Decoloniality and Africanisation as Instruments for Change: A Sociological Discourse Analysis of Meanings and Implications for Higher Education

Tebello Letsekha

Abstract

The end of 2017 marked a significant change in South African higher education with the government's announcement that free higher education would be extended to poor and working-class students. For students who engaged in protest action to demand a curriculum which centres Africa and takes African discourses as its point of departure, this was a partial victory. While concessions were made regarding fees and the removal of colonial-era statues, students continue to grapple with the form and purpose of higher education. This struggle is not a new one; it can be traced back to the early 1960s, when Black student movements rejected colonial and apartheid ideas at an intellectual level. In grappling with the critical epistemological questions raised by students, scholars have proposed the notions of decoloniality and Africanisation as instruments to rethink the purpose and form of higher education. Using sociological discourse analysis, this article examines the pragmatism of these concepts in the quest for relevance in higher education.

Key words: Africanisation, decoloniality, sociological discourse analysis, higher education

La fin de l'année 2017 a marqué un changement significatif dans l'enseignement supérieur sud-africain avec l'annonce par le gouvernement que l'enseignement supérieur gratuit serait étendu aux étudiants pauvres et issus de la classe ouvrière. Pour les étudiants qui se sont engagés dans des actions de protestation pour exiger un programme centré sur l'Afrique et prenant les discours africains comme point de départ, ce fut une victoire partielle. Il est vrai que des concessions ont été faites concernant les frais de

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: TEBELLO LETSEKHA, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. E-mail: tebello.letseka@wits.ac.za

scolarité et la suppression des lois de l'époque coloniale, mais les étudiants continuent de se débattre avec la forme et le but de l'enseignement supérieur. Cette lutte n'est pas nouvelle; elle remonte au début des années 1960, où les mouvements des étudiants noirs ont rejeté les notions intellectuelles coloniales et d'apartheid. Aux prises avec les questions épistémologiques critiques soulevées par les étudiants, les chercheurs ont proposé les notions de décolonialité et d'africanisation comme instruments pour repenser le but et la forme de l'enseignement supérieur. À partir d'une analyse sociologique du discours, cet article interroge le pragmatisme de ces concepts dans la quête de pertinence dans l'enseignement supérieur.

Mots clés : africanisation, décolonialité, analyse sociologique du discours, enseignement supérieur

1 Introduction

The emergence of the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements in 2015 and 2016, respectively, placed the issue of the form and purpose of higher education back on the national agenda. The demand for a decolonised education in particular, reminded us of the colonial nature of the university, including its primarily "Western paradigm of values and cultural climate" (Jogee, Callaghan, and Callaghan, 2018). While it is essential not to homogenise the 2015-2016 student movements, their emergence can be traced back to the entry of Black students into the academy following years of marginalisation and exclusion. As descendants of racially oppressed, excluded and colonised peoples, this was bound to impact the idea of the university, curriculum, epistemology, and pedagogy (Mbembe, 2016).

In response to student engagement with the idea of the university, curriculum, epistemology, and pedagogy, scholars (Heleta, 2016; Jansen, 2017; Mbembe, 2016) have proposed the notions of decoloniality and Africanisation as possible instruments to achieve relevance. The discourse on these concepts is worth examining because academic debates and student demands have led to a better understanding of what they entail in the university context. If anything, the situation has become less clear due to confusion around what, exactly, each concept means as a process related to the purpose and form of higher education.

This article unravels some of the misperceptions that have ensued by examining the pragmatism of these concepts in the quest for relevance in higher education. While the discussion is framed by the questions raised during the student protests, the task at hand is not an analysis of these movements. The article is divided into three parts. The first briefly traces engagement with the form and purpose of higher education in the South African context. Part two presents the methodology and outlines the particular version of sociological discourse analysis utilised to examine the discourse on each concept. The last part analyses what these concepts might entail as a series of envisaged remedies to rethink the content and practice of teaching to make them relevant to the local context.

Engagement with the Form and Purpose of Higher Education

Educational institutions in Africa date back a thousand years – Al-Azhar in Egypt, Al-Zaytuna in Morocco, and Sankore in Mali all existed prior to European domination of the continent (Mamdani, 2011). However, contemporary African higher education institutions are ordered by disciplinary divisions that emerged in 19th and 20th century Europe. This was mainly a post-colonial development during the 1950s and 1960s (Truscott and Van Bever Donker, 2017). During this period the development of universities was a key nationalist demand and every country needed to establish one to prove that it had truly become liberated (Mamdani, 2011, p. 2).

While these universities emerged after independence, the colonial legacy remained intractably entrenched. The general consensus among several African scholars (Wa Thiong'o, 1981; Adesina, 2002; Mamdani, 2011; Mbembe, 2016) is that these institutions remain Eurocentric, based on a Western canon which attributes truth solely to the Western way of knowledge production. Other epistemic traditions are disregarded and it attempts "to portray colonialism as a normal form of social relations between human beings rather than a system of oppression" (Mbembe, 2016, p. 32).

