3

Decoloniality as Democratic Change Within Higher Education

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Introduction

The hegemony of Eurocentrism in globality—especially in education—has resulted in demands for decolonisation of conceptualisation, practice and institutions of education across the world. African higher education is strategically potent to overcome the diverse forms of neo-colonialism that constitutes most African public institutions. Ironically African higher education itself is characteristically both Eurocentric and intolerant of indigeneity. This chapter argues that democratising higher education in Africa is a guaranteed way of achieving meaningful and sustainable

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decolonisation of education in Africa. This position is grounded on the premise that ideal decolonisation is not merely substitution of a Eurocentric epistemology with an Afrocentric one or merely ensuring balanced statistical representation of each world view in education. Rather, democratisation entails that the civic role of higher education necessarily demands that the university be incessantly connected in a non-paternalistic manner with society, centring the concrete enablers and disablers of collective democratic life as a major preoccupation of higher education. Without necessarily prescribing what constitutes locality and indigeneity—owing to the contestations that arise in such discourses—decolonisation as democratisation of higher education will escape the traps of ethnocentric essentialism and rigidity towards meaningful hybridity that is cardinal for the modern cosmopolitan world.

Democracy: The Goal of Higher Education

Among the core aims of education is its embedded commitment to democratisation and social justice. The university, through its academics and graduates, has a profound civic role aimed at achieving criticality and social justice (Waghid 2008, 20). Among its major mandates, higher education must endeavour to commit itself to "finding and dismantling social structures that sustain oppression" (Waghid 2008, 21). The university must not only give new knowledge and skills to the graduates, but most importantly, it must awaken in the graduates an alertness and responsiveness to the condition of the many in the wider community who are in dire suffering and deprivation (Waghid 2008, 21). Ideal education must therefore sustain and develop democracy.

Besides being committed to ensuring conditions for the attainment of individual freedom, democracy is also a social ideal in that it presupposes and aspires for a community of free individuals who are "bound together by shared experience and a commitment to the common good" (Schoeman 2010, 137). Higher education can perform its civic role towards the social order meaningfully by being connected and responsive to the challenges of society only when higher education itself is democratised in its

motivations, focus, structure and operations. Higher education that is detached from its social situatedness will glaringly fail to make a contribution towards social transformation. Democratic change within the university is therefore a prerequisite for achieving education that confronts structures of oppression and injustice in society meaningfully. The implication is that higher education should actively centre both individual and concrete collective interests if it is to fulfil its democratic obligation. Ultimately, one can hold that the commitments of education towards democracy and social justice are the flipside of meaningful interconnectedness between the domain of the university and the society for whom the university exists. Evidently, education and democracy have a normatively binding "collectively motivated goal" that is neither at odds with nor can be dispensed by extremist pursuits of individual liberty (Pais and Costa 2017, 8) as though the two ideals are mutually exclusive.

Education develops and sustains democracy and democratisation. Higher education can develop democratisation of society meaningfully only if it is itself functionally democratic. Making higher education liberating entails that the university should not impose its preferred metaphysical outlooks on the community, but through mutual engagement and deliberation co-construct knowledge (Waghid 2008, 20). This presupposes that the university should engage the perspectives of the community intrinsically as it is not in its interest of conforming communities into some 'standard' paradigm. Higher education cannot be indifferent to and alienated from the context and concreteness of the social situatedness of the students because injustice and inequality are comprehensible in the context of social situatedness. Social inequalities are mostly intelligible with reference to the historical, cultural, political and economic concreteness of a community. Among others, the oppression and injustice the university is committed to resolve reside in the marginalisation of local epistemologies and languages, and ultimately manifest in a lack of committed research into indigenous culture, art, literature and architecture on the part of the university. Therefore, the social order must incessantly be the subject of democratisation and therefore centred in higher education because the university is an institution that may embody concrete relations of power of a society. Across societies, power operates

through diverse ideological conceptualisations of values and viewpoints regarding the way people relate with each other and the way social goods, such as "education, employment property and equal opportunity", are distributed among them (Blunt 2005, 1369). Higher education may either perpetuate or confront such power imbalances but cannot be neutral about them.

