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In Defence of Education That Embodies Decolonisation

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Introduction

In higher education, the debate on decolonisation or decoloniality is important. Mbembe (2016) argues that in postcolonial Africa, the project of decolonisation was the same thing as Africanisation and was part of a nation-building project. He however contends that critics, such as Fanon (1925–1961), did not support the Africanisation project as led by the African postcolonial middle class because "it [the African postcolonial middle class] had totally assimilated colonialist thought in its most corrupt form" (Mbembe 2016, 33). African universities need to challenge ways of knowing or acting that perpetuate adherence to colonial thought without careful analysis of their own world.

In South Africa, for example, debates on decolonisation have recently been invigorated owing to a number of reasons, such as feelings of cultural alienation created by the apartheid regime along with its Western

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epistemologies (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Nkoane 2006). The #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements have been catalysts to the recent decolonisation debates in the country. Many in South Africa see the university as perpetuating the apartheid legacy in prioritising Western forms of knowing at the expense of African or South African knowledge relevant to the continent (see Koma 2018; Makgoba 1996; Nkoane 2006). Such feelings have often led critics of university education in South Africa to call for decolonisation of curricula, pedagogy and/ or the whole university (see Le Grange 2016; Mbembe 2016; Waghid et al. 2018).

In this chapter, I posit that decolonisation is a necessary project in society and especially in the South African higher education context. However, I argue that merely changing pedagogic styles and curricula content to reflect context without a robust conceptualisation of the notion of education cannot lead to decolonisation. I draw on Aristotelian notions of practical reason, *phronēsis* (conceiving the end to be achieved as well as correct deliberation on how to achieve it), and potentiality, *dynamis* (that people have the potential to become what they can or not). I further draw on the Platonic idea espoused in the allegory of the cave (the liberating power of education) to propose a concept of education woven within practical reasoning, potentiality and liberation that has intrinsic power to decolonise or which could prepare people better to decolonise. Such a decolonisation project is interwoven within the notion of education itself and capable of altering attitudes, such as those that engulfed the African postcolonial middle class and perpetrators of colonial attitudes. Once conceived and enacted, such a concept of education prepares the mind and forms right attitudes towards understanding oneself and other, fosters respect of others and their cultures, liberates beings from social distortions and opens real possibilities to decolonise. In other words, I contend that a concept of education based on practical reasoning, potentiality and liberation creates necessary conditions for decolonisation.

I start by engaging with the notion of decolonisation where I support the need to decolonise before proposing a concept of education based on practical reasoning, potentiality and liberation and argue that such a concept is necessary for the decolonisation project to succeed. I then show how the concept of education espoused in the chapter could be used to

decolonise university curriculum, pedagogy and governance and lastly, provide some conclusions.

Decolonisation as a Necessary Project

Colonialism inculcated a sense of an inferiority complex in the colonised in ways that have further undermined their knowledge production, development and ways of thinking and acting. While juridical-political colonisation is a thing of the past, the long-standing ways of thinking and acting that have been perpetuated by colonialism still exist and require challenging. These long-standing ways of thinking and acting, also known as coloniality (see Maldonado-Torres 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013), tend to affect behaviour and world views. Drawing on the work of Quijano (2000) cited in Maldonado-Torres (2007, 243) posits:

> Coloniality … refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time and everyday.

Maldonado-Torres' (2007) sentiments show how coloniality is deep-rooted in peoples' ways of thinking and acting. Universities cannot challenge coloniality with superficial changes as changes in attitudes and ways of thinking and acting require a genuine rethinking of university education—such as one based on practical reasoning, potentiality and liberation.

For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, 15), decoloniality or decolonisation is "born out of a realisation that ours is an asymmetrical world order that is sustained not only by colonial matrices of power but also by pedagogies and epistemologies of equilibrium that continue to produce alienated Africans …". Such observations are important in imagining how to craft a concept of education that embodies decolonisation.

