Chapter 8: Conclusion

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This manuscript serves as reflections on the journey of decolonising thought and practise within the African context . This manuscript derives its basis from the Journal of Decolonising Disciplines (JDD), which provided a vital platform for interrogating entrenched colonial structures in academia, fostering critical dialogue and amplifying diverse voices committed to decolonial practices. Since its inception, the JDD has foregrounded thoughtful and provocative scholarship, adding to the rich nuance and deep challenge of the dominant, traditional, and hegemonic discourses around how we engage with scholarship, and practice. The work of the JDD came at a timely and necessary point within decolonial discourse, with the JDD serving as a pathway to building and sharing knowledge within a 'changing social context' (Reddy 2019: v). The JDD played a crucial role in problematising, critiquing, challenging teaching, research and education. Most importantly, it encouraged diverse scholarship, providing the 'epistemological case' for decolonisation and encouraging readers to reorganise, rethink and historicise decoloniality, even past our 'disciplinary boundaries' (Reddy 2019: v). This collection of chapters is an homage and departure from these intellectual and inaugural roots as a part of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant — 'Unsettling Paradigms: The Decolonial Turn in the Humanities Curriculum at Universities in South Africa' (2017).

To move forward, we must look back

This edited book is an illustration of the practical process of decolonisation. Decolonisation involves a process of reflection and a reckoning of our realities and research. The chapters explore our histories and our consciousness. In particular, they demonstrate tow coloniality, patriarchy and other oppressive systems have diminished and shaped what it means

to be African. These structures have forced us to forsake our identities, our memories, and have contributed to fractures in our development and self of self.

While this history is a source of discomfort, this edited book also illustrates opportunities for reconciliation, restoration and reclamation. The chapters encourage us as readers to think critically about our traumatic history, and how coloniality and oppressive systems have boxed us into disconnected silos. Rather than wallow in this knowledge, the chapters advocate for us to unburden ourselves from these traumatic shackles and legacies. We move forward by embracing ideals like reintegration, rediscovery and recovery. We find our meaning and purpose through our dreams, our commitment and our collective action. The process of decoloniality is not just intellectual, it is a practise that must be lived through. These chapters are a call to action: a call to embracing our African values, principles, philosophies and metaphysics for our survival, communities and dignity. In this way we affirm and acknowledge our humanity.

This edited book, explores overarching discussion points from previous JDD issues, including an exploration into practical interventions regarding medicine and the sustained critique on higher education. This issue also presents the final departure from the earlier issues. It provides a deep reflection on decoloniality and decolonisation with a multi-disciplinary approach to humanness, humanity and humanism and engages in the themes of education, leadership, healthcare, heritage and ancestry. Most importantly, this issue re-engages in decoloniality as a process and providing a distinction between decolonisation versus decoloniality.

In *Mobile App and Data Specifications for Afro-Colombian Ancestral Medicine Units in Bogota: Technology Affordance and Data Sovereignty Limitations*, Cáceres *et al*. look to an international healthcare initiative in Bogota, Colombia that aims to integrate ancestral medicine practices into a deeply colonial digital space. This unique case study highlights the need for interdisciplinary approaches to the practicalities of decolonisation. Using a mobile app, the authors explore the practical application of the decolonisation of digital health and data sovereignty. This again shows the expansive quality of decolonial discourse, providing insight into sidelined voices from Afro-Colombian populations. While there is an increased

efficiency through the digitalisation of ancestral medicine, there also is a trade-off, that is, added bureaucracy in data collection and the loss of agency of the traditional medical practitioner.

The chapter, *Decolonial African Posthumanism: Beyond the Eurocentric Human*, looks beyond Western humanism and looks toward decolonial posthumanism as an alternative and more inclusive approach to knowledge production. Through a comparative discussion between African metaphysics and Western metaphysics, El Fahli poses insights into the benefits of an African metaphysical framework. This chapter makes a compelling case for the benefits of the integration of African philosophy and metaphysics to transcend posthumanist discourse. The chapter specifically challenges the idea of being 'fully human', which has been explored from a Western, Greek, Renaissance idea of the 'human condition' and tradition. This universalised understanding inherently alienates other perspectives of humanity, humanness and the human condition. Even the notion of posthumanism is, in and of itself, exclusionary to the 'existence of alternative forms of humanism'. It overlooks 'rich African thought' and 'indigenous cultures and repositories of knowledge' that provide us with a diverse and deep understanding of what it means to be human. The author calls on the reader to expand the idea of humanism to include critical and decolonial posthumanism. Decolonial posthumanism expands one's understanding of the human condition and experience from a 'non-European contexts'.

In *Listening Affects: Evocations on sound/silence as a mode of decolonial thinking/being/doing/theorizing*, Singh incorporates the use of sounds and silences to explore gendered and racial tensions within institutions of higher learning. In this chapter, the author skilfully engages the auditory sense while reflecting on their position within a deeply embedded colonial academic institution. This creative approach proposes the method of Deep Listening as a collective way to foster conversations (or sounds) to allow space for the process of decolonisation. This chapter takes place on two levels: a critical decolonial self-reflection by the author and an invitation for the reader to self-reflect and engage with this research. The author is an embedded researcher, providing both objective and subjective contributions to the decolonial discourse. The author demonstrates the process of decolonisation espoused in Prof Vasu Reddy's preface in the

inaugural issue—the idea of 'decoloniality in motion'. This is a departure from traditional discussions on decoloniality, one which reflects and works toward the 'product of decoloniality', that is, the end result. In this piece, the author takes the audience through their process and imaginings of decoloniality within 'academy and academia'. This chapter is also contemplative, providing the reader with a glimpse into the 'process of questioning, thinking/being/doing/theorising' within higher education and how that process is 'in motion' and not static.