The necessity for the university firstly to democratise before it attempts to confront the injustices of society is based on the grounds that, despite the university being a potent agent for democratisation, it is more often itself susceptible through its operation and structures to reproduce society alongside the inequalities and injustices that characterise society, which the university ought to resolve. One of the challenges of most African societies today is that education and research in African institutions are not addressing the particularistic core challenges of the human condition in Africa largely because African higher education employs Eurocentric world views so that the people can hardly relate to African higher education.

The African university has hitherto played a passive role insofar as ensuring educational justice for its people—particularly with reference to epistemic justice—is concerned because the university itself is in need of democratisation. Mostly, the African university has failed to centre the modes of being human and the African condition meaningfully. As Zeleza (2009, 131) holds, the African academy has always been measuring African phenomena (humanity, history, civilisation, culture, ethics, economics technology and sociality) in European master frameworks by drawing from the Eurocentric prototype and systematically deeming African phenomena as deficient and imperfect versions of the European person (Zeleza 2009, 131). However, democratisation within higher education necessarily demands the African university to be grounded in and connected with the community without necessarily being restricted and controlled by it. This entails centring the interests, concerns, aspirations and needs of the community in academic inquiry in higher education. Centring the local in higher education is crucial for democracy because meaningful democracy needs to be incessantly "re-thought and reformulated" because democracy is "never finished and must be viewed primarily as a process of democratization" (Giroux 2004, 33).

In both principle and practice, education in African higher education is associated with and informed by a mainstream culture through the "norms of behaviour and communication that are expected in schools … and these ways of being typically exclude racial and linguistic minorities" in the schools (Rodríguez 2009, 27). In modern higher education, globalisation of education has largely commodified higher education (Biesta 2007, 468; Waghid 2008, 19). The neo-liberal global order by large pursues and realises development at the expense of equity (Blunt 2005, 1371). Ultimately, the modern university has succumbed to economic pressure that has altered its prime function into the "training of a high-skilled workforce and the production of high-quality scientific knowledge" (Biesta 2007, 467). As a result, the arguably default mandate of modern university education is that it is expected as its primary goal to train a specially high-skilled workforce and also produce high-quality scientific knowledge that is to be consumed by the industrial market (Waghid 2008, 19). The dominance of economic interests in the academy is at the cost of other social interests that are more foundational to democracy.

The domination of neo-liberalism and corporate culture in both civil society and education "subordinates the needs of society to the market" (Waghid 2008, 23). The implication is that economically unattractive yet culturally and normatively pertinent interests of the society are discarded and spurned. In a sense, the advancement of economisation of society and education is arguably proportional to the trumping down of other situated cultural and localised interests. Such interests have normative value warranting preservation and promotion; yet, they are forced to succumb to the force of economisation.

Higher Education and Decolonisation

Under the prevailing neo-liberal hegemony, a person is to a degree dehumanised as the market principle of neo-liberalism mainly regards the human being as a resource only (Blunt 2005, 1369) ultimately extinguishing and devaluing the concreteness of being human in situated social contexts. Market-oriented higher education largely concentrates

on equipping students with specialised job-related skills, ultimately diluting or even slighting education for democratic citizenship that does not necessarily have such market skills at the centre (Waghid 2001, 460). Consequently, the implication is that knowledge has been reduced to an informational commodity whose value is restricted to production and global competition for influence (Blunt 2005, 1369). Ultimately, the mandate of higher education inherently marginalises centring of social justice.

Such embedded systematic marginalisation of collective values and interests in higher education is the reason for the emergence of calls for decolonisation of higher education. In this context, decolonisation of the university entails breaking the current default norm of turning students into "customers and consumers" (Mbembe 2016, 31) where students no longer value the social transformation role of knowledge but conceive of it only in self-aggrandisement terms. Decoloniality demands that higher education institutions exist and operate under the principle and context that "the creation of communities in which life as opposed to economic profit prevails" (Desai and Sanya 2016, 714).

African education systems and institutions are under neo-liberal pressure to "become part of a global 'knowledge society'" (Blunt 2005, 1370). One of the characteristics of such universalising knowledge is its propensity to "tyrannically suppress difference" (Blunt 2005, 1369) by prioritising the positivist world views that embed exclusivity of otherness as being the benchmark for understanding reality. Modern life, which is influenced by positivist scientific world views, disintegrates the situatedness of everyday life (Biesta 2007, 473).