As a result of this colonial legacy, for some the academy can be an alienating, tremendously white, Eurocentric space and experience. For Black students in particular, there is an expectation that they will assimilate unfamiliar norms, customs and academic language in spaces that are not very accommodating of their presence or identities. At historically white universities, there remains "a deeply embedded culture of whiteness that has yet to yield to substantive respect for and affirmation of difference and creation of inclusive institutional cultures" (Badat, 2019, p. 7). This culture has been a key impediment to transformation and remains "invisible and unmarked… the absent centre

against which others appear as points of deviation" (Ahmed, 2012, p. 36).

The irrelevant Western canon and culture of whiteness and subordinate inclusion have not gone unchallenged by students. South African students have an extensive history of questioning the purpose and form of the education they receive. Such questions often arise as a result of day-to-day challenges around issues of race, class, access, representation, and recognition. In the university context, they have been expressed through various approaches that have included but have not been limited to protests, taking staff hostage, boycotting lectures, and vandalism (Badat, 1999).

These strategies can be traced back to the pre-1960 period when heterogeneous groups, led by the white-dominated National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) held student marches and placard demonstrations. Questions were also raised about the purpose and form of education with the emergence of the South African Student Organisation (SASO) in 1968 (Biko, 2004). Led by Steve Biko, SASO was made up of students who broke away from NUSAS as they "felt the need for a nationally representative black student organisation" (Biko, 2004, p. 3). They were of the view that NUSAS was not adopting a sufficiently radical stance on issues that affected Black students. Biko (2004 5) asserted that "not unless the non-white students decide to lift themselves from the doldrums will they ever hope to get out of them". This newly formed student movement rejected apartheid ideals, including white political dominance and Black subordination.

The "revolution" called for by students during the events that began in March 2015 was, therefore, not new or surprising. Such calls and criticism of historically white universities for their Eurocentric curricula and alienating institutional cultures are linked to the purpose and form of higher education for several reasons. Among other things, they raise questions about the very idea of a university in the African context, and the extent to which universities are upholding the promise of social change; pose questions about the process of acquiring knowledge and what it means to be educated; and bring to the fore the lack of alternative concepts, theories, methodologies and questions other than those from the global North.

Beyond the acquisition of knowledge, higher education holds the promise of contributing to both cognitive and social justice. The former refers a normative principle for the equal treatment of all forms of knowledge; this does not necessarily mean that all forms of knowledge are equal, but that the equality of the knowers forms the basis of dialogue between knowledges

(Leibowitz, 2017). The latter is concerned with the way in which human rights are manifested in the everyday lives of people at every level of society. "Recognising other knowledge forms, bringing them into dialogue and tying these to an ethical commitment, such as social justice, not only broadens the knowledge repertoires available to students, but remedies vital absences from the public curriculum" (Jansen, 2017, p. 5). In South Africa, the promise of social justice accompanied by cognitive justice remains unrealised, with higher education being a powerful mechanism of exclusion.

In academic debates on the purpose and form of higher education, it has been suggested that the concepts of decoloniality and Africanisation might be appropriate instruments to achieve relevance. These historically laden terms have also provided a language for students to express themselves and articulate a desired state of affairs in higher education. While these concepts have gained popularity, there is also some confusion around what they entail, especially for the individual academic. Although these concepts are either utilised interchangeably or as alternates for each other, I demonstrate that as processes related to education, they mean different things. Such distinctions are important because not all the challenges confronting South African higher education can be traced back to the imperial experience. They are also crucial because the applicability of each concept is likely to be limited to certain fields of study.

2 Data Selection: Document Review

My evaluation of the pragmatism of decoloniality and Africanisation as instruments to bring about change in higher education draws on what has been written about these concepts. Documents in the form of journal articles and books served as data sources. The use of documents as sources of evidence is a long and worthy tradition in the empirical social sciences (Prior, 2008). A document can be defined as any symbolic representation that can be recorded and retrieved for description and analysis (Altheide, Coyle, and De Vriese, 2008). Documents' major advantage over interviews and other data collection methods is their lack of reactivity. Documents were also preferred as they contain text that has been recorded without a researcher's intervention (Bowen, 2009). They can therefore be regarded as 'social facts', which are reproduced, shared, and used in socially organised ways (Atkinson and Coffey, 2004, p. 46). Reviewing documents yielded the data – excerpts, quotations, and entire passages – that were coded and organised into key themes through

content analysis.

As part of the document review process, I reviewed journal articles, book chapters and books following a Google scholar search on the concepts of Africanisation and decolonisation/ decoloniality. Following the initial review process, 29 documents were selected for analysis, comprised of 23 journal articles and six books. Each conveys particular aspects of the alternative discourses in particular ways. The documents not only represent and reflect certain versions of reality; they also play a part in the very construction and maintenance of that reality (Cheek, 2004). The final selection of the documents was guided by assessing each document for the following (Bowen, 2009, p. 33):

- Completeness – comprehensive (covering each concept completely or broadly) or selective (covering only some aspects of the concept).
- Evenness – containing great detail on some aspects of the concept and little or nothing on other aspects.
- The original purpose of the document – and intended audience.
- Evaluated against other sources of information – because documents are context-specific.
- Information about the author.

