

## **Decoloniality as Travelling Theory: Or What Decoloniality is not**

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*Can we produce a radical anti-systemic politics beyond identity politics? Is it possible to articulate a critical cosmopolitanism beyond nationalism and colonialism? Can we produce knowledges beyond Third World and Eurocentric fundamentalisms? Can we overcome the traditional dichotomy between political-economy and cultural studies? How can we overcome the Eurocentric modernity without throwing away the best of modernity as many Third World fundamentalists do? I propose that an epistemic perspective from the subaltern side of the colonial difference has a lot to contribute to this debate.*

**Ramon Grosfoguel (2011:1).**

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

**Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007:243).**

*Provincialism? Absolutely not. I'm not going to confine myself to some narrow particularism. Nor do I intend to lose myself in a disembodied universalism. There are two ways to lose one self: through walled-in segregation in the particular, or through dissolution into the 'universal.' My idea of the universal is that of a universal rich with all that is particular, rich with all particulars, the deepening and coexistence of all particulars.*

**Aime Cesaire (1972: 84).**

### **Introduction**

To travel away from the present modern/colonial world but never actually depart is the perplexity of philosophers of decoloniality. This is the existential dilemma of those who occupy the subaltern side of the colonial difference, those who live but do not dwell in the modern/colonial world. While from Socrates to Slavoj Zizek

philosophy may be the love of wisdom in its probing of the world and the human condition, for those who feel, think, speak and write from the 'darker side of western modernity,' 'from the underside,' philosophy must necessarily be also wisdom to love. Not only the wisdom to love but in actuality the courage to love in a part of the world where love was suspended, denied and abolished. From 1492 to date, in the Global South suspensions, denials and abolitions of love took the form conquests, colonisations and enslavements that were accompanied by genocides and epistemides (the killing of histories and knowledges of the defeated). In the classical articulation of the profits of the political and the state as a representation of the highest of all goods Aristotle (2000:25) also defended the classification of some as natural masters and others natural slaves, for that reason the classical also became colonial.

In forcefully seeking to define the political proper as the navigation and also negotiation of power in 1932, Carl Schmitt (2007) emphasised the existence of friend and enemy relations in the distribution of good, peace, power and also punishments, oppressions and dominations. In the subaltern side of the colonial difference and in the darker side of modernity politics as the dirty game of war, power as domination, enmity and life as punishment have been distributed in a way that has also naturalised and normalised them. The naturalisation of war and normalisation of dominations, oppressions and suffering are what I define as coloniality in the present presentation.

In the modern/colonial world Charles Mills (1997:1, 3) has observed "white supremacy" to be "the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today," where "racism is itself a political system, a particular power structure of informal or informal rule, socioeconomic privilege, and norms for the differential distribution of material wealth and opportunities, benefits and burdens, rights and duties." The contract the governs the world is not the social contract of the bond of "we the people" but a racial contract. After Anibal Quijano (2000), Ramon

Grosfoguel (2011) and others, Walter Mignolo has described how coloniality of power envelopes the Global South through the:

**Control of the economy** based on appropriations of land (and subsequently natural resources) and control of labor; financial control of indebted countries.

**Control of authority:** based on the creation of imperial institutions during the foundation of the colonies or, more recently, by the use of military strength, forced destitution of presidents of countries to be controlled, the use of technology to spy on civil society, etc.

**Control of gender and sexuality:** having the Christian and bourgeois secular family as a model and standard of human sexual heterosexual relations; and heterosexuality as the universal model established by God (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries), first, and then by Nature (from the nineteenth century to the present);

**Control of knowledge and subjectivity:** by assuming the theological foundation of knowledge, after the Renaissance, and the egological foundation of knowledge, after the Enlightenment; and by forming a concept of the modern and Western subject first dependent on the Christian God, and then on its own sovereigns, reason and individuality( **Mignolo, 2008:15**).

