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Perhaps Decoloniality is the Answer? Critical Reflections on Development from a Decolonial Epistemic Perspective

Provincialism? Absolutely not. I'm not going to confine myself to some narrow particularism. Nor do I intend to lose myself in a disembodied universalism. There are two ways to lose one self: through walled-in segregation in the particular, or through dissolution into the 'universal.' My idea of the universal is that of a universal rich with all that is particular, rich with all particulars, the deepening and coexistence of all particulars (Aime Cesaire 1972: 84).

The decolonial turn does not refer to a single theoretical school, but rather points to a family of diverse positions that share a view of coloniality as the fundamental problem in the modern (as well as postmodern and information age), and decolonization or decoloniality as a necessary task that remains unfinished (Nelson Maldonado-Torres 2011: 2).

This issue of *Africanus: Journal of Development Studies* is devoted to the interrogation of key aspects of development from a decoloniality perspective. Development can be interrogated from the perspective of a discourse, an idea, a practice or a policy. This is why modernity promised progress and development. Imperialism and colonialism were justified on the grounds of bringing development and civilization to Africa. The anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggles were also ranged against underdevelopment. Most of the Francophone Africa opted for neo-colonialism (maintenance of links with France) so as to develop faster. Apartheid was justified and articulated as separate development. The impositions of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) by the World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) were justified on the grounds of development. One-party state regimes and military juntas that dominated western, eastern and central Africa in the late 1960s and 1970s were justified on basis of failure of civilian government to deliver development. The adoption of socialism as an alternative to capitalism was justified on the basis of development. Pan-Africanism and nationalism promised to deliver development. Those African presidents who struggled to amend constitutions so as to gain 'third term' in office often claimed that their unfinished development plans needed them in office. The new wave of military interventions by the powerful Euro-American powers

in countries such as Libya and Cote D'Ivoire are justified on development grounds. Democracy, peace and human rights have been identified as essential prerequisites for development.

The fundamental question which arises is what is development? Is it an attempt to 'catch up' with the industrialized Euro-American world? There is indeed a strong school of thought that articulates development in terms of the Africa's fight to catch up with industrialized Euro-American nations of the North. The 'catching-up' argument is traceable to W.W. Rostow's stages-orientated conception of development. In recent years, Thandika Mkandawire, a leading intellectual voice on African development, has revised the 'catching up discourse'. In his professorial inaugural lecture delivered at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), he stated that:

The idea of "catching up" entails learning not only about ideas from abroad but also about one's capacities and weaknesses. 'Catching up' requires that countries know themselves and their own history that has set the 'initial conditions' for any future progress. They need a deep understanding of their culture, not only for self-reaffirmation, but in order to capture the strong points of their culture and institutions that will see their societies through rapid social change [...]. The real issue about "catching up" is not that of simply taking on every wretched instrument used by their pioneers to get what they have—wars, slave labour, child labour, colonialism, Gulags, concentration camps—but of finding more efficacious and morally acceptable ways of improving the life chances of millions of poor people. [...] There would be no point in investing so much in the study of history if it involved simply regurgitating scripts that countries must follow (Mkandawire 2011: 13).

The catching up thesis presents development as being like the West – being industrialized and modern. If this is true meaning of development, the next fundamental question is, what factors prevent Africa from 'catching' up with the industrialized nations of the North? The dependency theorists in the 1970s identified the slave trade, mercantilism, imperialism, colonialism, global capitalism and neo-colonialism as the key processes that produced an Africa that was underdeveloped (Rodney 1973; Amin 1990). Dependency theorists were criticized for ignoring internal factors and processes that were equally responsible for lack of development in Africa.

It was the advocates of neo-liberalism and the Washington Consensus that blamed such internal factors as corruption, patrimonialism and authoritarianism as responsible for the underdevelopment of Africa. They identified predatory states that interfered with the natural functioning of laws of demand and supply (market forces), bad governance, and corruption and lack of strong civil society as the key factors generating underdevelopment and preventing Africa from catching up with the developed nations of the North. They recommended the 'withdrawal of the state' (Harvey 2005).