The #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall Movements

The #RhodesMustFall movement started at the University of Cape Town in 2015 when students demanded that the statue of Cecil John Rhodes on campus should fall (Ahmed 2017; Luescher 2016). Students perceived Rhodes as a British imperialist and racist and saw his statue as continuing the systematic dehumanisation of black people that started with colonisation. Following the #RhodesMustFall movement, was the 2016 #FeesMustFall movement that seriously raised the challenges of access to higher education in South Africa. Luescher (2016, 23) contends:

> [W]hereas #RhodesMustFall and its derivatives represented a Black intellectual rage against ideological superstructure of South African higher education and its whiteness, the #FeesMustFall movement captured the imagination of students nationwide, as it brought things to the grassroots' level of the material conditions of student life, with the powerfully resonant demand for free education.

The two movements brought to the fore the need for transformation and decolonisation in South African higher education (Nyamnjoh 2017). The decolonisation debates have tended to focus on curriculum (content), pedagogy (how content is mediated), knowledge production (who produces what is accepted as knowledge and from what lens) and decolonising the whole university (see Council on Higher Education [CHE] 2017).

Proponents of the decolonisation of curricula argue for the provision of relevant content to students generally and/or specifically a need to advance subjects that draw on African scholarship (see Makgoba 1996; Nkoane 2006). According to the CHE (2017), others have argued for a need for changes in pedagogy—how knowledge is mediated by academics and how students experience and engage with knowledge. In terms of knowledge production, others have been concerned with the question of a Cartesian duality, 'cogito ergo sum' or, 'I think therefore I am', advanced by Descartes, which is said to characterise the Eurocentric canon (see Le Grange 2016; Mbembe 2016). The challenge with the Cartesian dualism

frame of knowing is that it separates the knower from the subject (to be known) but claims that the knower is able to discern universal knowledge applicable to the subject (Mbembe 2016). Unfortunately, this Western frame of thought has become hegemonic (Mbembe 2016). For Le Grange (2016), curriculum must be rid of Cartesian duality presented by Descartes' *cogito*, 'I think therefore I am' to one that embodies *ubuntu*, 'I am because we are'. He posits, "a decolonised curriculum is evidenced by a shift in subjectivity from the arrogant 'I' (of Western Individualism) to a humble 'I' that is embedded, embodied, extended and enacted" (Le Grange 2016, 8).

Echoing Le Grange's sentiments, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, 12) argues that Descartes' 'I think, therefore, I am' translated into 'I conquer, therefore, I am' and is apparent in the 'coloniser and colonised' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, 14) relationship. Such a relationship dehumanises the colonised. Le Grange (2016) suggests five phases in the process of decolonisation:

- rediscovery and recovery (process whereby colonised peoples rediscover and recover their own history, culture, language and identity);
- mourning (the process of lamenting the continued assault on the world's colonised or oppressed peoples' identities and social realities);
- dreaming (when colonised peoples invoke their histories, world views and indigenous knowledge systems to theorise and imagine alternative possibilities—in this instance, a different curriculum);
- commitment (when academics or students become political activists who demonstrate the commitment to include the voices of the colonised, in this case the university curriculum) and
- action (where dreams and commitments translate into strategies for social transformation).

For Mbembe (2016), decolonisation entails reconfiguring the whole university—buildings, the university classroom, large systems of authoritative control, the mania of assessment, methods of the evaluation of faculty and breaking the cycle that tends to turn students into customers and consumers. While in support of the several efforts and ideas on

decolonisation presented in the foregoing, I contend that such efforts and ideas need to be anchored by a strong concept of education for them to lead to decolonisation.

The Need to Rethink the Concept of Education

Given the challenges in attitudes and ways of thinking and acting created by colonialism, the decolonisation project should be a matter of urgency. Universities, being crucial sites for initiating and socialising human beings (Weidman et al. 2014), ought to respond to calls for decolonisation with an in-depth understanding. Calls that tackle decolonisation without basing their understanding and/or arguments on thick concepts of the notion of education itself are less likely to contribute coherently to the success of the decolonisation project. One such in-depth engagement with the project is to base decolonisation on a notion of education that prepares people for decolonisation. In fact, on what would changes in curriculum content and/or pedagogic styles be based without an elaborate concept of the notion of education itself to guide the process?