In their experience of the world and life as a universe of dominations, controls and impositions; peoples, communities and countries of the Global South continue to live in colonial subjection. The dethronement of juridical colonialism and

administrative apartheid has not exhausted colonial power, epistemic and experiential conditions and relations. Democratic constitutions, liberal education systems and open societies have not managed to nullify the colonial and racial contract. Where decolonisation failed to abolish coloniality, decoloniality as an extended family of theories and paradigms should seek liberation. To decolonise is one thing and to liberate is another. The principal allegation of this presentation is that decoloniality is a philosophy of liberation, it is not racism, nativism, xenophobia, tribalism, or is it witchcraft, anarchy and primitive chaos, it is a militant philosophy that is not simplistic revenge and hate. Decoloniality is the thinking and practices from peoples and parts of the world that have experienced even the Enlightenment itself as a darkening of the world and have endured modernity as dehumanisation. As such, decoloniality as a philosophy of liberation entails the rehumanisation of the dehumanised and the courage to care and to love, to set afoot a new planetary human citizenship that Cesaire referred to as a universal experience of being that is enriched by the particular. Decoloniality is, in other words, the philosophy of those that have been victims of slavish and colonial fundamentalism and resist the temptation to liberate themselves using the logic of the same fundamentalism. Decolonists are those that can no longer live in the world as it is, are doing everything about it, but are not leaving the world. In this presentation I will speak and also allow philosophers and theorists of decoloniality to speak in their own words, sometimes at great length.

### **The Life of Theory in Travel**

In the essay, *Travelling Theory*, Edward Said (1983) illustrates how theories are born in time, place and situations, and how they travel, get used and abused. In their lives and their inevitable circulation in the world theories have to cut across geographies and biographies where they are gained and lost, and where they lose parts of themselves to gain parts of other theories and are flavoured and poisoned by experiences. Some theories get

misread and distorted in such a way that totally new theories are born out of them. As a militant philosophy of liberation and humanisation, I argue, decoloniality has not escaped the perils of travel, use, distortion, usurpation, appropriation, resistance and even neglect. Decoloniality has even suffered what Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2016:3) in his important, *Outline of Ten Theses on Coloniality and Decoloniality*, has called “benevolent neglect,” where it is energetically embraced as needing “urgent action” and then creatively and constructively abandoned as tried and failed, unrealistic and wishful. Benevolent neglect is not the worst of what decoloniality as a philosophy of liberation has been put through, there have been distortions where those that wish to practice any form of hate do so in the name of decoloniality and its time.

Be they ideologies, theories, paradigms or philosophies, powerful and beautiful ideas seem to have to pass the test in their travel. Nationalism in its employment and deployment in the African struggle against colonialism went through tragic degenerations, collapses, paralysis and what Frantz Fanon (1967) described as “the pitfalls of national consciousness.” Nationalism, away from being the idea of decolonisation that carried the hopes of Africa toward independence collapsed back into the colonial idea and experience that it was meant to confront. In the “unpreparedness of the educated class” that was accompanied by “their laziness and let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle” gave rise to “tragic mishaps” where “the nation” was “passed over for the race” and the “tribe preferred to the state” (Fanon, 1967:119).

Frantz Fanon (1967:125) laments how the struggle degenerated “from nationalism” down to the mud of “ultra-nationalism; to chauvinism, and finally racism” and xenophobia where minority tribes and foreigners were told and forced to leave. From its pronounced revolutionary utopia nationalism travelled the political road down to a dystopian violence and decay, perhaps this became the reason of the failure of nationalism, as Ali

Mazrui (1982) argued, to lead to nationhood and Pan-African unity in Africa. It is also possible that the degeneration of nationalism to the same colonialism that it sought to dethrone contributed to incomplete decolonisation and the continuity of coloniality beyond political independence.

In the present South African university, a westernised university and in most ways a colonial university, every faculty and department is busy decolonising this, transforming that and Africanising one or two things. One may argue that decolonisation of the university and of higher education in South Africa and in the Global South at large gets performed but not enacted, fictions and myths of the thing are thrown around and dramatised while the thing itself is ignored. The philosophy of decoloniality is not only given a bad name so that it is hanged but the cause of liberation abandoned as cadres and allies withdraw to prejudices and political preoccupations of the previous era. Perhaps the success of coloniality, in its manifestation through slavery, colonialism and imperialism has been its uncanny ability to turn its victims into its perpetrators and opponents into participants in its projects.