According to Zeleza (2009), besides neo-liberalism, the prevalent globality is also grounded in Eurocentrism whose inherent intellectual orientation is comparative and universalistic. Twentieth-century education has suffered from a particularistic conception of being that is advanced as essentialist and universal where to be human one has to meet a certain universal or essentialist norm, and education ought to 'cultivate' a particularistic conception of being human that is based on these standards (Biesta 2014, 18). The African university is organised in a manner that values and competes for status and prestige conceptualised in Euro-American terms (Morreira 2017, 287). The research output, the quality

of university research and the financial returns generated by universities are among the determinants of the competitiveness of a university today. However as Mbembe (2016, 39) observes, assuming the competition is necessary, after all, even "the terms of the competition are defined by the West". Zeleza (2009) holds that even militant Afrocentrism, other than dismantling the hegemony of the Eurocentric epistemological order in the African university, has generally been about "investing Africa with the imagined positive attributes of Europe" ultimately failing to transcend "the seductions and sanctions of writing Africa by analogy" (Zeleza 2009, 131).

The scientific world view of Eurocentrism is not the only perspective for understanding reality, but it is a particular world view that is fit for scientific phenomena however clearly not always fit for all purposes, such as normative judgments (Biesta 2007, 476). This is mainly because "the expertise of science is limited and situated" (Biesta 2007, 475). Techno-scientists are able to create facts and machines that endure outside the laboratory simply because the laboratory itself is a recreation of the real world (Biesta 2007, 476). However, the real world scientific positivism attempts to replicate is characteristically complex, diverse and shaped by particular shared values among different human societies across the world and cannot be fully accounted for by positivist paradigms alone.

The African university is in principle Eurocentric in most respects. The neo-liberal pressure to globalise has escalated the alienation of the university from its locality. In the quest for being globally relevant and competitive, the African university has defaulted on its civic role. Not only has it failed to help build a democratic Africa in a meaningful way, but it is rather also itself in dire need of democratisation. Democratising the university partly entails making the African university responsive to local situatedness. There is a glaring absence of Africa as the object of academic inquiry in most African universities. African philosophy, literature, music, art and education hardly form the object of inquiry in academic institutions of Africa (Ramose 2005, 1187). More pronounced and with profound implications is the marginalisation of African languages from the academy. While it is imperative for African higher education to pursue globality, this must not be pursued in terms

of marginalisation of indigeneity that is embedded in Eurocentric globality (Kolawole 2005a, 1196).

Decoloniality as Democratising Higher Education in Africa

Coloniality is "the hierarchizing logic that places peoples knowledge into a classificatory framework" that valorises Eurocentrism (Morreira 2017, 292). While the African university has been investing in making itself globally competitive, it has, on the other hand, increasingly alienated itself from the concrete challenges facing Africa. The prevalent Eurocentric mode of the African university is inherently against indigeneity and exclusive of alternative epistemological frameworks, except for scientific ones. To decolonise meaningfully, African higher education must democratise itself first. Decoloniality is necessitated by the grounding of modernity in coloniality ideology because modernity creates and maintains a particularistic kind of epistemology as the exclusively legitimate and ultimate standard (Morreira 2017, 292).

The project of decolonisation is ultimately a call for democratisation of the African university. 'Decoloniality' or 'Africanisation' is not in this sense essentialist terms that call for a mere dominance of Afrocentric cultural referents in university. Rather, decoloniality is grounded on the premise that the prevalent systematic dissonance between higher education in Africa and local and indigenous concreteness is against respect for human dignity and equality. This is because respecting a people's equality entails recognising what individuates or situates a people as being constitutive of their being human (Benhabib 1992, 161). What is celebrated as impartial and universal Eurocentric education across much of Africa is in the strictest sense particularistic, and its flourishing subtly and necessarily marginalises other epistemologies, ultimately rendering it both exclusivist and assimilationist. The African university in the post-colonial era must guard against a premature celebration of superficial global hybridity, which essentially sanitises neo-colonial hegemony as a 'shared' global culture (Zeleza 2009, 130). Most universities in Africa, lack autonomy

and, owing to the entrenchment of Eurocentric hegemony, "resist the moral and political imperative to become African universities. A university in Africa is not by necessity an African university" (Ramose 2005, 1187).