Pan-Africanists identified lack of continental integration and pan-African unity as the major cause of lack of development in Africa (Nkrumah 1963; Nkrumah 1965; Nyerere 1967). African nationalists blamed tribalism for the lack of development in Africa. For them the tribe had to die for the postcolonial nation-state to live and for development to take place (Laakso and Olukoshi 1996). Post-development theorists critiqued the very idea of development as imperialistic and colonial and dismissed the concept as a hegemonic discourse used to interpellate people as subjects of Euro-American power. For instance, Arturo Escobar wrote that:

I propose to speak of development as historically singular experience, the creation of the domain of thought and action, by analyzing the characteristics and interrelations of the three axes that define it:

the forms of knowledge that refer to it and through which it comes into being and is elaborated into objects, concepts, theories, and the like; the system of power that regulates its practice; and the forms of subjectivity fostered by this discourse, those through which people come to recognize themselves as developed or underdeveloped. The ensemble of forms found along these axes constitutes development as discursive formation, giving rise to an efficient apparatus that systematically relates to knowledge and techniques of power (Escobar 1995: 10).

James Ferguson understood development to be nothing but an ‘anti-politics machine’. To him, development is ‘the name not only for a value, but also for a dominant problematic or interpretive grid through which the impoverished regions of the world are known to us’ (Ferguson 1990: xvi). Despite all these animated debates, critiques and even outright dismissals:

“Development” in our time is such a central value. Wars are fought and coups are launched in its name. Entire government and philosophy are evaluated according to their ability to promote it. Indeed, it seems increasingly difficult to find any way to talk about large parts of the world except in these terms (Ferguson 1990: xiii).

The articles constituting this volume of *Africanus* are diverse but they all emphasize the need for decoloniality as another perspective from which development could be interrogated and understood as discourse. What the majority of authors argue for is decolonization of the discourse of development through indigenization of the concept. An un-decolonized discourse of development presents Africans as objects rather than subjects of development. African people feature in development discourse as a problem to be solved. A humanitarian perspective has always permeated development discourse in the process hiding the structural causes of lack of development in Africa. A decolonial perspective is grounded in world-systems approach. It maintains that the modern world system that emerged in 1492 has remained racially hierarchized, Euro-American-centric, sexist, hetero-normative, Christian-centric, Western-centric, capitalist and colonial in orientation (Grosfoguel 2007). Africa and other parts of the Global South have remained peripheral and subaltern. This is why decolonial thinkers understand development as involving the decolonization of the modern world system.

Decoloniality cascades from the context in which the humanity of black people is doubted and their subjectivity is articulated in terms of lacks and deficits (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013b). Lacking development is constitutive of a Western articulation of African subjectivity. This point is well articulated by Ramon Grosfoguel, a leading Latin American thinker and theorist who understood the articulation on subjectivity of non-Western people as unfolding in this way:

We went from the sixteenth century characterization of ‘people without writing’ to the eighteenth and nineteenth century characterization of ‘people without history,’ to the twentieth century characterization of ‘people without development’ and more recently, to the early twenty first century of ‘people without democracy’ (Grosfoguel 2007: 214).

During the same period, those in the ‘Zone of Being’ were systematically gaining more and more fruits of modernity ‘from sixteenth century ‘rights of people,’ to ‘eighteenth century ‘rights of man,’ and to the ‘late twentieth century human rights’ (Grosfoguel 2007: 214). Decoloniality is against all vestiges of colonialism and realities of coloniality. It is a redemptive epistemology which inaugurates and legitimates the telling the story of the modern world from the experiences of colonial difference.

Decoloniality materialized at the very moment in which imperialism and colonialism arrived in Africa. Decoloniality ‘struggles to bring into intervening existence an-other interpretation that bring forward, on the one hand, a silenced view of the event and, on the other, shows the limits of imperial ideology disguised as the true (total) interpretation of the events’ in the making of the modern world (Mignolo 1995: 33).

Decoloniality is both an epistemic and a political project seeking liberation and freedom for those people who experienced colonialism and who are today subsisting and living under the boulder of global coloniality. Development is linked to liberation and freedom from domination and exploitation. This is why decoloniality is distinguished from the imperial version of history through its push for shifting of a geography of reason from the West as the epistemic locale from which the ‘world is described, conceptualized and ranked’ to the ex-colonised epistemic sites as legitimate points of departure in describing the construction of the modern world order (Mignolo 1995: 35). Decoloniality identifies coloniality as a key hindrance to development in Africa. Nelson Maldonado-Torres, a leading philosopher in decolonial thought, grapples with the meaning of coloniality and this is how he defined it:

Coloniality is different from colonialism. Colonialism denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or a people rests on the power of another nation, which makes such a nation an empire. Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in 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 every day (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 243).