In description of the present form of the university in South Africa and Africa at large, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013:11) calls the institution “the university in Africa” and not the African university for the reason of its colonial form and content. On the same subject, Ramon Grosfoguel (2013) narrates the history of a westernised university in the Global South that has for centuries been complicit with the Euro-American colonial and imperial enterprise, a university that participated in the epistemicides and linguicides that consigned cultures of the colonised to marginality and oblivion in its centering of Euro-American epistemologies.

After a historical research on the university in South Africa, Robert Kriger (2015) notes that from 1916 onwards a suite of legislations was produced that enabled the creation of

universities that were meant specifically for the production of enlightened “sons of Empire,” Young white male graduates that would have the same technical, intellectual and professional competence as their counterparts in Britain and America. Kriger describes the history of how the Randlords and business moguls of the time were mobilised to fund the construction of the universities and pay for the tuition of the chosen white “sons of Empire.”

Clearly, there was a time in the life of South Africa when higher education was seen and handled as an investment. Only when black people were, in larger numbers, allowed access to higher education did the financing of higher education become an expenditure. Those that are not “sons of Empire” and whose education is seen as expenditure even by a democratic government are those that Bernard Magubane (2007) called the “dispensable others” of the colonial and apartheid system. The poor, black and disadvantaged continue to endure dispensability in the university and outside.

One can observe the political and intellectual laziness in South Africa and Africa at large where the production of an educated citizenry is not seen in terms of investment that warrants the taxing of big business and the creative mobilisation of funds to secure free and affordable higher education. The black governments and the ruling classes of Africa are still bound by the invisible but powerful colonial and racial contract that legislates the poor and black peoples out of mainstream social life. The decolonisation of African polities and economies has clearly not led to liberation; even democratisation has not delivered liberation but has proven its complicity in sustaining coloniality. The reality that the calls for free higher education by students are seen as unreasonable, unrealistic and even irrelevant demands by an unruly lot is testimony to the incompleteness of decolonisation in Africa and its failure to achieve liberation. Intellectual laziness and lack of political will is the malady.

Colonisers did not colonise with playfulness. It was with a political spirit that Friedrich Nietzsche (1968) called a warlike 'will to power' that the white minority government of apartheid South Africa built Afrikaans from a tribal dialect to a language of record, education, training, law and religion. In 1913 Afrikaans was used for the first time as a medium of instruction in primary schools. By 1918 it had been built and developed to a language of university education, professional and intellectual communication. Parliamentary debates and deliberations were conducted in Afrikaans in 1925, a few years before the first Afrikaans bible appeared in 1933. The use of indigenous languages in the present South African university, more than two decades after the dethronement of apartheid is still the true stuff of the token and a subject of slogans than real political and historical will. Did Chinua Achebe not warn us that:

The missionary who left the comforts of Europe to wander through my primeval forest was extremely earnest. He had to be; he came to change my world. The builders of Empire who turned me into a "British protected person" knew the importance of being earnest, they had the quality of mind which imperial Rome before them understood so well: *Gravitas*. Now it seems to me pretty obvious that if I desire to change the role and identity fashioned for me by those earnest agents of colonialism I will need to borrow some of their resolve. Certainly, I could not do it through self-indulgent levity (Achebe, 1989:84).

The coloniser and the Empire builder who produced our present world and shaped our current condition did his job with an iron will to power and a monstrous gravitas. The colonial will to power is defined by what Friedrich Nietzsche (2000:1) called the habit of "philosophising with a hammer," that is producing ideas



that have the force to change histories and change destinies of peoples and their communities.

In its travel the decolonial will is losing direction, gravitas and hardihood. We will to undo with luxury what the coloniser did with a hammer of force and fraud. Coloniality as a power structure in the Euro-American world system is the work of the evil genius and to undo it demands from us a monstrous decolonial will. Decoloniality cannot hope to undo extreme domination using moderate means. The coloniser shaped our world with extreme zest. Chinua Achebe, in his simple but not simplistic manner, gave us an observation and a suggestion:

The first nationalists and freedom fighters in the colonies, hardly concerned to oblige their imperial masters, were offensively earnest. They had no choice. They needed to alter the arrangement which kept them and their people out in the rain and the heat of the sun. They fought and won some victories. They changed a few things and seemed to secure certain powers of action over others. But quickly the great collusive swindle that was (political) independence showed its true face to us. And we were dismayed; but only momentarily for even in our defeat we had gained something of inestimable value- a baptism of fire (Achebe, 1989:85).