The African university must be a "concrete reality that speaks to the African experience and charts implementable courses of action to solve Africa's problems" (Ramose 2005, 1188). To achieve this, the university must meaningfully and not tokenistically open to indigenous epistemologies and pedagogies without firstly transforming such epistemologies and pedagogies and benchmarking them with 'intelligible' Eurocentric paradigms. The normativity of the inclusion of indigenous knowledge is rooted in the reality that the knowledge is all-encompassing as it underlies the social structures, values, interaction, cooperation and even individual and collective decision-making, ultimately informing the education, law and resource management and distribution of the community (Kolawole 2005b, 1451).

The question, firstly, of African higher education necessarily presupposes African-ness or African identity (Le Grange 2005, 1209). Africanness is not necessarily an idea about finality but rather one about becoming, about coming into existence (Le Grange 2005, 1209). Understanding some knowledge as African is not necessarily making an ethnocentric claim, contrasting it in binary terms with Eurocentric knowledge. Rather, the idea of African knowledge is cognisant of the multiplicity of forms and sources of knowledge in post-colonial Africa (Morreira 2017, 288). More importantly, it is cognisant that motivations, attitudes and processes of knowledge construction are not disinterested endeavours. They are inevitably and necessarily steeped in the concrete situatedness of the community. In higher education, it is therefore worth acknowledging that there are certain fundamental elements of the knowledge production process that are pertinent and generally representative of African experiences. Among such elements is the employment of African languages in academic spaces. Secondly, there is also a need to bring those contested indigenous world views and epistemologies into academic spaces from where they have been systematically marginalised.

The project of democratising the African university depends, firstly, on reclamation of indigenous knowledge denigrated by colonialism and, secondly, on reimagining the substance and form of African knowledge (Le Grange 2005, 1209). Some colonial traits that are still inherent in education in Africa today are:

- limited access to higher education due to associating education with sustaining elitism;
- employment of a foreign language of instruction and research; and
- a limited curriculum that systematically de-emphasises local knowledge (Le Grange 2005, 1209).

A pristine Africa to which the African university must return does not exist. Therefore, the existential condition today is no longer a choice of either the Eurocentric global or the African local. What constitutes Africa and African-ness is loaded, complex and largely as contentious as it is diverse. Therefore, "the African University in the 21st century cannot (re)define itself outside of the challenges presented it by contemporary change forces of both a global and local nature" (Le Grange 2005, 1211). However, as a starting point of the democratisation endeavours, African education must of necessity challenge and overcome the immense influence of modern marketisation of education and knowledge that in principle serves and reproduces social and global inequalities where power is concentrated only in elites and mega-corporations who ultimately fund and determine the shape of higher education as the arguably sole consumer of higher education outputs (Waghid 2001, 460).

Decolonising higher education in Africa is dependent on achieving democratisation of the construction and legitimation of knowledge in African universities. Decoloniality is not an ethnocentric exclusive displacement of Eurocentrism with Afrocentrism. The inherent unacceptability of Eurocentric exclusivity cannot be corrected by another ethnocentric exclusivity regardless of such exclusivity being African. However, given the sustained systematic marginalisation African indigeneity and epistemology have suffered from Eurocentric higher education, merely opening up academic spaces to be inclusive of objects of inquiry

may not by itself ensure representation or recentring of the other. There must be deliberately initiated interest or inclusion of hitherto marginalised indigeneity.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy as Decoloniality and Democratisation

The civic role of the university requires of it to develop criticality in learners whose relevance is beyond examining abstract and academic texts. The ultimate criticality the university ought to promote is one that enables self-actualisation and restructuring of the social order to overcome the forms of inequality that constantly generate injustices that undermine and threaten both individual actualisation and the democratic context that secures minimal conditions for such actualisation. More importantly, criticality ought to make the student transcend an obsession with self-interest as the ultimate benchmark for education, justice and human flourishing and instead take into consideration the failure of others to flourish equally due to entrenched iniquitous nature of the social order as well as of the education systems. The university as a constituent and product of the social order may either perpetuate or overcome social injustice through its structure, operation and motivations. This is why a culturally relevant pedagogy in the African university is imperative. A culturally relevant pedagogy is concerned with "how student learning and academic achievement are contingent upon educators knowing and understanding the realities of students" (Kim and Pulido 2015, 18).