Decolonial thinkers understand the Global South as that epistemic site that received the negatives of modernity. Coloniality is a name for the ‘darker side’ of modernity that needs to be unmasked because it exists as ‘an embedded logic that enforces control, domination, and exploitation disguised in the language of salvation, progress, modernization, and being good for everyone’ (Mignolo 1995: 6). Walter D. Mignolo argued that ‘Coloniality names the experiences and views of the world and history of those whom Fanon called *les damnés de la terre* (“the wretched of the earth,” those who have been, and continue to be, subjected to the standard of modernity)’ (Mignolo 1995: 8). He elaborated on the meaning of the wretched of the earth in this way:

The wretched are defined by the colonial wound, and the colonial wound, physical and/or psychological, is a consequence of racism, the hegemonic discourse that questions the humanity of all those who do not belong to the locus of enunciation (and the geo-politics of knowledge) of those who assign the standard of classification and assign to themselves the right to classify (Mignolo 1995: 8).

Unlike coloniality, decoloniality names a cocktail of insurrectionist-liberatory projects and critical thoughts emerging from the ex-colonised sites such as Latin America, Caribbean, Asia, Middle East, and Africa. It seeks to make sense of the position of ex-colonised peoples within the Euro-America-centric, Christian-centric, patriarchal, capitalist, hetero-normative, racially hierarchized, and modern world-system that came into being in the fifteenth century (Mignolo 2000; Grosfoguel 2007).

Decoloniality seeks to unmask, unveil, and reveal coloniality as an underside of modernity that co-existed with the rhetoric of progress, equality, fraternity, and liberty. It is a particular kind of critical intellectual theory as well as political project that seeks to disentangle ex-colonised parts of the world from global coloniality (Mignolo 2011).

What distinguishes decoloniality from other existing critical social theories is its locus of enunciations and its genealogy – which is outside Europe. Decoloniality can be best understood as a pluriversal epistemology of the future – a redemptive and liberatory epistemology that seeks to delink from the tyranny of abstract universals (Mignolo 2007: 159). Decoloniality informs the ongoing struggles against inhumanity of the Cartesian subject, ‘the irrationality of the rational, the despotic residues of modernity’ (Mignolo 2011: 93). As a critical social theory, decoloniality is constituted by three main concepts. The first is coloniality of power. It is a useful concept, which delves deeper into the roots of the present asymmetrical global power relations and how the present modern world order was constituted. It boldly enables a correct naming of the current ‘global political present’ as a racially hierarchized, Euro-American-centric, Christian-centric, patriarchal, sexist, capitalist, hetero-normative, hegemonic, and modern power structure that emerged in 1492. At the centre of the construction of this power structure was the bifurcation of the world into ‘Zone of Being’ and ‘Zone of None-Being’ maintained by invisible ‘abyssal lines’ (Gordon 2005; Santos 2007). The Portuguese sociologist and leading decolonial thinker had this to say about the making of the ‘Zone of Being’ and the ‘Zone of Non-Being’:

Modern Western thinking is an abyssal thinking. It consists of a system of visible and invisible distinctions, the invisible ones being the foundation of the visible ones. The invisible distinctions are established through radical lines that divide social reality into two realms, the realm of “this side of the line” and the realm of “the other side of the line.” The division is such that the “other side of the line” vanishes as reality, becomes nonexistent, and is indeed produced as nonexistent. Nonexistent means not existing in any relevant or comprehensive way of being. Whatever is produced as nonexistent is radically excluded because it lies beyond the realm of what the accepted conception of inclusion considers to be its other. What most fundamentally characterizes abyssal thinking is thus the impossibility of the copresence of the two sides of the line (Santos 2007: 45).

To the ‘Zone of Being’ (Euro-American world) modernity deposited its fruits of progress, civilization, modernization, industrialization, development, democracy and human rights while at the same time imposing the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism and apartheid into Africa (the Zone of None-Being).

The second concept is that of coloniality of knowledge. Epistemology and methodology are inextricably intertwined with imperial power. This is why Claude Ake wrote about ‘social science as imperialism’ that enabled development in Europe and America while disabling development in Africa (Ake 1979). Research into development cannot ignore delving into epistemological issues, into the politics of knowledge generation, and the fundamental question of who generates which knowledge and for what purposes. How knowledge has been used to assist imperialism and colonialism and to inscribe Euro-American-centric epistemology that consistently appropriated what was considered progressive, and displacing what was considered repugnant aspects of endogenous and indigenous knowledges remains a fertile area of research. The same is true of the important question of relevance and irrelevance of knowledge, particularly how some knowledges disempowered communities and peoples, and how others empowered individuals and communities.