University education globally shows strong adherence to the global neo-liberal tendency (Lynch 2006; Peters 2012), which has generally commodified education and advanced what Peters (2012, 136) calls "consumer sovereignty". Such a concept of education has limited the public role of the university generally. For example, it has perpetuated inequality to university access in many countries as those who cannot afford to pay fees fail to access university education. I argue that given such challenges, a decolonisation project that simply engages with changes in curricula content or pedagogical styles while maintaining, for example, the neo-liberal world view is inappropriate for decolonisation. I contend that there is a need for an education that decolonises the mind (Wa Thiong'o 1986), one that is girded by a concept of education that draws on practical reason, potentiality and liberation. I develop such a concept of education next.

Towards a Concept of Education Necessary for Decolonisation: Practical Reasoning, Potentiality and Liberation

In this section, I develop a concept of education based on practical reasoning, potentiality and liberation that embodies decolonisation. First, I engage with Aristotle's concept of practical reasoning—*phronēsis*. Second, I briefly explain Aristotle's notion of potentiality—*dynamis*. Third, I deal with Plato's allegory of the cave to explain the liberatory nature of the notion of education I advance. Lastly, I then show how these aspects of the notion of education embody decolonisation.

Aristotle's Notion of Practical Reasoning—Phronēsis as an Aspect of the Concept of Education

I propose practical reasoning—*phronēsis*—as an aspect of the concept of education because as a virtue, it embodies dispositions and aspects of ethical judgement, social dimension, deliberative reasoning and understanding of the whole using particularities (Austin 2016, 2018; Carr 2007)—which I consider pivotal in engaging with many social issues such as decolonisation.

For Aristotle, practical reasoning—*phronēsis*—means the capability to conceive the end to be achieved as well as correct deliberation on how to achieve the end (Taylor 2016). In other words, practical reasoning demands rational considerations and choices as well as deliberative mechanisms to achieve the intended goal. Thus, "in the simplest terms, practical reasoning is deliberation about what it would be best to do, both in particular situations, and with reference to one's life as a whole" (Austin 2018, 25).

For Aristotle, practical reasoning as a virtue differs from other mental states that he describes as scientific knowledge—*episteme*—and craft or craft knowledge—*techne*. Scientific knowledge explains things or aspects that are necessarily true and which cannot be otherwise (Birmingham 2004). Craft or craft knowledge depicts true knowledge with an aim of

production—for example, having knowledge about how to improve student reading (see Birmingham 2004; Carr 2007). For Carr (2007, 276) *techne* is basically 'a type of instrumental practice undertaken in order to achieve some extrinsic or independently determined outcome'.

Both *episteme* and *techne* are different from *phronēsis* in that the latter is a form of ethical reasoning in which notions of deliberation and judgement are intrinsic (Carr 2007). Drawing on Aristotle (1999) and Birmingham (2004, 314) describes *phronēsis* as "a state of grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with action about things that are good or bad for a human being". Ethical judgement is crucial because the outcome of *phronēsis* is not only born out of a reasoned decision but a judgement that would be morally appropriate within the prevailing conditions (Dunne 1993, cited in Carr 2007). Birmingham (2004) contends that reflection does not only have moral implications as suggested by some theorists but is also essentially moral—the virtue of *phronēsis*. The ethical dimension of practical reasoning is crucial for the concept of education advanced in this chapter.

Second, the social dimension of practical reasoning is important in the concept of education that I advance. Austin (2018, 26) contends:

> The social, political and economic environment in which a person grows up, and the practices and norms of [his or] her immediate and wider social groups, are primary influences on the development of [his or] her mode of practical reasoning—the basic structure of [his or] her personal concept of value.

The fact that practical reasoning develops within social environments, necessarily calls for assessment of societal beliefs some of which might be informed by distortions such as beliefs in apartheid or racial apartness and colonialism.

Third, *phronēsis* is pertinent to the concept of education in this chapter because it embodies deliberative reasoning. It calls for reflection on what one wants to do—thus it advances a form of reasoned decision-making or deliberation and/or self-assessment (Dunne 1993, cited in Carr 2007).