A culturally relevant pedagogy and education refer to the education and teaching that empower the intellectual, social, emotional and political being of learners by employing objects of culture to develop skills, attitudes and cultivate knowledge (Kim and Pulido 2015, 18). A meaningful culturally relevant pedagogy is dependent on academic success being hinged on developing a critical consciousness in the learners so that they effectively challenge the status quo of the prevailing social order and develop a self-determining capacity (Kim and Pulido 2015, 18). This entails that critical thinking for democracy and social justice that

education cultivates in learners is contextualised development of cultural competence as it empowers the self-identity of the learner (Kim and Pulido 2015, 18). In other words, the process of being educated should not be about tacitly coercing the student to unduly shed off his or her cultural situatedness in order to assume the dominant ostensibly impersonal one that is merely associated with the hegemonic culture of education.

In the context of globality and internationalisation, democratic education is about education addressing the injustices, imbalances, prejudices and endemic systematic marginalisation of the other in the global society to enable flourishing and actualisation of all human potential. Education cannot be reduced to a false choice between economics and impartial knowledge on the one hand and local cultural situatedness on the other, as though having both choices is unattainable (Giroux 2004, 32). It is important to scrutinise cultural politics within higher education because it is through culture that "the pedagogical site on which identities are formed, subject positions are made available, social agency enacted, and cultural forms both reflect and deploy power through their modes of ownership and mode of public pedagogy" (Giroux 2004, 32). Democratisation of higher education as critical pedagogy "emphasizes critical reflexivity, bridging the gap between learning and everyday life, understanding the connection between power and knowledge, and extending democratic rights and identities by using the resources of history" (Giroux 2004, 34).

Unlike viewing teaching and learning as a technical practice aimed at processing received knowledge, critical pedagogy regards education as a mode of political intervention that aims to create alternatives that will achieve social transformation in society and in the world (Giroux 2004, 34). Critical pedagogy goes beyond having an intellectual accumulation of and familiarity with ideas of and about democracy. Rather, critical pedagogy is about developing a mode of "being-in-the-world that engages real struggles" (Glass 2000, 280). As an agent of democratisation, critical pedagogy views teaching and learning as a moral and political practice aimed at not merely processing, but more importantly transforming received knowledge "as part of a more expansive struggle for individual rights and social justice" (Giroux 2004, 34). A critical

pedagogy is mindful that knowledge, values and social visions and relations are steeped in power relations at both the social and global levels (Giroux 2004, 34).

Democratising higher education in Africa should not be conflated with a stance of anti-Western knowledge. The idea of the African university lies in not returning to the past ignoring the transformative contributions of Western knowledge and science. Rather, the future of the African university lies in regarding contemporary forces and processes of change as possible avenues for expressing and articulating African-ness and African knowledge (Le Grange 2005, 1211). The ultimate implication is that culturally relevant pedagogy should be cautious not to over-assume about the relevance of cultural identification by confining itself to cultural referents without ensuring collaboration and communication with students regarding what is meaningfully relevant to them in the context of their cultural situatedness (Kim and Pulido 2015, 30).

Critical pedagogy would make African higher education democratic, which would inevitably achieve decoloniality that is not ethnocentric. The normative basis for the enterprise of decolonising African higher education is basically founded on the premise that the typical prevalent education necessarily has exclusive and hegemonic epistemologies and not because the dominant epistemologies are Eurocentric rather than being Afrocentric. Such exclusivity marginalises, undermines and denarrativises the concrete experiences of most African societies as being normatively inconsequential and thus unfit for inclusion in academic inquiry. Denying the concreteness of being human and grounding normativity of human relationships only in similarities effectively undermines what it is to be human. This is because individuated beings who are subjects of human equality are "embodied, affective, suffering creatures [with] memory and history, [and] their ties and relations to others" (Benhabib 1992, 161) and are considered part of the phenomenal realm, which in the hegemonic epistemology is not regarded as a site for objective realities and knowledge (Benhabib 1992, 161). Such perspectives and epistemologies regard only the commonalities of being human and experiences reducible to scientific standards as objective knowledge worth academic inquiry. Defining being human as independent of all the ends the self may choose and necessarily detached from any conceptions of the