3 Data Analysis: Sociological Discourse Analysis

From a sociological perspective, *discourse* is understood as any exercise whereby individuals permeate reality with meaning (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009). Sociological discourse analysis was developed by adopting and adapting methods of analysis developed in other social science traditions such as linguistics and political theory. In order to interpret discourse from a sociological standpoint, the discourse must first be analysed from both a *textual* and *contextual* approach (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009). There are, therefore, three levels of analysis: a textual level, a contextual level and an interpretative level (Ruiz Ruiz 2009; Keller, 2009).

Discourse as Object: Inductive Content Analysis

To carry out the first level of analysis I relied on inductive content analysis, which is useful if knowledge about a phenomenon is fragmented. This approach moves from the particular to the general, so that particular instances are observed and then combined into a larger whole or general statement (Elo and Kyngas, 2007). Inductive content analysis made it possible to refine words into less content-related categories (Prior, 2008, p. 113). This can only occur by absorbing oneself in the content; the journal articles and books selected for analysis were thus read numerous times.

It is anticipated that when categorised into the same categories, linguistic units such as words and phrases share the same meaning. To classify content, I relied on emergent coding where codes are drawn from the text (Stemler, 2001). This was the commencement of a long process of working with raw content through constant comparison, initial conceptual identification, and categorisation (Blair, 2015). To begin the open coding process, I wrote notes and headings in the text while reading it. Themes were freely generated at this stage.

To create themes, content was classified as belonging to a particular group. This implies a comparison between this data and other observations that do not belong to the same category (Stemler, 2001). Creating themes provided a means of describing each concept to increase understanding and generate knowledge. Coding was carried out manually for two reasons: firstly, there were practical issues to consider, such as the time it would take to familiarise myself with coding software. Secondly, I was more comfortable using highlighters and pens. The table below illustrates how a few of the themes tied to each concept were generated. For the sake of brevity, all the themes used in the analysis are not elaborated in this article.

Theme: *African Identity*	**Theme:** *Paradigm Shift*	**Theme:** *Culture*
Codes	*Codes*	*Codes*
Integration	Alienation	Rich knowledge base already exists
Indigenous	Context	Oral traditions
The African experience	African culture-based theories	African Philosophy
Reclaim	Integration	Language

Theme: *African Renaissance*	**Theme:** *Agency*	**Theme:** *The African University*
Codes	*Codes*	*Codes*
Reclaiming what has been taken away from Africa	African agenda	Learning from social context
Indigenous knowledge	Reclaim history	Rethinking disciplines
Valorising African scholarship	Destiny	African culture
	Social justice	Transdisciplinary
	Capabilities	
	Student voice	

Table 1: Coding examples

Discourse as a Singular Event: Intertextual Analysis

The second level of analysis centred on context, which is the space in which discourse has emerged and takes meaning (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009). For this phase, I made use of intertextual analysis. The implicit and explicit relations that a text has to prior, contemporary and potential future texts is known as intertextuality (Bazerman, 2004, p. 86). In its simplest sense, intertextual analysis is a way of interpreting texts which focuses on the idea of texts borrowing words and concepts from each other. Though intertextual analysis, it was possible to distinguish different levels at which each text invoked another text and relied on it as a conscious resource. These included:

- Drawing on prior texts as a source of meanings.
- Drawing on the explicit language of prior texts.
- Explicitly using statements as background, support, and contrast.
- Relying on beliefs, issues, ideas and statements generally circulated.

Cheek (2004) warns of an ongoing tension in discourse analytic research between the text and the context in which it is situated. The dilemma for the researcher is how far one should go beyond the actual text being analysed to arrive at a contextual interpretation of what is being conveyed. In addition, discourse analytic research tends to bestow a great deal of power on the analyst to impose meanings on another's texts (Cheek, 2004). Given these issues I constantly took into consideration that as an analyst I was not only the reader but also a producer of discourse.

Intertextual analysis was first carried out on the texts related to decoloniality

which originated from Fanonism and the discourse on decolonisation. Decolonisation, the precursor of decoloniality, was a call for a dual process of destruction and restoration. Although not explicitly addressing issues related to education, Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) which has been hailed as "The Handbook of the Black Revolution" became a key text in articulating this form of destruction and restoration. Fanon, who is sometimes credited as the father of decolonisation (Sartre, 1963) became an authoritative figure in the discourse on decolonisation.

Interestingly the analysis provided in *The Wretched of the Earth* was meant to be relevant to a particular time and place – Algeria in the 1960s. Fanon (1963) also warned that it was not intended to be applicable to every Black man (sic) in similar conditions. He did, however, call for people to respond to their time and place as he did with his Algerian context. He also acknowledged that one can perhaps identify some broad threads along the lines of the analysis he provided.