Fourth, *phronēsis* allows people to use the immediate situation or the particularities to grasp the significance of the whole (see Birmingham

2004; Carr 2007). This means that people can behave in a given situation while thinking about the significance of their actions on the whole. For example, Carr (2007, 277) notes that educators who draw on *phronēsis* "strive to achieve … excellence intrinsic to their practice, develop a capacity to see the particularities of a concrete practical situation in light of its general educational significance … ".

Aristotle's Notion of Potentiality—Dynamis as an Aspect of the Concept of Education

I propose potentiality—*dynamis*—as an aspect of the concept of education because of its characteristic of becoming, which denotes constant reflection: continuously becoming better, ethical, deliberative and so forth.

In elucidating the concept of potentiality, *dynamis*, Aristotle opposes it to actuality, *energeia* (what something becomes or is) (Agamben 1999). For Aristotle what something could become is always in its nature (Morgan 2013). Agamben (1999) notes that Aristotle introduced two potentialities: one generic and the other existing and that the latter was of his interest. An example of generic potentiality is when we say, "a child has potential to know, or that [he or] she can potentially become head of state" (Agamben 1999, 179). Although it is conceivable that a child has the potential to know and indeed could become head of state, such potentiality is not based on knowledge or ability possessed by the child. On the other hand, an example of existing potentiality is "[when] we say of an architect that he or she has the power to build …" (Agamben 1999, 179). The latter shows one has existing knowledge or ability.

Villamizar (2013) posits that what is appealing to Agamben is that potentiality in the Aristotelian sense means also the potentiality not to do—the impotentiality. In this way, Aristotle does not propound a static actuality or finality of potentiality. Potentiality has the capability of becoming as well as suspending the becoming. The ideas of potentiality and impotentiality are important when we think about choice, and are also related to the negation of finality of actuality. To hold a view that knowledge or abilities can be acquired to finality or actuality is to deny the capacity for constant questioning and ever striving for the good.

Thus, I contend that the view of knowing as actuality is problematic. Waghid (2014, 40) observes, "to absolutely know what education is [for example] suggests that students have found final answers that are conclusive and beyond doubt". Such a view is deceptive as knowledge is not static.

Plato's Allegory of the Cave—Liberatory Power of Education as an Aspect of the Concept of Education

I propose engaging Plato's allegory of the cave as an aspect of the concept of education because of its liberatory power—the need to liberate oneself and others for the betterment of society. Adapting from Plato (1944, 222–230), I narrate the allegory of the cave as below:

> The allegory depicts men prisoners who since their childhood lived in a cave underground with an entrance open to the light and a long passage all down the cave. The men had their legs and necks chained such that they could not turn nor move to see what was in front of them. At some distance higher up there was light from fire burning behind them, which cast shadows seen by the prisoners.
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> The shadows were cast not only by the prisoners themselves but also by other people and animals who made noise in the process. Since the prisoners could only see the shadows, they thought that the shadows made the noise (because of the echo).
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> If one of them was set free and went through the ascent, his eyes would first experience pain because of the light. However, his eyes would eventually acclimatise and he would see that what they used to see in the cave with his fellow prisoners, were mere shadows of real things. He would experience and see true reality and contemplate that in fact it is the light from the sun that caused all the shadows he and his fellow prisoners used to see.
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> Upon knowing the reality, he would feel happy for himself but sorry for his fellow prisoners. If he went back to the darkness in the cave his eyes would once again experience pain, now because of the darkness in the cave and he would struggle to see the other prisoners who would then laugh at him for having ruined his sight. Unhappy with this, the prisoners would,

if found, kill the person who would have made their friend climb the ascent. This is because they were used to the reality of the cave and its darkness.

However, if they all would leave the cave and the darkness and climb the ascent, their eyes would first experience pain because of the light but eventually get used to reality. In other words, the prisoners would get enlightened.