good the self may hold undermines what is to be an individuated human being (Benhabib 1992, 161). However, denying the social attributes that engender the situatedness and concreteness of human communities undermines the shared philosophical perspectives of what it means to be a concrete human being and the requisite social order that must actualise such an ideal. Such perspectives are the means through which another individual expresses his or her individuation. He or she expects not only to be tolerated but also to be respected as part of acknowledging his or her equal human worth. Meaningful education must therefore centre the concreteness of a people. In other words, centring a people's concreteness in principle renders education democratic.

It is worth emphasising that the Africanisation of higher education must be understood in the context of democratisation. This is because what is unacceptable in terms of the prevalent order of higher education in Africa is its systematic maligning and exclusion of African concreteness and indigenous epistemologies. Such malignity renders the prevalent education system undemocratic because it compromises the capacity of the academy to probe, examine and demand structural changes to the social order that shapes the opportunities of people in society. The education undermines the indigenous epistemologies and perspectives as unworthy of study by unduly privileging a particularistic epistemic tradition and parading it as the ultimate impartial and absolute epistemology. Democratisation as decoloniality is therefore imperative for endeavours of decolonisation in Africa to avoid falling into the same exclusivity traps that unduly valorise everything in African epistemological canons in an essentialist manner. Unless the decolonisation process is fully understood as a democratisation process, it is very easy for anti-Eurocentric hegemony to slide into narcissistic Afrocentrism, which is as normatively blameworthy as Eurocentric exclusiveness. Decolonisation as democratisation will leave room for the contested imaginations of being African without unduly privileging one over the other, mindful that what constitutes shared fate for societies varies across societies and is dynamic. Democratisation will also further allow for meaningful hybridity, where there is an equitable exchange of ideas and recognised influences across different global cultures and societies on a platform of mutual respect and equality.

Pertinent Democratic Ideals for African Higher Education

The project of decoloniality as democratisation understands democracy not just as a state of having certain institutions or the performance of certain procedures or routines. Rather, democracy is an incessant process of probing, examining, assessing and reconstituting social structures so that they yield just outcomes (Giroux 2004, 33).

Given the diversity of sources of being and epistemologies for modern human existence, the concept of deliberation is central to the democratisation of higher education in Africa. Deliberation is necessitated by the reality that no single epistemology exclusively accounts for the concreteness of being human and the human condition in Africa. Deliberation in this context entails the academic spaces engaging different sources of being, the indigenous and foreign epistemologies alike.

Following Benhabib's (2011, 89) idea of democratic iterations, the values informing processes of knowledge production in higher education institutions should not be alienated from the situatedness of the people who undergo education. Education should not generally be about discarding indigeneity as a precondition for acquiring transcendent universal knowledge to which the local social order must ultimately conform. It is thus imperative that knowledge production be responsive to contextuality where the local people's perspectives and epistemologies are a core preoccupation of the university. Contextualisation of knowledge production and legitimation of knowledge will require that education actively engage various concrete indigenous philosophical traditions through the centring in higher education of civil society aspirations and its mode of perceiving reality. Among its core focus, higher education in Africa must centre on indigeneity and confront the challenges, dilemmas, aspirations, prejudices, opportunities and limitations for individual and collective flourishing of the African society through responses that are grounded in the concreteness of African societies. This way knowledge and its processes of acquisition are stripped of their parochialism and Eurocentric paternalism (Benhabib 2011, 89).

