

**IN PURSUIT OF A  
DECOLONIZED TEACHER:  
AGENCY AND BOLDNESS  
IN FOSTERING CHANGE**

**BY**

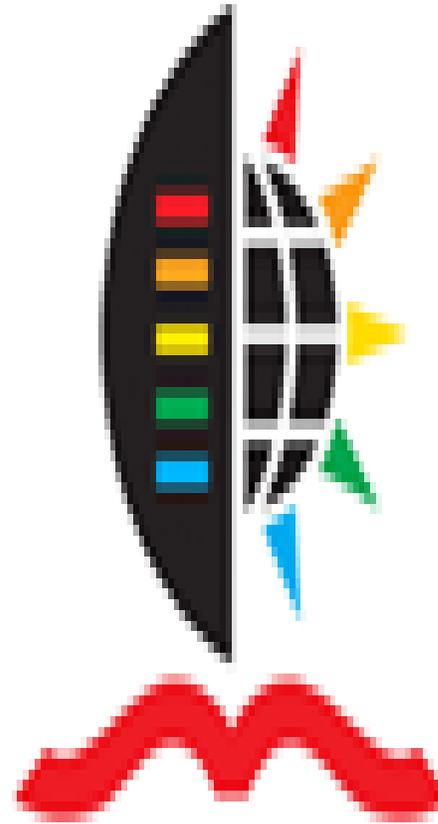
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# INTRODUCTION: COLONISATION AND EDUCATION

- **Song:** “Song ‘thina sizwe esimnyama sikhalela umhlaba wethu mabaulethe...” shows that colonisation by using land impacted deeply on all spheres of indigenous people of SA lives.
  - Colonisation program operated around land issues
    - Land used as an agenda of destruction of the colonised.
    - Land is powerful for indigenous people of Africa and it is through it that the colonised were dehumanised.
    - Land is – religion, History, and gives identity = it humanizes without it less human African is one with land. Losing it means loss of sense of being
  - In this sense Education also used as TOOL TO TAKE OVER THE COLONISED HUMANNESS
    - Curriculums constructed to instil western ideals of subjugating the colonised
    - The same ideals are engraved in our curriculums. Hence when colonization occurred = conquering/appropriation/ taking over of land that meant the taking over of peoples wellbeing = identity, land, culture and knowledge.
    - Land was and it is still used as violence to violate others
    - The same colonisation was applied in education to violate the identity of the colonised
    - For education it meant subjugation of indigenous ways of knowing and the upliftment of western epistemology
- \*\*This presentation depicts = it is time to stop crying but acting = agency is needed\*\***

# BACKGROUND OF COLONISATION

- Colonisation means subjugating indigenous knowledge and uplifting western ways of knowing as this has led to the oppression of all areas of indigenous people.
- When Europeans shifted from a God-centred society to secular thinking during the Enlightenment period, they inaugurated the science of “knowability”. God was no longer the only one who could understand the world. The rational human could too.
- This idea is best captured in Rene Descartes’ famous dictum “Cogito Ergo Sum (I Think, Therefore, I am). This marks the emergence of the Cartesian philosophy of being and the Cartesian knowing subject: a human defined by her rationality.
- .
- Currently the decolonial theorists have unmasked the person behind the “I” as not just any human being, but the European “Man. Meaning that the ‘other’ non-European = non-human = akongomtu = hence land dispossession, knowledge appropriation and subjugation and colonialism of all areas of Africans.
- Hence Schools began as a colonial project. That was meant to educate Africans on the British way of life which is their Norms, Values and Standards.
- Modern African schools are built on a European model intended to colonise the mind of students and perpetuate a Eurocentric vision of society.
- Thus schools and curriculums therefore have to form an African legacy in the new South Africa.

# CONCEPTUALIZATION: DECOLONISATION



- It refers to the complete removal of the domination of non-indigenous forces within the curriculum, geographical space and institutions of the colonised.
- It also focuses on decolonising the mind from the colonisers ideas that made the colonised feel inferior
- According to Mamdani, it refers to the sifting through of historical legacy based on contemporary reality and discarding some parts of it and adapting others to a new purpose.
- Meaning that all knowledges have equal status
- Hence, I use the term science in a pluralist context, as described by Ogawa (1995) as a “rational perceiving of reality,” so that both Western and Black peoples sciences can be categorized under this umbrella