In *Historical Justice: An Interplay between Colonialism and Capitalism*, Rasras addresses the concept of "historical injustice" by looking into the interplay between capitalism and colonialism, through examples from Mali. The chapter investigates the 'colonial obstructions' that make it difficult for colonised people to fully enjoy freedom and liberation. The legacy of the colonial project has meant that colonised people have had a harder time achieving full freedom and independence and have had very little room to develop and 'self-build' in the post-colonial dispensation. The authors also explore the idea of self-consciousness and how even that has been tainted by the legacy of colonial rule. The chapter highlights the pervasive quality of colonial culture, 'plans, techniques and regulations'.

In *Mohlomi's indigenous knowledge system as a tool to decolonise the Basotho: The Botho perspective*, Seema specifically focuses on the power and influence of indigenous knowledge systems and how they can be used for the advancement of Africans broadly, and the Basotho specifically. The knowledge systems put forward by the author are the use of medicine and the succession of power in chieftaincies. This chapter shares similarities to the other chapters presented in this book, specifically in their focus on traditional knowledge systems, medicine and harnessing ancestry in the dissemination of healthcare. It also shares some similarities with the chapter on the *Decolonial African Posthumanism: Beyond the Eurocentric Human*, as it explores the idea of humanity/humanness from a Sesotho understanding.

In *Classics and Decolonising the Curriculum: A Case Study Using the Teaching of Sexuality*, Haskins explores how the Classics – Greek and Roman literature - can be used as multicultural tools to decolonises literature and develop scholarship. In this chapter, Haskins argues that the Classics are useful because of their ability to allow African to critique, problematise and

communicate with the West and the world at large. The Classics offer South African curricula, and by extension African curricula, a perpetual way to gain an insight into culture/s, 'what is African?' and how to think and understand our modern circumstances. Haskins argues that by using the Classics, we can gain an understanding of the thought patterns and speech of the West, which can in turn be used to interact with them and be heard by them. Haskins then explores their own teaching practice and how they have use the Classics to teach and decolonise sexualities in their undergraduate course. Traditionally, teaching of sexualities in higher education was seen in a negative light i.e. as a means to corrupt and pervert young minds. However, Haskins use of sexualities in inquiry based learning, shows how the Classics can be used to showcase and understand the interrelatedness and systems between ancient social hierarchy and ancient sexual hierarchy. This allows for undergraduate students to gain an understanding of sexuality from contexts that are different from what they know. As a part of Haskins interventions in the curricula, they also include discourse on sexualities within Africa, focusing on its acceptance and subversions - by texts like the Bible. These interventions allow for students think critically about the influence and drive of the West on African understandings of sexuality.

In *Decoloniality and Decolonisation Leadership Inclusion: Insights from Higher Education Experiences*, Nyoni and Toolo further speak to the dynamics between decolonisation and leadership. The authors highlight the need to address the gaps that exist within scholarship on leadership models. Through a critical review of literature, the authors highlight the need for decolonial leadership within higher education through epistemic decoloniality and decolonisation strategies. The authors posit that whiteness remains as a dominant power dynamic which remains favourable among higher education leadership. This chapter explores 'animosity and mistrust' within higher educational spaces and interrogates the history and legacy of academic institutions, how they are underlined by white dominance and how this is filtered into 'leadership styles, decision making processes, and the overall institutional culture'. The primacy of these Eurocentric institutional frameworks continue to alienate and 'marginalise non-Western knowledge systems and experiences' and students, just as

Sooliman (2020) remarked in his critique on the commodification of the university space. The chapter calls for substantive inclusion in 'leadership and decision-making' processes, and guided by the SJLF, which would reflect true systemic change and 'different epistemologies and leadership practices rooted in cultural diversity'.

Conclusion

The JDD played a key role in advancing the decolonial agenda. It provided a space, refuge and platform for 'innovative and progressive ideas' and provided the proof of the 'process and project' of decoloniality within the Global South (Reddy 2019: v).

As Sooliman mentioned in the second volume of the JDD, decoloniality is a fraught journey and continuous process (2020: 6). This discourse and journey are nuanced and intricate, filled with 'hidden tensions' and 'exciting possibilities' (Sooliman 2020: 6). The proliferation of literature, including the ones housed under the JDD, demonstrate these intricacies and complexities. From the papers we have published so far, as well as this edited book, the process of decoloniality has already begun and the question has moved beyond 'what needs to be decolonised first' (Sooliman 2020: 6). The value and importance of the conversations around decoloniality and decolonisation should continue to revolve around adding to the established scholarship. The discourse should also move beyond mere definitions and branch out even further beyond law, medicine, leadership, education and philosophy. This would showcase the plurality of the discipline and the firm commitment to the continued deepening of the conversations around decoloniality. We should continue the challenge and critique of the dominant discourse, but also be intentional in our reflection and reflexivity. After all, this provides us with a record and insight into human potential and the human condition (Sooliman 2020: 7). As one of the authors in this final issue pointed out, we should be able to sit in the tension, the uncomfortability, the knots and insolvability of the decolonial discourse. As this book highlights, the JDD's impact extends beyond the theoretical, urging scholars, practitioners and institutions to reflect on the practical and ethical imperatives of decolonising disciplines. From

rethinking methodologies and epistemologies to engaging with the lived experiences of those historically excluded from knowledge production, this issue's contributions reveal the complexity and urgency of this work. This concluding volume, therefore, not only underscores the achievements of the JDD, it also invites a continued exploration and innovation in the ongoing project of decolonisation.

References

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