Dialogue with otherness as a democratic virtue is necessary because currently, progression on the neo-liberal education ladder for both students and academicians is synonymous with detachment from the cultural realities that shape the lives of students and of their communities (Rodríguez 2009, 28). An iterative approach to education demands that higher education recentre differences that constitute metaphysical and epistemological otherness. Such an approach is cognisant of the role of concreteness in relations of human equality (Benhabib 1992, 89). The concreteness of otherness is not an obstacle but rather a guaranteed avenue for achieving human equality in that it takes into consideration what individuates being human. Besides acknowledging the centrality of rationality as a common human attribute, the concrete otherness viewpoint goes further to regard individuation as residing in the idiosyncratic "concrete history, identity and affective-emotion constitution" of every human being (Benhabib 1992, 159). This moral standpoint recognises that a complete recognition of the equality of the other as a human being resides not only in acknowledging the rational capacity for agency all human beings share, because such does not tell us anything about individuation. Instead, acknowledging the equality of the other with all humanity also resides in recognising the value of otherness to the other. This compels us to comprehend and recognise 'the needs of the other', his or her motivations, what she searches for, and what she desires that "through which the other feels recognized and confirmed as a concrete individual being with specific needs, talents and capacities" (Benhabib 1992, 159). It is also worth noting that the other is not a detached transcendent being. The concreteness of otherness presupposes a social situatedness of shared (and contested) values, world views, history and languages. One therefore cannot comprehend otherness in detachment from the social situatedness.

It thus follows that, under the concrete other moral standpoint, engagement of and with differences of the other is not a means of getting to a common embrace of certain universalist perspectives and epistemologies anticipating the other to integrate voluntarily into the mainstream. Rather, difference is valued as an end in itself because it is what constitutes the being of the other. Difference is the articulation of concrete being such that knowledge production must be contextualised in such concreteness. Democratic iterations therefore require re-envisioning

indigeneity in such a way that indigeneity should no longer be conceived as "immature versions of some Western prototype" (Beck 2002, 23). Transforming higher education in Africa entails production of new knowledge and "seeing new problems and imagining new ways of approaching old problems and, deconstruction and reconstruction or constant exploration beneath surface appearances" (Waghid 2002, 459). Among others, this would entail reconnecting education with the society by, among others, having a common non-alienating language between the academy and society. This includes literally demanding the placing of a functional role on indigenous languages in the academy to ensure a meaningful connection between education and its hosting civil society. As Mbembe (2016, 36) observes, "a decolonized university in Africa should put African languages at the center of its teaching and learning project. Colonialism rhymes with monolingualism".

Historically, marginalised people were usually "excluded from theory building" and the mainstream traditional "forms of cultural capital typically subtract the knowledge and experiences" of the marginalised minorities (Rodríguez 2009, 26). This is where the democratic value of dialogue becomes central. In practice, education must promote dialogue between different people, cultural outlooks, experiences and the expected outcomes of the education system through pedagogical experiences and curriculum content.

The demand for the African university to decolonise is therefore in principle a call for the university to democratise. Calls for decolonisation are not political ideology matters, but rather they are normative imperatives to the core. Democratisation in this context entails that the institution of learning must be connected with the concrete challenges of the community. The virtues of criticality in students are aimed not at innovative thinking that would increase the profit returns of the corporate industry, but critical thinking is and primarily ought to be aimed at improving the human condition.

Democratic or reflective openness to the new and critical loyalty to the known (Hansen 2011) requires one to open oneself to others and vice versa (Waghid 2016, 2). For a democratic or transformative encounter to be meaningfully and mutually open, it is necessary that the agents be

open to each other for there to be transformative engagement, and such openness requires one disclosing oneself to the other (Waghid 2016, 3).

Democratic iterations are not meant to manage and contain difference. Rather they are meant to understand and situate difference in the shared public spaces as a necessary requirement for social justice. To achieve meaningful and authentic democratisation of academic spaces in African higher education, it is imperative that there be "the unveiling of the strange [that] requires of humans to take risks on the basis of disclosed-ness and demystification" where there is no concealment or censorship of the self (Waghid 2016, 3). The necessity of this imperative lies in the fact that, 'unless people open themselves up' substantively to one another, meaningful, "inclusion might not ensue, that is, transformation might be thwarted" (Waghid 2016, 3). Disclosed-ness, in this context, implies removing all institutionalised epistemic barriers in knowledge production and legitimation opening up the academic space and removing all unduly privileged particularistic obstacles that regulate what passes for an object of academic inquiry or not, and the paradigms under which such inquiry should be conducted. In the African context, given the enduring heritage of colonialism and the hegemony of neoliberalism, both of which undermine indigeneity, the African university must not only be open to indigenous otherness but must rather be actively inviting to all marginalised and slighted epistemologies. Democratisation therefore cannot be achieved by only opening up academic inquiry spaces to indigeneity that faces systematic and sustained marginalisation under the existing frameworks of African higher education. Disclosed-ness on its own would be incomplete to ensure democratisation of higher education. Centring in the inquiry spaces, the structurally marginalised epistemologies will occur if and when the orientation of the university is reconstituted and deliberate strides are made to bring in those excluded.