Decolonisation, in Africa and the entire Global South did not only fail to achieve liberation, it soon became a colossal historical swindle, a true fraud of the ages. The historical drama came with melodious anthems, colourful flags and carnivals of performances of stateliness by black besuited men, guerrillas in ties. Freedom was performed and not enacted, away from sight but present in all power, the sons of Empire continued to reign.

Observing the crisis of capitalism today, the ecological catastrophe, terrorism and the so called war against it Slavoj Zizek (2017) the prophet of leftist Eurocentricism can demand from the world as he knows it “the courage of hopelessness,” to be brave enough to acknowledge hopelessness. Outside the universe of meaning of which Zizek is citizen, there are those who have never been sons of Empire, those who don’t need courage to be hopeless because hopelessness was imposed on them. They have always been outside the borders of the provinces of the state and its goodness that Aristotle classically defined. They are bound by a historical and political contract that they never signed but was signed on them. They have always lived in the state of the junk and the state of captivity, to say their state was captured now is fake news and alternative facts in which their lives have always been enveloped. For them philosophy cannot only be the love of wisdom but a wisdom and a courage to love where love was abolished and made impossible. In respect of that, the decolonial will can only be a will that Achebe suggests, a will of fire. Decoloniality is that philosophy of liberation that has learnt it the hard way and has endured a baptism of fire, a philosophy that has not only lost its innocence but also its temper.

### **What fundamentally is Decoloniality?**

Decoloniality as not just a philosophy but an extended family of theories, paradigms and even some ideologies of liberation, as I have said, goes beyond the love of wisdom but approaches the courage to think and love under impossible conditions. Enrique Dussel in his description of the philosophy of liberation boldly states that:

Philosophy when it is philosophy and not sophistry or ideology, does not ponder philosophy, it does not ponder philosophical texts, except as a pedagogical propaedeutic to provide itself with interpretive categories.

Philosophy ponders the non-philosophical, the reality...the philosophy that has emerged from a periphery has always done so in response to a need to situate itself with regard to a center- in total exteriority (Dussel, 1985:3).

The kind of philosophy that Dussel articulates has no time for the Olympics of philosophical civil wars, between the continental and analytical categories, of which Linda Martin Alcoff speaks. Eurocentric critiques of Eurocentricism can afford luxuries. In the Westernised University and colonial academy of which we are products and citizen philosophy spends time philosophising its disciplinarity and philosophiness, parading the narcissism of philosophy and strutting its stuff in the fashion of true intellectual pageantry. Decoloniality cannot afford that paradisaical preoccupation of philosophy that has even the pleasure to ask itself if it exists or not, a privileged thought that has the power to deny its identity.

Decoloniality has more urgent business. Philosophising from the reality of being black in a world governed by a racial constitution and contract that consigns the black to the toilet of history, Lewis R. Gordon (2008:1, 13) delineates *Africana existentia* philosophy as the deep and painful thinking of those peoples whose very humanity has been doubted. Similarly, philosophising from Africa's stolen history and disfigured political heritage Dani Wadada Nabudere (2011) erects Afrikology that emerges from the African cosmology as an epistemology in search of "wholeness" after a long history of the minimisation and reduction of African peoples. It was to philosophise in decoloniality when Kwame Nkrumah (1963) pondered the "triple heritage" in his *Consciencism*. Nkrumah agonised over how Africa was to create a new civilisation out of its traditional past, the western Christian civilisation and the Arab Islamic civilisation. The search for a political method to turn a clash of civilisations into a futurist dialogue of cultures is what burdened Nkrumah.