The power of this allegory is in its meaning that human beings can be enslaved within 'caves' in their lives and mistake such experiences as truths. As such, "enlightenment means not only counting oneself happy for seeing the sun (knowing the good), but also doing the good, even if that means returning to the cave despite the blindness caused by the re-entry to the darkness" (Peterson 2017, 274). A concept of education that allows for the liberation of the self and others is meaningful in challenging social ills, such as hegemonic tendencies, apartheid and colonisation. I now turn to elaborating how the concept of education advanced embodies decolonisation.

The Concept of Education (Practical Reasoning, Potentiality and Liberation) as Lens for Decolonisation

Drawing on the concept of education I have advanced, I now show how such a concept is necessary for decolonisation. As noted, the concept of education developed has three major tenets:

- practical reasoning—*phronēsis*: ethical judgement, social dimension, deliberative reasoning, using particularities to understand the whole;
- potentiality—*dynamis*: potentiality and impotentiality, becoming and
- Plato's allegory of the cave: liberatory power of education.

I now show how these tenets of the concept of education enable decolonisation of curricula content, pedagogy and university governance.

Practical Reasoning as an Aspect of the Concept of Education to Decolonise Curricula Content

Establishing the content of curricula takes into consideration a number of activities, such as planning and selection of the content by academics within departments. Generally, content needs to respond to the context to be relevant and there is a need to align modules coherently to the programme.

Basing the process of curriculum selection on practical reasoning means that planning and selection of content are done ethically and deliberatively, engage the social dimension and reveal an understanding on the part of academics of the significance of their content choices and decisions (particularities) in relation to the whole field.

In a decolonisation framework, ethically, it means that academics do not just choose content that is African without applying ethical judgement within the process and in the nature of the content itself. For example, African content that may be shallow, biased and antagonistic to humanity as a whole would be avoided. That could happen when academics self-assess or reflect (deliberatively) on their process of selection of content and the content itself.

Engaging the social dimension is very useful because practical reasoning is shaped by the social beliefs that also need careful assessment. This means that content selected is not just accepted at face value because, for example, it is African and/or rooted in African scholarship but should be assessed for distortions that may be held normative in the social domain. Here, academics have to develop capacity to understand that the everydayness of human living can be informed by distortions or taken-for-granted aspects that require change or challenging (see Habermas 1987; Shawa 2013).

Drawing on practical reason in selecting curricula also means that academics need to pay attention to how the content selected within their context reflects or contributes to the development of the field as a whole. For example, content should not negatively affect students in understanding their fields in relation to global humanity. In other words, a decolonised content should not limit students' engagement with their fields holistically. The content should provide space for assessment.

Practical reasoning thus opens possibilities for decolonisation of curriculum content by inviting academics to be ethical in their content selection, to select content by being deliberative or reflective, to provide content that challenges the distortions that could normatively be accepted in society and to ascertain that the selected content contributes to the significance of the whole field critically.

Potentiality as an Aspect of the Concept of Education to Decolonise Curricula Content

As noted, Aristotle's potentiality is both potentiality and impotentiality in its ability to become. By having choice to bring aspects to potentiality or not means that academics and students have the freedom in their enacting or not of becoming. Drawing on potentiality as an aspect of the concept of education in decolonising curricula demands academics to understand that the selected content, for example, that is rooted in African scholarship can be brought to potentiality or not. This provides space for both academics and students not to be bound by the selected curriculum content only but also to allow students to read widely and engage with the readings critically. In other words, understanding curriculum content in potentiality is to allow for constant evaluation of content and providing space for better knowledge production (e.g. about decolonisation). This also means that academics become open to students evaluating the curriculum content for improvement (see Waghid et al. 2018). Academics who view curriculum content in potentiality guard against indoctrination.

Potentiality thus opens possibilities for decolonisation of curriculum content by inviting academics to be less prescriptive of content and constantly encourage assessment to avoid mere indoctrination.

The Allegory of the Cave as an Aspect of the Concept of Education to Decolonise Curricula Content

Plato's allegory of the cave has a liberatory message of education. Drawing on the allegory of the cave to decolonise curricula content allows academics to refrain from content that domesticates students—putting students

as prisoners in caves. Like the prisoners going up the ascent, both academics and students should allow the pain of making sense of a wide range of curricula and being able to help those who may be slow in understanding the texts. Further, liberating students from caves means that African students should not only be provided an African-related canon but should also be allowed to understand even the Western canon to provide comparative views that are helpful to understand their own better. The problem is when one particular way of knowing, such as the Western thought, becomes hegemonic.