There is no way the African university can meaningfully serve its civic role of engendering democracy and social justice as long as it remains detached and alienated from its social context. As Schoeman (2010, 133) observes, the fundamental assumption of democratic life is that human beings are not predisposed to live a life of freedom and responsibility reflexively. Rather human beings have a capacity to educate themselves or

be educated for freedom and responsibility (Schoeman 2010, 133). In other words, "democracy is less the enabler of education than education is the enabler of democracy" (Schoeman 2010, 133). Yet, paradoxically, unless the university itself becomes democratic being in concert with social concreteness, it is illusory to expect higher education to perform its civic role of engendering justice and fairness in society.

Among others, democratising higher education in Africa requires rethinking and reconstituting the aims of higher education. The African university should, among others, aspire to have its learners cultivate a sense of criticality not only about academic texts and abstract theorisation, but there should also be development of a criticality that is responsive to the concrete disadvantages, economic and linguistic imbalances, unaddressed historical inequities still reproducing inequalities, and marginalisation of non-dominant epistemologies on the mere basis of their otherness. Such a criticality would question the exclusive and absolutist claims of Eurocentric epistemologies dominant in modern internationalised education. The criticality would recentre indigenous epistemologies that have been regarded provincial and lacking normative weight. In matters of bringing together education and human equality, the central question is not one of choosing either education practices and epistemologies that achieve excellence (in all its varied forms) or achieving democracy by giving presence to all marginalised experiences and epistemologies. Rather the question is about whether "the excellence we naturally wish for can be democratic, [and] whether our democracy, which is about life in common, must mean a common life of mediocrity" (Schoeman 2010, 132). Democratising education or the civic role of the university does not always entail that the university must abandon forms of academic inquiry that are not connected with the civil society interests because not all aims of education are instrumental in nature (Waghid 2008, 22). Democratisation of education in Africa is about recognising the situation of unequal power relations behind epistemological interests and paradigms within higher education. This alienating and disempowering inequality is aggravated when African higher education, dominated by exclusive Eurocentric globality, regards the prevalent situation as natural, convenient and necessarily inevitable. Rationalising the unjust status quo this way is to accept the epistemological domination out of free will

and to serve the interests of the powerful at the expense of African interests: a dominance established on consent of the dominated other than on force (Blunt 2005, 1369).

Conclusion

Insofar as transformation and decoloniality are about recentring unduly marginalised perspectives, experiences and epistemologies into academic spaces, decoloniality comprises in principle democratisation processes. Thus understood, decoloniality will not be synonymous with merely displacing Eurocentric epistemologies with any other cultural referents of indigeneity. Instead, just as the wider society is not essentially Afrocentric but a hybridity of the many, it is equally imperative that the education domain reflects and connects with this multiplicity of sources of being. Ultimately, the university should not promote either Afrocentrism or Eurocentrism, but rather that which connects with the people, thus both the indigenous and the vernacularised foreign. However, the current situation of epistemic domination is a result of a historical past that actively marginalised African indigeneity from academic spaces. Today, African indigeneity is systematically provincialised and excluded by the systematically entrenched modern global order that emphasises 'shared' commonalities only while de-emphasising differences thereby stealthily promoting Eurocentric absolutism and exclusiveness.

The African university must vernacularise its knowledge construction and legitimation procedures and standards. This requires centring indigenous epistemologies that have for so long been systematically marginalised. The ultimate implication of such vernacularisation will be the centring of the challenges of the African civil society, and the university will help contribute solutions to such challenges in a model that is intelligible to the situated people of Africa. Dialogue characterised by disclosed-ness coupled with deliberate invitation of marginalised epistemologies into academic spaces must epitomise the democratisation. Such decoloniality in principle meets some of the core demands of democratisation.

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