In an act of strong decolonial will, M. S.C. Okolo (2007) wrote to argue that contrary to Eurocentric and racist opinions, such African thinkers as Ngugi wa Thiongo and Chinua Achebe, admired for the entertainment value of their novels must be recognised and respected for their art as a wealth of African philosophy that is engaged with the human experience and condition in Africa. A recognition of the artistic and the poetic as philosophical, away from Plato's classical contempt for the fictive imaginists, is also defended by Cornel West (2017:151, 152) in his agony with "what it means to be human," where he claims "black prophetic fire" and the tendency to philosophise from the "funk" and the "mess" of victimhood. "I am the jazzman and blues man of philosophy" Cornel West claims and insists that Negro spirituals are still his inspiration. Like Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiongo, Cornel West's art is not art for art's sake but an attempt to engage with catastrophe and calamity. The decolonial will does not brood and meditate in the catholic closet the way Rene Descartes did but it also sings, sculpts, recites poetry, and dances. The lone meditator who speaks with the words of power "I think therefore I am," is not exactly the same with the Blues singer and jazzman who sings powerful words in search of liberation.

Words of power and powerful words are not from the same epistemic site; one is from privilege the other from pain. In the westernised university epistemic privilege and canonical power is given to the western white men that are given the status of fathers of disciplines, parents of methods and theories. Chinua Achebe described his own artistic philosophical vocation, not profession, thus:

I for one would not wish to be excused. I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past- with all its imperfections- was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting

on God's behalf delivered them. Perhaps what I write is applied art as distinct from pure. But who cares? Art is important, but so is education of the kind I have in mind. And I don't see that the two need be mutually exclusive (Achebe, 1989:45).

Decoloniality seeks to address injustice. In the decolonial reason and will of Achebe the artistic and the philosophical cannot be separated and care is not given to prescriptions of disciplinary police officers and intellectual magistrates that we are in the westernised university. The beautiful and the powerful are combined in the probing and expression of the world and the human condition. In doing this Chinua Achebe was fighting and resisting impositions and prescriptions that seek to command certain ways and means of knowing, his was a strategic decolonial fight that involved using the language and culture of the coloniser to confront coloniality:

Most African writers write out of an African experience and commitment to an African destiny. For them, that destiny does not include a future European destiny for which the present is but apprenticeship. And let no one be fooled by the fact that we may write in English, for we intend to do unheard of things with it. Already some people are getting worried... every literature must seek the things that belong unto its place, must in other words, speak of a particular place, evolve out of the necessities of its history, past and current, and the aspirations and destiny of its people (Achebe, 1989:74).

Achebe saw it before many of us that the westernised global system of knowing and knowledge making was designed for Europeans and other westerners, and for aspiring Europeans and apprentice westerners among us. The realisation did not drive

Achebe to the Third World fundamentalism of angrily retreating to a pristine Africa, he did the courageous thing to do under the circumstances, to appropriate the imperial language, domesticate it, load it with the idiom and sensibility of the colonised and perform the unheard of thing of insulting Empire in its grammar and vocabulary turned.

To valorise the decolonial gesture of Achebe thus is not in any way to minimise Ngugi wa Thiongo who has globalised the importance of return to the mother tongue in decolonisation, that is perhaps what Spivak called strategic essentialism, as long as it does not lose its strategy and properly decline to the essential, it is decolonial struggle. The decolonial uses of colonial language in the struggle against Empire were also beautifully and powerfully fortified by Frantz Fanon who in his combative and militant tone mocked the political blindness of the coloniser in French Algeria:

The occupation authorities have not measured the importance of the new attitude of the Algerian toward the French language. Expressing oneself in French, understanding French, was no longer tantamount to treason or to an impoverishing identification with the occupier. Used by the voice of the combatants, conveying in a positive way the message of the revolution, the French language also becomes an instrument of liberation (Fanon, 1965).

In strategic historical and political circumstances the struggle for liberation considers the content and the attitude of language in, the language in the language, not just the shapes on paper and sounds in the air. The biography and geography of language are not more important than the use to which it is put. Colonial and imperial languages can, for instance, be weaponised against Empire and that can get some people truly worried as Achebe observed. Decoloniality is in the political business of doing

unheard of things and instrumentalising every opportunity for liberation.

In its political and intellectual attitude decoloniality has an important investment in what Boaventura De Sousa Santos (2014) has called “epistemologies of the South” as a struggle for “justice against epistemicides.” As I noted somewhere above, part of the project of coloniality at a world scale has been the genocide of cultures, languages and knowledges of the Global South. The epistemicides have been cause to both cognitive and hermeneutic justice where in the global academy that is dominated by the westernised university only epistemologies of the Global North enjoy epistemic power and privilege. If not appropriated and usurped, epistemologies of the South are erased, peripherised or reduced to superstition and tokenised as decorations and displays in the Eurocentric libraries of the westernised university. When the burning of libraries is condemned which it must, the starting point should be with the condemnation of the systemic and continuous way in which the westernised university structurally and systematically burns archives, canons and epistemologies that are not western, through the curriculum, the syllabi and the recommended reading lists.