The liberatory message of Plato's allegory of the cave opens possibilities of decolonisation of curriculum content by inviting academics to help students to learn together and be sensitive about helping those who may not easily grasp the content and to challenge hegemonic canons.

Practical Reasoning as an Aspect of the Concept of Education to Decolonise Pedagogy

Pedagogy entails how academics mediate curricula or how they teach (CHE 2017). Pedagogic styles are ways in which students get to experience knowledge production or academic literacies (CHE 2017). Basing pedagogy on practical reasoning means that academics use pedagogic styles ethically and deliberatively, tap into students' social dimensions, and use pedagogic styles that contribute to knowledge production in relation to the whole field.

While with decolonisation, there is a need to tap into African ways of knowing, drawing on practical reasoning entails adherence to ethical judgements about the best possible African ways of knowing that best suit the situation. For example, against the Cartesian duality, academics need to tap into African methods that denote the collective dimension revealed in African cultures—knowing together. A deliberative mechanism (for Aristotelian reflection) is required for academics to be able to choose ethical pedagogic styles. In other words, academics should guard against simply replacing what they may call Western pedagogic styles by African ways of knowing without applying moral judgement if they want to succeed in decolonising pedagogy.

As noted, paying attention to the social dimension in one's pedagogic styles is important because practical reasoning is shaped by the social beliefs that also need careful assessment. This means that selected pedagogic styles should not maintain, for example, distortions that are held as normative in a given society. For example, in some African societies, children or students may not freely challenge the elders or teachers as they tend to be passive learners. In such a case, one's pedagogic style, while tapping into the African readiness to listen, should also encourage students to form their voices and contribute to their learning freely.

Drawing on practical reason in choosing pedagogic styles also means that academics use relevant methods that are significant to producing knowledge in their field as a whole. Further, the selected methods aim to help students understand the significance of what they learn in particular situations to the whole field. For example, a method that allows students to question and engage deliberatively with academics in a Philosophy of Education class, prepares students to learn the art of constant questioning that is demanded by the field. In other words, a decolonised pedagogy should equip students with tools necessary to learn relentlessly and holistically within their fields.

Practical reasoning thus opens possibilities for decolonisation of pedagogy by inviting academics and students to use pedagogic styles that are ethical and deliberative, to tap into ways of knowing prevalent in their society and to assess the ways of knowing that might present distortions in their societies and to ascertain that the selected methods significantly contribute critically to knowledge production in the whole field.

Drawing on Potentiality as an Aspect of the Concept of Education to Decolonise Pedagogy

Aristotle's concept of potentiality is helpful in conceiving a pedagogy that relentlessly questions without assuming finality of knowledge (Waghid 2014). Decolonised pedagogic styles call for both academics and students to devise styles collectively that innovatively contribute to knowledge creation. This means that simply tapping into some African pedagogic styles, such as storytelling, without thinking about how to improve this method,

means that such a method has reached finality and is in actuality. As such, while advancing African ways of knowing, both academics and students should allow space to improve on the methods by seeing them as in becoming, in potentiality.

Potentiality thus opens possibilities for decolonisation of pedagogy by inviting academics and students to engage critically with pedagogic styles they use in producing knowledge with an aim to improve the styles constantly.

The Allegory of the Cave as Aspect of the Concept of Education to Decolonise Pedagogy

Pedagogic styles framed within the Platonic allegory of the cave put a demand on academics and students to engage in self-assessment to liberate themselves and others. Such pedagogic styles invite both academics and students to deconstruct their attitudes, thought processes and ways of doing things. For example, instead of simply relegating Western forms of knowledge production, a liberated decolonised education engages with both African ways and Western ways of knowledge production to facilitate assessment of these for the betterment of humanity.

The liberatory message of Plato's allegory of the cave opens possibilities of decolonisation of pedagogy by inviting academics and students to assess their pedagogic styles and share best practices with those who might not be able to discern improved pedagogic styles (liberating them).