The point that emerges poignantly from decoloniality is that current knowledges, epistemologies and methodologies are for equilibrium rather than transformation. They are for the status quo rather than for change. The fundamental challenge facing Africa is how knowledges, epistemologies and methodologies of equilibrium can be expected to enable development in Africa. Decoloniality speaks to this quandary.

The third concept is that of coloniality of being, which was articulated by Nelson Maldonado-Torres (2007). This concept enables us to delve deeper into the pertinent questions of the making of modern subjectivities, into issues of humanism, and into questions of the role played by philosophers such as Rene Descartes and the long-term implications of his motto, ‘Cogito ergo sum/I think, therefore, I am’) on conceptions of subjectivity. What is evident is that modernity endowed whiteness with ontological density far above blackness as identities. This happened as the notions of ‘I think, therefore, I am’ were mutating into ‘I conquer, therefore, I am’ and its production of ‘colonizer and colonized’ articulation of subjectivity and being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013a). From these imperial and colonial articulations of African humanity, there was a permanent questioning of the humanity of black people and this attitude and practice culminated in processes of ‘objectification’/‘thingification’/‘commodification’ of Africans as slaves (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013b).

Therefore, the response to the question of why decoloniality in the 21st century, the answer is simply that coloniality is still operative and active and needs to be decolonized. The post-1945 juridical decolonization did not succeed to decolonize the modern world order that was formed since 1492. This is why Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni argued that:

What Africans must be vigilant against is the trap of ending up normalizing and universalizing coloniality as a natural state of the world. It must be unmasked, resisted and destroyed because it produced a world order that can only be sustained through a combination of violence, deceit, hypocrisy and lies (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013b: 10).

It is a question that Ramon Grosfoguel gave a more comprehensive response:

One of the most powerful myths of the twentieth century was the notion that the elimination of colonial administrations amounted to the decolonization of the world. This led to the myth of a “postcolonial” world. The heterogeneous and multiple global structures put in place over a period of 450 years did not evaporate with the juridical-political decolonization of the periphery over the past 50 years. We continue to live under the same “colonial power matrix.” With juridical-political decolonization we moved from a period of ‘global colonialism’ to the current period of “global coloniality.” Although “colonial administrations” have been almost entirely eradicated and the majority of the periphery is politically organized into independent states, non-European people are still living under crude European/Euro-American exploitation and domination. The old colonial hierarchies of European versus non-Europeans remain in place and are entangled with the “international division of labour” and accumulation of capital at a world-scale (Grosfoguel 2007: 219).

The celebration of ‘juridical-political’ decolonization obscures the continuities between the colonial past and coloniality – it leads to illusions of possibilities of enjoyment of ‘independence’ and ‘freedom’, ‘national sovereignty’ and ‘national identity’, as well as ‘national development’ and ‘progress’. Decoloniality pushes for transcendence over narrow conceptions of being decolonized and

consistently gestures towards liberation from coloniality as a complex matrix of knowledge, power, and being. Decoloniality consistently reminds decolonial thinkers of ‘the unfinished and incomplete twentieth century dream of decolonization’ (Grosfoguel 2007: 221). Decoloniality announces the ‘the decolonial turn’ as a long existing ‘turn’ standing in opposition to the ‘colonizing turn’ underpinning Western thought (Maldonado-Torres 2011: 1).

Decoloniality announces the broad ‘decolonial turn’ that involves the ‘task of the very decolonization of knowledge, power and being, including institutions such as the university’ (Maldonado-Torres 2011: 1). Maldonado-Torres elaborated on the essence of ‘decolonial turn’:

The decolonial turn (different from the linguistic or the pragmatic turns) refers to the decisive recognition and propagation of decolonization as an ethical, political, and epistemic project in the twentieth century. The project reflects changes in historical consciousness, agency, and knowledge, and it also involves a method or series of methods that facilitate the task of decolonization at the material and epistemic levels (Maldonado-Torres 2006: 114).

For Maldonado, ‘By decoloniality it is meant here the dismantling of relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geo-political hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world’ (Maldonado-Torres 2006: 117). Like all critical social theories of society, the decolonial epistemic perspective aims to critique and possibly overcome the epistemological injustices put in place by imperial global designs, and questions and challenges the longstanding claims of Euro-American epistemology to be universal, neutral, objective, disembodied, as well as being the only mode of knowing.