Another text commonly drawn on as a source of meaning in the discourse on decolonisation is Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiongo's collection of essays titled, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. This work was published in 1981 at the height of the Cold War and examines the relationship between language and culture. For Ngugi, language and culture carry the entire body of values by which people perceive themselves and their place in the world. The text is commonly drawn on to articulate the centrality of language and culture in both colonisation and decolonisation.

A few Latin American scholars have emerged as central figures in articulating the shift from colonialism to coloniality in the present moment and the need for decoloniality. They include literary critic Walter Mignolo, Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano and anthropologist, Arturo Escobar. It is difficult to cite specific texts as the idea of decoloniality in higher education has not been widely debated. However, I argue that most scholars writing on decolonisation are in fact calling for decoloniality. In the African context, drawing on the work of some of the Latin American scholars listed here, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni has become a prominent voice in articulating the debates on coloniality and decoloniality in higher education.

Similar to the ideas on decoloniality, calls for Africanisation are rooted in the colonial experience. When applied to education, it is taken to signal a renewed focus on the African context to render knowledge more African (Louw, 2010). Malegapuru Makgoba's (1997) book, *The Makgoba Affair- A*

reflection on transformation, has become a source of meaning in academic debates on Africanisation. Indeed, Makgoba, the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of KwaZulu-Natal has become a somewhat authoritative figure in understanding the meaning of Africanisation and all the documents I analysed make reference to his definition. Makgoba (1997, p. 66) writes that Africanisation is not a process of exclusion but of inclusion…

> "*[I]t is a learning process and a way of life for Africans. It involves incorporating, adapting and integrating other cultures into and through African visions to provide the dynamism, evolution and flexibility so essential in the global village. Africanisation is the process of defining and interpreting African identity and culture. It is informed by the experience of the African Diaspora and has endured and matured over time from narrow nationalistic intolerance to an accommodating, realistic and global form.*"

This quotation from Makgoba's (1997) book is commonly utilised as background, support, and contrast in the effort to provide a definition of Africanisation. The danger of relying on it is that it creates a single and incomplete narrative of what Africanisation means. Furthermore, the quote is commonly taken out of context without engaging with the entire text to understand the original context in which it was written. Many of the criticisms (Horsthemke, 2004) of Africanisation are based on this it and seem not to take into account other developments in the discourse.

The text was published in 1997, three years after the transition to democracy, which was the impetus for a shift to a more open, inclusive, relevant and non-discriminating higher education system. Post-1994, higher education was called upon to address and respond to the development needs of a democratic South Africa and to transform in order to redress apartheid legacies. During this period struggles around who played a significant role in determining the direction of institutional change were not uncommon. In the book, Makgoba (1997) addresses the topical issue of '*transformation*', which was a key concern following the 1994 democratic elections. The text also attempts to elucidate the role of the African intellectual in South Africa, a subject Makgoba (1997) described as central to institutional transformation. Several themes can be highlighted in the text such as the notion of self-consciousness; agency and the idea of a unique 'African identity'. These are unpacked in the interpretation of the discourse.

Interpretation: Discourse as Social Information and as a Social Product

The final level of sociological analysis requires interpretation of the discourse, which, although characterised as the third level of analysis, is present in the prior two levels (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009, p. 7). At this level, discourse was interpreted as *social information* and as a *social product*. Interpreting the *informative dimension* of discourse entails providing relevant information about social reality. In this instance, the relevant information is about what the discourses on Africanisation and decoloniality mean in relation to the form and purpose of higher education as a series of remedies. Discourses both enable and constrain certain ways of thinking about reality while excluding others. In this way they determine who can speak, when, and with what authority; and, conversely, who cannot (Ball, 1990). Interpreting discourse as information seeks to explain it in terms of the social competence of subjects as informants, namely, their knowledge of the reality and their expository capacity (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009, p. 9).

Interpreting discourse as a social product considers the social conditions under which it was produced. Discourse carries a heavy symbolic load; however, not all discourses are afforded equal presence or, therefore, equal authority (Cheek, 2004). The key questions for this type of interpretation were: Why have certain discourses been produced (and not others)? What social circumstances have allowed some discourses to arise and not others?

The discourses on decoloniality and Africanisation emerged from a history of turmoil, experiences of domination and resistance, struggles and crisis, and recognition of the need to engage with, redress, and transcend these experiences. Decolonisation can be traced back to the late 1960s when several European empires were largely replaced by dozens of new nation-states, and its application was primarily political (Betts, 2012). While its central theme was the creation of independent nation-states free from colonial rule, it was soon extended in meaning to include all elements of the colonial experience, whether political, economic, cultural or psychological (Hargreaves, 1996, p. 244). Decolonisation can be accurately defined in the well-known words: "'The last shall be first and the first last.' Decolonisation is verification of this" (Fanon, 1963, p. 2).