Decoloniality seeks epistemic justice. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014: viii) emphatically starts with the observation that “first the understanding of the world by far exceeds the western understanding of the world, second there is no global social justice without global social justice, third the emancipatory transformations in the world may follow grammars and scripts other than those developed by western-centric critical theory, and such diversity should be valorised.” Knowledges like the languages that carry them do not walk on two legs but are carried by living bodies, to silence and erase some knowledges is genocidal in that it involves the erasure of beings and their sensibility. Human diversity and the diversity of knowledges are a central plank of decolonising not only the westernised university but the entire Global South. Critical Diversity Literacy,

Pluriversality and intercultural translation become some of the most important critical tools with which to confront coloniality in and outside the westernised academy.

In such a scenario where Eurocentricism seeks to have an uninterrupted march across the campuses of the university in the Global South, such philosophical and political gestures as “the Afrocentric idea” that is articulated by Molefi Kete Asante (1998:1, 14) become critically important. In the observation that the assumption of neutrality and objectivity in western thought is a true colonial fiction that conceals imperial subjectivity Asante explodes the myths of western science. It is not enough, however, to only answer Eurocentricism with Afrocentricity, decoloniality as I illustrate below goes further to seek to establish critical humanism.

In many meaningful ways, decoloniality departs and even differs diametrically to postcolonial theory. One such way is that decoloniality regards colonialism and especially coloniality itself as a reality of the present and not a past process, event or episode in the history of the Global South. To start with coloniality is described by decolonial thinkers and theories as those structures and even institutions of power that derive from and continue from colonialism:

Coloniality is different colonialism. Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to a long-standing patterns of power that emerged as result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is



maintained alive in Power, Knowledge and Being 109 books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality as the time and every day (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 243).

Coloniality and or colonialism itself in its systemic effects can in no way be considered as things of the boring past. Consigning the colonial to the dead past is understood as fraudulently mythical and misleading. Coloniality is a stubborn presence that can only be denied in myth:

One of the most powerful myths of twentieth century was the notion that the elimination of colonial administrations amounted to the decolonization of the world. This led to the myth of a 'postcolonial' world. The heterogeneous and multiple global structures put in place over a period of 450 years did not evaporate with the juridical political decolonization of the periphery over the past 50 years. We continue to live under the same 'colonial power matrix'. With juridical-political decolonization we moved from a period of 'global colonialism' to the current period of 'global coloniality (Grosfoguel, 2007:219).

Coloniality is in that view of decolonial thinking a present and haunting ghost. It is alive in the control of economies and control of authority in the Global South. It is present in the domination and exploitation of people according to gender and sexuality and in the colonisation of knowledge and subjectivities. In the punishments that it levies, and the privileges that it asymmetrically distributes and yet it remains not so obvious coloniality becomes "the corpse" that "obstinately persists in getting up again every time it is buried and, year in year out," in

everyday life and language it installs its tyrannies as Achille Mbembe (2001:3) describes the injustice against Africa. For the reason that coloniality permits colonial conditions, occasions colonial experiences and sustains colonial power relations after administrative decolonisation, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) concludes that what was supposed to be the decolonisation of Africa became myths and fictions that Empire used to conceal its imperial designs in Africa. The political project of decoloniality is partly to unmask coloniality where ever it is concealed.

### **Decoloniality as a Philosophy of Liberation**

Like any other theory or philosophy in travel in the world decoloniality has had its misinterpretations, distortions, misuses and degenerations. Decoloniality has seen the plight of a travelling theory that Edward Said described. As a philosophy of liberation it is founded on the observation that the decolonisation of the periphery failed and coloniality is still at large. The archaeology of the world that decoloniality does in describing the problem of coloniality is followed by an eschatology and pronouncement of it's decolonial utopia. I argued earlier that decoloniality is a philosophy that is not limited to the love of wisdom but extends to the courage and wisdom of love in a world where love was abolished. Paulo Freire is one philosopher who defined the burden of the oppressed as courageous liberators who liberate themselves and their oppressors:

Because it is a distortion of being more fully human, sooner or later being less human leads the oppressed to struggle against those who made them so. In order for this struggle to have meaning, the oppressed must not in seeking to regain their humanity (which is a way to create it), become in turn oppressors of the oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both. This, then, is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and

their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power; cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both (Freire, 1993:1).