It is ‘an-other thought’ that seeks to inaugurate ‘an-other logic,’ ‘an-other language,’ and ‘an-other thinking’ that has the potential to liberate ex-colonised people’s minds from Euro-American hegemony (Mignolo 2005: 56). Decoloniality helps in unveiling epistemic silences, conspiracies, and epistemic violence hidden within Euro-American epistemology and affirms the epistemic rights of the African people that enable them to transcend global imperial designs.

Decoloniality is re-emerging during the current age of ‘epistemic break’. The term ‘epistemic break’ is drawn from the French theorist Michel Foucault. It refers to a ‘historical rupture which occurs when one epistemic system breaks down and another begins to take its place’ (Mills 1997: 145). It is a very relevant concept that captures the epistemic crisis haunting the modern world order today and encapsulates the enormity of the crisis of Euro-American epistemologies unleashed on the world by modernity. This epistemic rupture is well captured by Immanuel Wallerstein who argued that:

It is quite normal for scholars and scientists to rethink issues. When important new evidence undermines old theories and predictions do not hold, we are pressed to rethink our premises. In that sense, much of nineteenth-century social science, in the form of specific hypotheses, is constantly being rethought. But, in addition to rethinking, which is “normal,” I believe we need to “unthink” nineteenth-century social science, because many of its presumptions—which, in my view, are misleading and constrictive – still have far too strong a hold on our mentalities. These presumptions, once considered liberating of the spirit, serve today as the central intellectual barrier to useful analysis of the social world (Wallerstein 1991: 1).

The key point is that Euro-American epistemologies predicated on fundamentalist rationalism are in a deep crisis. In his recent book titled *The end of conceit: western rationality after postcolonialism*, Patrick Chabal admitted that whenever Europeans try to make sense of the current problems facing Europe it becomes clear that ‘the instruments we use are no longer fit for the job. The instruments – that is, the social sciences we employ to explain what is happening domestically and overseas – are both historically and conceptually out of date’ (Chabal 2012: viii). The whole world is at an epistemological crossroads characterised by the end of Euro-American conceit that created some form of epistemological certainty. As argued by Chabal (2012: 3), ‘Western societies are no longer sure of how to see themselves.’ This uncertainty opens the way for projection of decoloniality as the first humanistic-oriented philosophy of liberation gesturing towards another world that is pluriversal, another logic that is freed from racism and the birth of a new humanism.

This volume of *Africanus* is inspired by this new utopic-decolonial momentum gesturing towards deeper structural decolonization and pluriversalism freed from racial hierarchization of human beings. The first article is by the language specialist Finex Ndhlovu and is focused on the important question of African regional integration and pan-African unity. He deploys decoloniality to argue the cross-border languages that have been promoted as vehicles for African economic and political integration are actually carrying dominant ideologies of Westphalian statism and the Berlin consensus that are not easily amenable to regional integration. He challenges the conventional view of the African Academy of Languages (Acalan) of projecting vehicular cross-border languages as a means by which such problems as disunity could be resolved.

Ndhlovu argues that ‘One of the biggest challenges that come with these developments is that of cultivating intercultural communication, cross-linguistic understanding and social cohesion among the hitherto linguistically and culturally multiverse peoples of the African continent.’ He goes further to note that vehicular cross-border languages (those languages that are common to two or more states and domains straddling various usages) suffer from the same limitations as those currently besetting national languages because they are ‘conceived as isomorphic, monolithic and countable entities that do not accommodate other language forms’ and their ‘cross-border status is defined in terms of existing nation-state boundaries that they purport to transcend’. Ndhlovu’s intervention begins to reveal coloniality hidden in some of the celebrated mechanism chosen as levers for achieving regional integration and pan-African unity. This critical thinking is very important as it enable Africans to avoid another false start that is not informed by genuine decoloniality.

What epistemologies and knowledges underpin mainstream development discourse? This question is directly addressed by Seth Opong from Ghana who argues for indigenizing knowledges as the first step towards attainment of endogenous development. He defines endogenous knowledge ‘as knowledge about the people, by the people and for the people’. This definition is important as it distinguishes those knowledges imposed on Africa from outside those knowledges generated by Africans. Opong’s contribution proposes that ‘the African scholar should adopt a problem-oriented approach in conducting research as opposed to the current method-oriented approach that prevent the African from examining pertinent African problems’. Opong correctly notes that ‘contextually relevant knowledge is the basis for national development’. His article is therefore a most relevant intervention on the level of epistemology, pedagogy and methodology as they impinge on the question of development in Africa.