According to Fanon (1963, p. 35) decolonisation is simply the replacing of a certain "species" of men (sic) by another "species of men". "Without any period of transition, there is a total, complete, and absolute substitution". Fanon (1963, 36) saw decolonisation as a programme of complete disorder,

characterised by revolutionary violence which can be understood as a declaration of agency as well as a means to recover agency following years of colonial subjugation and humiliation. In the context of higher education, revolutionary violence was taken to mean complete destruction of the Western canon which can be viewed 'as praxis, an act of acting out', in which the Self is rediscovered. This destruction was seen as the only means of intellectual independence.

Noting that the decolonisation movements of the post-independence period failed because this revolutionary change had not been achieved, Anibal Quijano introduced the concept of decoloniality. Decoloniality speaks to the deepening and widening of decolonisation movements in those spaces that experienced the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism, and underdevelopment (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Characterised as a new form (wave) of decolonisation, decoloniality is much more rooted in the present context and the university space. Decoloniality refers to the ongoing efforts to challenge and understand persistent forms coloniality, not only in the legacies of imperialism but in the very organisation of the world (Zembylas, 2018).

Decoloniality is different from the anti-colonialism movements that dominated the 20th century and does not advocate for the destruction of canonical knowledge because it is the knowledge of the powerful (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015, p. 488). The decolonisation that is spoken about in the current context "strongly advocates ecologies of knowledge/multiplicity of knowledges: not removal and replacement" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015, p. 20). It aims to create a new humanity free from the racial hierarchisation and asymmetrical power relations that have been in place since conquest.

The concept of Africanisation has become an established part of the African political vocabulary as a result of the continent's colonial experience. It emerged from the struggle for political, social and economic justice. The Africanisation question is tied to reclaiming what was taken from Africa as the colonial experience resulted in the commonly-held view of Africa as a continent with no history. Thus, the original goals of Africanisation were related to this attempt to assert the viability of a distinct African history (Brizuela-Garcia, 2006). Over the years, the term has acquired a much wider meaning and has extended beyond political discourse.

Its use in South African higher education can be traced back to the post-1994 period and attempts to ensure that the system reflected the changes

that were taking place in society to redress past inequalities. Inclusive, contextualised education was a key goal during this period. Such an education is more deeply embedded in its social context, learning from that environment. It is also responsive to challenges in the local environment. Suarez-Krabbe (2017, p. 69) argues that "Africanisation must be seen as an affirmation of existence; in itself, then, a negation of the negation."

While the political conditions that gave rise to calls for decoloniality and Africanisation are no longer a contemporary issue, the same cannot be said for higher education. The centuries-long history of Western domination has yet to give way to alternative epistemologies. The persistence of the discourses on Africanisation and decoloniality in higher education is tied to the quest for inclusion amid continued marginalisation of particular identities, cultures and contexts. The colonial and apartheid projects were based on a systematic attempt to ignore and dismiss the intrinsic value of the African context as a source of valid and valuable knowledge.

While there is awareness of the need to grant equal access to higher education in both a formal and an epistemological sense, the latter remains challenging. The plethora of available frameworks which include decoloniality and Africanisation have yet to give rise to epistemic and cognitive justice. It is worth noting that these discourses tend to be evoked whenever there is a crisis in higher education and they are often forgotten when the system is relatively 'stable'. For instance, they gained popularity at the height of the transition to democracy, and during the 2015-2016 student protests, and recur whenever racist incidents are reported. This continued resurgence points to the lack of change and evolution within the higher education system. In interpreting the informative dimension of the discourse, I was particularly interested in how each concept could assist in rethinking the purpose and form of higher education.

The interpretation was guided by the themes generated through inductive content analysis at the first level of analysis. The first theme is the idea of Western canonical knowledge which has achieved classical status. The decoloniality and Africanisation projects are not about the expulsion of the Western canon or "Europeans and their cultures". It is recognised that the canon has become engrained in the very notion of the modern university. However, the two projects offer differing perspectives on how to engage with the Western canon given its irrelevance. Decoloniality calls for what I refer to as the disruption of the canon, while Africanisation calls its contextualisation.

The former is about creating something new, while the latter is about finding new and relevant ways to work with what already exists.

Decoloniality calls for a disruption of the Western canon to open up multiple other forms of being in the world. This should be followed by the construction of a much more pluriversal canon which de-links from the Western canon because if another world is possible, it cannot be built with the tools inherited from the colonial era. The newly-constructed pluriversal canon unravels, "disobeys, and delinks" (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018, p. 2) from the Western canon, constructing a new path of "thinking, sensing, believing, doing, and living." This new path

> *"...cannot be built with the master's tools for the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change"* (Lorde, 1984, p. 112 cited in Magnolo and Walsh, 2018, p. 7).

A central aspect of the Africanisation project is ensuring that the Western canon is fit for the local context through integrating local epistemologies and cultures. Africanisation reinforces the idea that the Western canon is not superior to the rich knowledge base that already exists in the African context. Reclaiming this knowledge base presupposes a paradigm shift (Seepe, 2004) in relation to both content knowledge and the way knowledge is organised. It requires new ways of thinking about and working with the Western canon with the aim of ridding African academia of the prejudices and limitations imposed by traditional European academia. In this way, African scholarship is more than an appendage to Western scholarship.