Decoloniality is not revenge. In its full awareness and experience of the pain of domination and oppression decoloniality as a philosophy of liberation seeks justice but resists the temptation of hate and vengeance. What appears to be the “turn the other cheek” messianism of decoloniality as a philosophy of liberation is actually a great critical humanist responsibility and power that only the oppressed can afford. The utopia and eschatology of decoloniality is the rehumanisation of the world and the production of a new humanity that departs from the model of the human that oppression has fashioned.

Enrique Dussel (1985:4) described philosophers of liberation as those brave thinkers of the periphery “who had a perspective of the center from the periphery” who are the “the newcomers, the ones who hope because they are already outside, these are those who have a clear mind for pondering reality, they have nothing to hide, how can they hide domination when they undergo it?” Those that have been enslaved and colonised and who continue to suffer coloniality are the ones that can imagine liberation. In that way, decoloniality is what Ngugi wa Thiongo (2012:3,8) has called “poor theory” and “globalectical imagination” in that its riches lie in the serious occupation with struggles of the poor while its vision concerns the future of the globe.

Enrique Dussel wrote of the philosophy of liberation in 1969, many years before the appearance of the personification of western intellectual celebrity, Slavoj Žižek. Dussel described how western philosophy has the privilege to joke and play, a privilege

which decoloniality and the philosophy of liberation at large cannot afford:

Philosophy of the center gives us a wide gamut of false problems with its diversionary tactics and subtleties. Its philosophers sometimes appear to be the court jesters of the system that they entertain and amaze by their witticisms and games of logical sleight of hand. These are the themes of *homo ludens* while others are dying! They are the themes of philosophies of language, of word juggling, which reduce to silence the cry of the oppressed. Even the pain of the oppressed they cannot interpret. Phenomenological ontology, a good part of analytical philosophy, and certain dogmatic Marxisms are luxuries or fireworks displays. They are not themes of philosophy of liberation (Dussel, 1985:177).

The topics and themes that occupy decoloniality as a philosophy of liberation are subjects and topics from the slavish and the colonial bleeding wound. While Žižek may personify the jester philosopher, Edward Said and Frantz Fanon, among others are examples of philosophers of liberation and critical humanists whose themes and political engagements do not allow jokes. The political and philosophical preoccupation of decoloniality is not only to describe the world but in earnest to seek to change it, to recover the fullness of the human:

When I search for Man in the technique and the style of Europe, I see only a succession of negations of man, and an avalanche of murders. The human condition, plans for mankind and collaboration between men in those tasks which increase the sum total of humanity are new problems, which demand true inventions. Let us decide not to imitate

Europe; let us combine our muscles and our brains in a new direction. Let us try to create the whole man, whom Europe has been incapable of bringing to triumphant birth. Two centuries ago, a former European colony decided to catch up with Europe. It succeeded so well that the United States of America became a monster, in which the taints, the sickness and the inhumanity of Europe have grown to appalling dimensions. Comrades, have we not other work to do than to create a third Europe? (Fanon, 1967:252).

While hegemonic western thought and political ideology invents alternative facts, feeds on fake news and has over centuries worked to reduce humanity, decoloniality probes the human condition and experience in search of a “whole man.” The search for this complete humanity, as Grosfoguel agonises in the epigraph that opens these notes cannot be achieved through fundamentalism but through the courage to think and love under conditions where thinking and loving have been made impossible. As a philosophy of liberation decoloniality has the political project to undo coloniality and set afoot a new world. For that reason decoloniality is not a political craze, a fashionable intellectual trend or a hate movement but that has not protected it from being assumed to be, or used as such, after all it is also a theory in its travel whose dilemma is the search for a global that is open to the local and a local that is rich with the global.

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