were available at the cost of a few paisa. Hence, people used to call them paisa hotel-pais hotel-pice hotel' (2017). Food researcher Pritha Sen reflects upon this concept:

> Pice hotels also known as Bhaater or Rice hotels were what were also termed Hindu hotels. They mushroomed sometime in the 1930s–40s as cheap eating houses set up to feed the hordes of daily-wage earners, students and babus who lived in the hostels and messes of Calcutta, far away from their homes in primarily East Bengal and therefore the food was primarily Bangaal, another reason why they have remained so low profile till the foodies discovered them a few years ago! The food was just like you would have at home, never knowing what your mother would put on the table, never knowing what fish your father would get back from his early morning with the accent on small fish and greens. The meals were served for 1/16th of a rupee (*sholoanayak taka*) but everything had a price to it from the *kola pata* to the *lebu* with rice and dal being unlimited [e.i.o (cited in Indrajit Lahiri 2017)].

Thus, apart from serving homely and traditional Bengali foods, the pice hotels function as archives of social, cultural, political and culinary histories. Some of the renowned pice hotels are, among others: Swadhin Bharat Hotel, Hotel Siddheshwari Ashram, Jagannath Bhojanalayand Young Bengal Khidderpore. Swadhin Bharat Hindu Hotel was established in the year 1917 amidst various anti-colonial movements in colonial Bengal.

During the British colonial era, this hotel served as a dining space for delicious food to many freedom fighters including Chittoranjan Das, the

founder leader of the Swaraj Party in Bengal. Apart from serving traditional delicacies like *machher matha die chorchori*[19] and *topse machh bhaja*[20], it functions as a repository for diverse socio-historical narratives. Hotel Siddeshwari Ashram was established in the year 1925 and it has also served as one of the most visited dining places for revolutionaries in colonial Bengal.It is highly reputed for *kabirajijhol*[21] and *rui macher jhol*[22]. Jagannath Bhojanalaya was established in the year 1960 and gained its reputation or its chefs from the Indian state of Orissa[23]. Today, it is known for serving delicious mutton curry and *vetki* fry[24]. Young Bengal Khiderpore was established in the year 1930 and it is generally reputed for its home-style Bengali foods.

Apart from pice hotels, Indrajit also talks about snack joints like Lakshmi Narayan Shaw and Sons, *lassi*[25] shops near the Esplanade metro station, etc. in his blog. Visiting and dining at these places is not only about satisfying one's desire for manifold food tastes, but also about revisiting one's individual as well as collective socio-cultural past. In this way, food blogs function as a powerful medium to remind one of, and allow one to recover, the traditional food and culinary practices of West Bengal.

Reviving the Family-Centric Culinary Practices

A very unique aspect of the traditional Bengali food and culinary practices is that most of the Bengali families have a rich history of preparing certain food dishes, which have originated within a respective family and is not commonly prepared by any other family and/or is not cooked in any restaurant. For instance, two dishes that have evolved from my family kitchen are *doga patar*

[19] *Machher matha die chorchori* refers to a dish of mixed vegetable prepared with fish head.
[20] *Topse machh bhaja* refers to a dish of deeply fried 'topse' fish.
[21] *Kabiraji* has already been described in this article. So, 'kabirajis' are made and then it is soaked in the curry. Any curry in Bengali language is referred to as 'jhol'.
[22] *Rui machh*refers to Rohu fish and '*rui machher jhol*' refers to rohu fish curry.
[23] It is important to note that most of the reputed male chefs in these pice hotels are believed to have come from Orissa.
[24] *Vetki* is a type of white-scaled fish.
[25] It is a curd-based drink and is prepared by mixing curd, water and sugar.

jhol and *notun alur chocchori*. The preparation of these dishes was initiated by my great-great grandmother. *Dogapata* refers to the leaves of bottle gourd and pumpkin, and as mentioned earlier, *jhol* refers to any curry. The *jhol* is prepared by boiling bottle gourd and/or pumpkin leaves along with vegetables like potatoes, chicken drumsticks, papayas, pumpkins and carrots. After they are boiled, a small amount of mustard oil, or refined oil is poured into the cooking pan to mildly fry the *panch phoron*. After the *panch phoron* has been fried, the boiled vegetables are added to the cooking pan along with salt and black pepper. After all the required ingredients have been added, it is cooked for some time and then served hot, accompanied by boiled rice. Apart from being a delicacy during the humid summer season, it also functions as a home-made remedy for health problems like stomach inflammation and ulcers.

Notun alur chocchori is a vegetable dish made from onion, garlic, red chilli powder and small chunks of unpeeled potatoes. It is specifically cooked during the winter season, widely, due to two reasons: firstly, the potatoes that are used are not the usual large-sized potatoes, but the small, round ones that are cultivated exclusively during the winter season in West Bengal; secondly, this preparation is extremely hot and spicy. Therefore, it appears suitable for consumption only in cold weather conditions because its consumption during the unbearable summer heat might lead to health problems like stomach inflammation, indigestion, bloody diarrhoea, etcetera. This dish is prepared by chopping the unpeeled potatoes into small pieces. Then, along with finely chopped onions and garlic, red chilli powder, salt and turmeric powder, the potatoes are deep fried in the mustard oil. The oil that is used is measured precisely so that after the preparation of this dish is complete, the deep-fried onions, garlic and potatoes remain soaked in the fried oil. Usually, it is eaten with boiled rice as well as a serving of *roti*. Altogether, these initiatives are not only enabling a community to re-discover and rebuild their local and regional gastronomic traditions, but also function as an exercise to archive the past into the present and move toward a decolonial future.

Not Exactly a Conclusion

The purpose of elaborating on the traditional food and culinary practices of West Bengal and offering a critique of the European and North American imitation food patterns is not to generate narratives of gastronomic orthodoxies and chauvinisms, but rather to expose the various social, cultural, racial,

communal, geographical, colonial and political factors that motivated people to disown their traditional consumption patterns and impersonate the European colonisers and the North American imperialists. It is important to illustrate how the social, cultural, historical and sensual desire of taste buds have been captivated, colonised and enslaved by the toxic seductions of colonialism and capitalism.

The purpose here is not to conclude this article with a definite set of solutions but to develop a depolarised, pluriversal platform for dialogues, polylogues, agreements and disagreements, which will enable us to holistically involve ourselves in the exercise of *mothofatso* or a continuous re-humanisation of the social, cultural, historical, communal and geographical traditions of Indigenous food of West Bengal. The continual rehumanisation will also motivate us to de-hierarchise, de-capitalise and embrace different food from different parts of the world and successfully move from 'elimination to connections' (Gordon 2020).

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❧❧❧❧❧❦❦❦❦

Contents
Volume I

ARTICLES