The starting point of Africanisation is valorising, seeking to understand and transmitting to students the knowledge base on which African societies are organised (Matos, 2000). This is part of developing new praxis and rethinking the idea that Africans have no knowledge that is of value in education. It entails challenging the relevance of existing materials and content. Such a challenge should result in contextualisation through a careful consideration of sources, concepts, research methods and the role of the community setting in which academics conduct their work (Msila, 2009). Course content ought to be informed by the local context and the everyday realities faced by students.

While disruption and contextualisation entail different things in relation to the Western canon, there are some commonalities in the attitude and treatment of the local context and local epistemologies. To break with Western

dominance, the discourses on decoloniality and Africanisation suggest that education on the continent should be embedded in the African context, addressing uniquely African issues. Scholarship should rethink African problems beyond Western concepts and categorisations. This creates networks of knowledge that recognise Africa as more than just a geographic location. Education essentially becomes geared towards the African Renaissance, which refers to reviving what is already alive and organic in Africa that is embedded in African Philosophy (Higgs, 2012) which has a distinctive epistemic identity. The revitalisation of an African Philosophy allows education to be pragmatic and render a service while effectively contributing to the amelioration of the African condition. Such an education system focuses on granting not just formal access, but also epistemological access.

While the idea of an African Philosophy is sufficiently broad to accommodate indigenous/ traditional knowledge and culture, its revival does not mean reaching back to the past to an essentialised pre-colonial culture. The issue of culture has become somewhat contentious in debates on decoloniality and Africanisation in higher education. Discarding the norms, customs and worldviews imposed by the coloniser is an integral part of both projects. Through violence and influencing how Africans thought and viewed themselves, colonialism resulted in the marginalisation of African ways of being, knowing and doing (Fanon, 1963). The coloniser stripped Black people in particular, of anything that is African and one way of doing things became the only way of doing things (Heleta, 2016).

While the projects of decoloniality and Africanisation both advocate for cultural inclusion and awareness, they appear to be doing so in different ways. The discourse on Africanisation strongly argues that students should be exposed to material that has African culture as its focus (Horsthemke, 2004). Although it is important to refrain from exposing students to course content that relies on Western interpretations of the continent (Heleta, 2016), rethinking the purpose and form of education requires that we go beyond this. Decoloniality achieves this by advocating for multiculturalism; that is, students should be exposed to a plurality of cultural values and beliefs. This includes cultures from various contexts, not only the African one. A pluriversal and therefore multicultural approach to culture is critical, especially if we acknowledge that, within the African context, there is no single culture that subsumes various cultural beliefs and identities (Horsthemke, 2017). However, the commitment to multiculturalism requires that we proceed with

caution. The approach should be innovative and mindful because asserting an "authentic black culture is a simple reversal and re-appropriation of whites' essentialist construction of black culture" (Fanon, 1963, p. 86). Such an approach embraces the very dualistic structure it seeks to invert. Any revival and inclusion of African culture should be dynamic and rooted in the present.

The discourse on decoloniality articulates much more clearly the link between culture and language. Language is a carrier of culture; the two cannot be separated. It is through language that culture develops, and is articulated and transmitted from one generation to another (Farabi, 2015). Drawing on the works of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1981), the discourse on decoloniality also raises the issue of using language as a means of reuniting the postcolonial subject with their history and culture. This is important because a crucial element of the colonial project was deliberate disassociation of the language of conceptualisation, thinking, formal education and mental development from the language of daily interaction (Wa Thiong'o, 1981). Communicating in African languages is critical for cultural identity, the cultural Renaissance and the destruction of imperialist tradition.

Issues of cultural diversity and language are intricately tied to those of identity and difference. I also believe that in the classroom context, these issues raise questions about the relationship between students and their lecturers which is at the heart of education. The discourse on decoloniality recognises that the colonial experience had a psychological and mental impact, resulting in multigenerational trauma that did not end with colonialism. The postcolonial subject has not recovered from this psychological inferiority and remains a psychological cripple. A decolonised higher education addresses this through "the veritable creation of new men (sic)" (Fanon, 1963). It influences the consciousness of individuals and modifies them fundamentally to bring about new people. In the South African context, Steve Biko's (2004) ideals on black *consciousness* have become central to the discourse on addressing psychological inferiority. Biko and Fanon share a similar interest in the philosophical psychology of consciousness. Both saw the restructuring of consciousness as a necessary perquisite to allow the "new African" to defeat the psychological feeling of inferiority (Oelofsen, 2015).