Morgan Ndlovu's article on the pertinent theme of production and consumption of cultural villages in South Africa addresses the question of coloniality that is hidden within the tourism industry. He begins with questioning whether those who fought against colonialism really understood the complexity of the structure of power they were fighting against and the character of the modern world system that enabled colonialism. This becomes a pertinent question when one considers that today decolonization exists as myth and an illusion. The reality is that of coloniality on a global scale. His core argument is the concept of cultural villages in South Africa cannot be understood outside the broader global experiences of 'museumification' of identity and 'culturalization' of politics'. Morgan Ndlovu's article takes us to the tourist industry as a component of development in Africa and consistently reveals how staging culture is shot through by coloniality, which makes it impossible for Africans to reap any tangible developmental dividends. This is why he concludes that 'The manner in which the establishment of cultural village is produced and consumed in South Africa microcosmically represents the general picture of how cultural identity and the political economy are hierarchical ordered in the non-existent post-apartheid dispensation.'

Sarah Chiumbu's contribution targets the media as another domain of coloniality that needs decolonization. When decolonial thinkers use the term decolonization they do not confine it to decolonial issues of juridical-political independence. They extend it to issues of power, knowledge and being. This is why Chiumbu's specific focus is no media reform in southern Africa that continues to generate animated debates between agents of neo-liberalism and those of African liberation is very important. Coloniality of power is causing a lot of confusion in the debates on media reform and democracy, with the neo-liberal paradigm continuing to work towards obscuring the workings of power and disguising its ideological underpinnings. Chiumbu correctly notes that 'This masking does not leave room to problematize global structures directing knowledge production and media policy reforms.'

'Part One' of the volume of *Africanus* ends with Ama Biney who articulates the importance of the decolonial turn in critiquing development-oriented knowledge cascading from Euro-American perspective while at the same time motivating for Africa-centred paradigms of development. According to Biney, the decolonial turn is very relevant towards expanding frontiers of knowledge in the domains of political determination and economic development, environmental justice, gender and breaking the psychological chains of mental enslavement of Africans. Biney argues for pan-Africanism as the horizon of African development.

'Part Two' of this volume is on broader issues of modernity, coloniality, African subjectivity, Afrocentricity and how these impinged on knowledge production and development. Nontyatyambo P Dastile's article focuses on the contribution of Africa-centred paradigms to the debates on development with a focus on the expansive work of Molefe Kete Asante's Afrocentric approach, Archie Mafeje's Africanity and Dani Nabudere's Afrikology. Dastile charges that 'in search for Africa's solutions to Africa-centred problems, an Africa-centred paradigm provides a starting point towards knowledge generation'. This is so because Africa-centred paradigms privilege the quality of centredness, that is, Africa as a legitimate locus of enunciation of knowledge and development and contribute towards decolonization of mainstream existing Euro-American epistemologies. The next contribution is by William Mporu whose entry point is fictive imagination as a decolonial intervention that reveals coloniality of knowledge. Literary texts are effectively used to reveal coloniality as the cardinal sin bedeviling the postcolonial African drive towards development. Just like Finex Ndhlovu's article in

‘Part One’ of this volume, Mpfu delves deeper into issues of language using the contrasting arguments of Ngugi wa Thiong’o who motivated for abandonment of using foreign languages and Chinua Achebe who strongly believed that foreign languages such as English and French could be effectively used to express African experiences, capturing African sensibilities, and making a case for endogenous development trajectory.

The question of coloniality is further interrogated by Sebeka Plaatjie’s contribution, which calls for transcendence of Western-centric approaches and Eurocentric conceptions of development. Just like Dastile, Plaatjie posits that ‘there is need for decolonization and Africanization of development discourse to reflect the core needs of the African people particularly the poor’. He further argues that ‘while development promises life, it destroys particularly the lives of the racialised peoples of the world’. Taken together, the articles in this volume challenge Euro-American thought and call for the radical shifting of geography and biography of knowledge if endogenous development has to be attained in Africa. Endogenous development should emerge from the perspective of colonial difference and decoloniality involving a deliberate process of enabling African people to gain their lost ontological density through jettisoning epistemologies of alterity. The singular message that one gathers from these articles is that the existing asymmetrically ordered world system has to be decolonized and coloniality must be expunged from the world if Africa is to be allowed space to chart its autonomous and endogenous development path. Therefore, development emerges as nothing other than the act of decolonizing the present racialised global power structure in place since 1492. This global power structure is understood as coloniality – a form of the big concrete boulder pressing Africans to the ground whenever they try to rise up from confinement to the periphery and subalternity.

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