Practical Reasoning as an Aspect of the Concept of Education in University Governance

University governance entails a great deal of organising the university in its functions of teaching, research and community engagement. Drawing on practical reasoning in university governance entails that the university leadership organises university activities ethically and deliberatively, attend to societal dimensions in their understanding of governance and strives for their decisions and/or policies to contribute to best practices in university governance.

Tapping into practical reasoning means that university administrators devise regulations or governance systems using ethical judgement and reflection (deliberation) to achieve the best possible practices in running the university at a given time. For example, simply borrowing the neo-liberal logic in organising universities in Africa is counter-productive and unethical.

University leadership drawing on practical reasoning ought to engage societies in which universities operate and learn from good practices mirrored in the societies while at the same time assessing ways or societal beliefs that present distortions and influence governance of the university negatively. For example, in most African countries, the big-man syndrome (see von Soest 2007) and other neopatrimonial aspects tend to permeate university governance and require challenging (Shawa 2013).

Drawing on practical reasoning in university governance also means that the university leadership in its policy and decision-making understands the significance of its actions in terms of university governance as a whole. In other words, decolonised university governance in Africa could draw on *ubuntu* values that enhance the African communitarian decision-making (Waghid et al. 2018) and rid itself of, for example, neo-liberal performative tendencies (see Mbembe 2016) in facilitating genuine teaching, learning and community engagement. Such university governance could help not only in creating an enabling environment for advancing knowledge (epistemological) but also in helping students to become (ontological) good citizens or global citizens (see Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2007; Nussbaum 1997).

Practical reasoning thus opens possibilities for decolonisation of university governance by:

- inviting university leaders to make policies or regulations about teaching, research and community engagement using ethical judgement and reflection;
- understanding social dimensions in which the university operates;
- making decisions that reflect the significance of university governance as a whole and
- facilitating an environment in which students not only grasp knowledge but also become responsible human beings.

Potentiality as an Aspect of the Concept of Education to Decolonise University Governance

Drawing on the aspect of potentiality, university governance should be seen as becoming such that decisions taken to organise teaching, research and community engagement are not final but are open to constant assessment by the university community. In a decolonised university fashion, such assessments should centre on how the university facilitates an environment for African ways of knowing (epistemology) and being (ontology) without reifying them to finality. As noted, to conceive of particular ways of acting as in actuality impedes relentless questioning that is pertinent in improving leadership.

Potentiality thus opens possibilities for decolonisation of university governance by inviting university leadership to engage critically with decisions and university operations as in becoming, allowing the university community to assess the decisions and operations constantly and provide feedback on best practices in running the university.

The Allegory of the Cave as an Aspect of the Concept of Education to Decolonise University Governance

Plato's allegory of the cave is helpful in organising the university and creating an enabling environment for teaching, research and community engagement. The university leadership should constantly analyse its governance styles and discern better ways of acting. The leadership should be able to share their discerned better ways of governance to liberate themselves and others. For example, a decolonised university governance that rids itself of neo-liberal performative tendencies, which stifle the work of both academics and students, could then share with others new ways of acting that are more humane.

The liberatory message of Plato's allegory of the cave opens possibilities of decolonisation of university governance by inviting university leadership to assess their governance styles and allow for governance that is built on styles that aim at more humane engagements.

In summary, a conception of education based on practical reasoning, potentiality and liberation once conceived and enacted prepares the mind and forms right attitudes towards understanding oneself and other, fosters respect of others and their cultures, liberates beings from social distortions and opens real possibilities to decolonise.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued for a concept of education that embodies decolonisation. I have argued that while in support of the decolonisation project, merely changing, for example, curricula content and pedagogic styles without a robust conceptualisation of the notion of education cannot lead to decolonisation. I have developed a concept of education based on Aristotelian notions of practical reason (*phronēsis*) and potentiality (*dynamis*) and the Platonic idea espoused in the allegory of the cave and have shown how such a concept embodies intrinsic power to decolonise. Finally, I have drawn on this concept to show how it can be utilised in decolonising curricula content, pedagogy and university governance.

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