The Africanisation project approaches issues of identity differently from decoloniality, emphasising self-worth. This is achieved by addressing the epistemic violence of the present, thus opening up different traditions of knowledge and knowledge-making and allowing students to no longer rely

on others to locate their self-worth. This is important as the marginalised are often portrayed as having neither an epistemology nor a philosophy. This can only be achieved through an Afrocentric education, which reflects the African continent. Emphasising Africa's knowledge and intellectual contributions to academia assists the post-colonial subject to escape the belief that he/she is inferior. Starting from one's particular place – "not only geographically, but also contextually, to recognise that this could affect one's ideas" (Oelofsen, 2015, p. 140) is crucial in addressing psychological inferiority. This conception of African agency challenges the notion of Africans lacking history and a relevant knowledge base.

The Afrocentric base advocated for through Africanisation is rooted in the incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems. According to Makgoba and Seepe (2004), radical restructuring of education fails to make education relevant to African challenges if it does not include serious consideration of indigenous systems. These systems form the backbone of the social, economic, scientific and technological identity of indigenous people (Hoppers, 2000). However, to be included in university curricula, these knowledges need to be subjected to scientific rigour and should not be taken as they are because of the context that has given rise to them.

4 Conclusion

This article is the result of my attempts to find a blueprint of decoloniality and Africanisation that I could apply in my teaching. However, by the end of this endeavour, I was of the view that this is neither necessary nor possible, because "liberation is an ongoing process" (hooks, 2010, p. 9). The change students yearn for requires constant remodelling or restructuring; it cannot be rigid. What is crucial is that we constantly question our pedagogical practices as well as the choices we make regarding curricula to ensure that we address the needs of our diverse students. I am also inclined to agree with those who suggest that the meaning and implications of these concepts should be determined by specific schools or departments. What is proposed here is thus not a blueprint, but rather some broad threads to consider in thinking about these concepts as instruments for change.

Calls for decoloniality and Africanisation have largely been about inclusion and recognition. The starting point appears to be the local context and valorisation of the distinct contributions that have emerged from this context. In addition to this, reimagining the purpose and form of higher

education cannot dismiss issues of culture, language and identity. The disciplinary knowledge we teach and practices that guide our teaching are not value-free but have been shaped by the contexts which gave rise to them. As a result, we cannot assume that their relevance is universal.

The decoloniality argued for in the university context recognises the value of the Western canon, noting that while it should not be discarded, it ought to be disrupted. This entails a form of epistemic disobedience, de-linking from the Western canon and recognising other knowledge cosmologies. Disruption calls for de-mythologising history, and bringing to light the dominant perspectives embedded in leading theories and methodologies. In a quest for pluriversity, we ought to recover and circulate major examples of thought, not only from the African context, but also include Southern perspectives and a much greater diversity of content. Decolonising recognises that all students were born into knowledge systems that are valid and legitimate and as part of achieving cognitive justice, it goes beyond removal and replacement.

In the first instance, Africanisation requires a critical interrogation of the Western canon. Such interrogation should result in a paradigm shift, particularly regarding how we engage with this canon and the African context. Through a process of “rebirth” Africa should be at the forefront of all forms of scholarship, and where appropriate, scholarship from the West should be contextualised to be relevant for Africa and reframed through an African perspective. Africanisation is a process of contextualisation rooted in the local context, cultures and identities of our students. It involves integration of indigenous knowledge systems in the content of education, but these too should be critically interrogated to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet the scientific rigour required by each academic discipline. Furthermore, in Africanising education, we ought to be mindful that the required tools may indeed be found in scholarship which emanates from the West, such as narrative inquiry and action research.

References

Adesina, J. (2002). Realising the Vision: The Discursive and Institutional Changes of Becoming an African University. *African Sociological Review*, 23-39.

Ahmed, S. (2012). *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Altheide, D., Coyle, M., and De Vriese, K. S. (2008). Emergent Qualitative Document Analysis. In S. Hesse-Biber, and P. Leavy, *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, pp. 127-151. New York: the Guilford Press.

Atkinson, P., andand Coffey, A. (2004). Analysing Documentary Realities. In: D. Silverman *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*, pp. 56-75. London: Sage.

Badat, S. M. (1999). *Black Student Politics, Higher Education and Apartheid: From SASO to SANSCO 1968 - 1990*. Pretoria: HSRC Press.

Badat, S. M. (2019, June 10). *Deciphering the Meanings, and Explaining the South African Higher Education Student Protests of 2015-16*. Retrieved from Wiser: https://wiser.wits.ac.za/system/files/documents/Saleem%20Badat%20-%20Deciphering%20the%20Meanings%2C%20and%20Explaining%20the%20South%20African%20Higher%20Education%20Student%20Protests.pdf

Bazerman, C. (2004). Intertextuality: How Texts Rely on Other Texts. In: C. Bazerman, and P. Prior *What Writing Does and How it Does It: An Introduction to Analysing Text and Textual Practices*, pp. 83-96. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Betts, R. (2012). Decolonization: A Brief History of the Word. In: E. Bogaerts, and R. Raben *Beyond Empire: The Decolonization of African and Asian Societies, 1930s-1970s*, pp. 23-37. Leiden: Brill.

Biko, S. (2004). *I Write What I Like*. Johannesburg: Pan Macmillan.

Blair, E. (2015). A Reflexive Exploration of Two Qualitative Data Coding Techniques. *Journal of Methods and Measurement in the Social Sciences*, 14-29.

Bowen, G. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal 9*(2), 27-40.

Brizuela-Garcia, E. (2006). The History of Africanization and the Africanization of History. *History in Africa*, 85-100.

Cheek, J. (2004). At the Margins? Discourse Analysis and Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research 14*(8), 1140-1150.

Elo, S., and Kyngas, H. (2007). The Qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing 62*(1) 107-115.

Fanon, F. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press .

Farabi, R. (2015). Decolonising the Mind of the Oppressed: A Critical Analysis of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Paulo Freire. *Scholarly Research Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies 3*(18), 65-73.

Hargreaves, J. (1996). *Decolonisation in Africa*. (2nd ed.). London: Longman.

Healy-Clancy, M. (2016, March 21). *The Everyday Politics of Being a Student in South Africa.* Retrieved from SSRN: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2751105

Heleta, S. (2016). Decolonisation of Higher Education: Dismantling Epistemic Violence and Eurocentricism in South Africa. *Transformation in Higher Education 1*(1), 1-8.

Higgs, P. (2012). African Philosophy and the Decolonisation of Education in Africa: Some Critical Reflections. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 37-55.

Hoppers, C. O. (2000). *Indigenous Knowledge and the Integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Towards a Philosophy of Articulation*. Claremont: New Africa Books.

Horsthemke, K. (2004). Knowledge, Education and the Limits of Africanisation. *Journal of Philosophy of Education 38*(4), 571-587.

Horsthemke, K. (2017). Africanisation and Diverse Epistemologies in Higher Education Discourses: Limitations and Possibilities. In M. Cross, and A. Ndofirepi, *Knowledge and Change in African Universities*, pp. 101-120. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Jansen, J. (2017). Decolonising the University Curriculum given a Dysfunctional School System? *Journal of Education* (68), 1-14.

Jogee, R., Callaghan, C., and Callaghan, N. (2018). Student Acculturation in the context of 'FeesMustFall'. *South African Journal of Higher Education 32*(2), 122-142.

Leibowitz, B. (2017). Cognitive Justice and the Higher Education Curriculum. *Journal of Education* (68), 93-112.

Louw, W. (2010). Africanisation: A Rich Environment for Active Learning on a Global Platform. *Progressio 32*(1), 42-54.

Makgoba, M. (1997). *Mokoko: The Makgoba Affair - A Reflection on Transformation*. Florida: Vivlia.

Makgoba, M., and Tleane, C. (1998, September 23). Africanisation and Education. *Seminar, Wits School of Education*. Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa.

Mamdani, M. (2011). The Importance of Research in a University. Kampala. Retrieved April 5, 2019, from https://misr.mak.ac.ug/publication/working-paper-no-3-the-importance-of-research-in-a-university

Matos, N. (2000). The Nature of Learning, Teaching and Research in Higher Education in Africa. In: P. Higgs, N. Vakalisa, N. Mda, and N. Assie-Lumumba *African Voices in Education*, pp. 12-38. Landsdowne: Juta.

Mbembe, A. J. (2016). Decolonising the University: New Directions . *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education 15*(1), 29-45.

Mignolo, W. D. (2011). Epistemic Disobedience and the Decolonial Option: A Manifesto. *Transmodernity*, 44-65.

Mignolo, W. D. (2017). Coloniality is Far from Over, So Must Be Decoloniality. *Afterall*, 38-45.

Msila, V. (2009). Africanisation of Education and the Search for Relevance and Context. *Educational Research and Review 4*(6), 310-315.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2015). Decoloniality as the Future of Africa. *History Compass 13*(10), 485-496.

Prior, L. (2008). Researching Documents: Emerging Methods. In: S. Hesse-Biber, and P. Leavy *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, pp. 111-126. New York: The Guilford Press.

Ruiz Ruiz, J. (2009). Sociological Discourse Analysis: Methods and Logic. *Qualitative Social Research 10*(2), 1-18.

Seepe, S. (2004). Editorial Notes. *South African Journal of Higher Education 18*(3), 9-16.

Stemler, S. (2001). An Overview of Content Analysis. *Practical Assessement, Research and Evaluation*, 137-146.

Suarez-Krabbe, J. (2017). The Conditions that Make a Difference: Decolonial Historical Realism and the Decolonisation of Knowledge and Education. In: M. Cross, and A. Ndofirepi *Knowledge and Change in African Universities*, pp. 58-80. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam.

Truscott, R., and Van Bever Donker, M. (2017). What is the University in Africa for? *Kronos 43*(1), 13-38.

Wa Thiong'o, N. (1981). *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Zembylas, M. (2018). Decolonial Possibilities in South African Higher Education: Reconfiguring Humanising Pedagogies as/with Decolonising Pedagogies. *South African Journal of Education 38*(4), 1-11.