# COLONIZATION AS PRESENT AND FUTURE WAR: TEACHERS AS THE WEAPON OF FIGHTING THE WAR



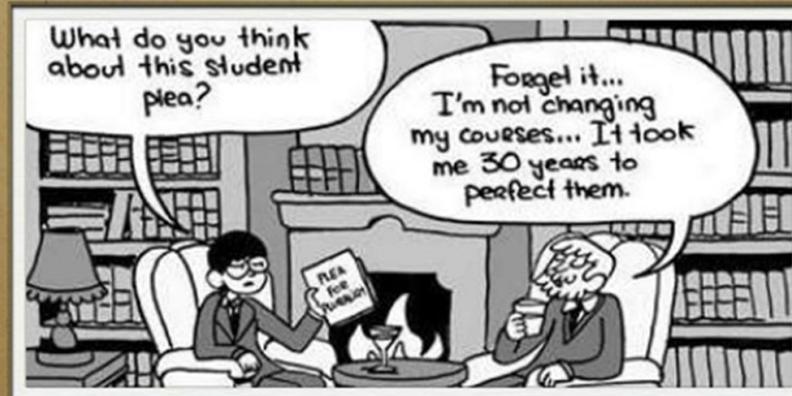
- Collin Gray argues that there is a future war coming which will be about both change and continuity from the past and this war will be based on educating the modern day generation = for me it is current war of decolonisation
- Education weapon to destroy colonisation – teachers key
  - Used to overthrow the apartheid government
  - APARHEID FELL BECAUSE OF TEACHERS = SOWETO UPRISING = key people were TEACHERS because “they taught us (students) we were colonized”
  - Hence I define teachers as TEACH US = knowledge is power
  - Thus decolonisation is pivotal and must be driven by education and by educators through the curriculum

# MY PURSUIT OF BEING A DECOLONIZED TEACHER

- Colonization is a topical issue globally and in SA it became more evident through education = Rhodes must fall UCT. Hence we must be bold for change
- This presentation recounts my ongoing process of becoming decolonized in my thinking and teaching practice in order to make education relevant, meaningful, and respectful for all students, teachers and people I interact with.
- Through close collaboration with both western and African philosophy I have gained insights into both epistemologies on their ways of being and ways of understanding the world.
- I have developed a deep appreciation for those who invite me to question my epistemologies by sharing ways of knowing the world that is different from my own.
- Viewing myself through both knowledges lens has impacted profoundly on how I interact with students and people from both worlds and has brought a crucial question - on the significance of all knowledges of the world. That is moving away from subjugating indigenous knowledge and uplifting western ways of knowing as this has led to colonisation of all areas of indigenous people.
- My journey of decolonisation
- I am a Northern Sotho African , staunch Africanist. , grew up in Ga-Rankuwa and Soweto.
- Did History throughout my education to PhD. My university education background is rooted on indigenous knowledge as I felt it is through knowing my roots that I would be able to engage well with western science
- This brought major enlightenment to all students I taught and still teach – they become conscious of diverse knowledges that they have to be accorded the same status as western science
- I use diverse knowledges = hence my students excel because I draw from their worldviews

# Decolonisation of education and excuses

## Decolonising the curriculum: Some ideas



Presentation by Carina van Rooyen  
on 24 May 2016 at APK UJ

Workshop on Decolonisation of the curriculum, arranged by Ad hoc Senate task  
team on the decolonisation of knowledge

Source: <http://www.gcgj.info/images/2015studentsplea.jpg>

# TEACHING PEDAGOGY AND DECOLONISATION: CHARACTERISTICS OF A DECOLONISED EDUCATOR

- Self-love = being black (appreciation of the existence of the nation black and the other) – embracing the ideals of Steve Biko
- In search of the “I” who I am.
- Speech very important = speech makes one human = umuntu vs umntwana = peoples knowledge processes important.
- So Language as key in decolonization = embrace significance of African languages as having equal status as other languages.

= Look at Afrikaans it developed in South Africa by people who found themselves in one space and had to communicate – Huguenots, Germans and Dutch

= UKZN isiZulu is uplifted as an academic language. All students are forced to do it. Students are allowed to write even their thesis in isiZulu

- Embrace all that is African as rational
- Researcher = reread, rewrite, reorganize what they know and teach
- Engage with = border crossing pedagogy Hence Waghid (2002) says that to meet national and community needs curriculums must embrace all knowledge's and speak to communities they serve = reflective.
- Engaging with official and unofficial knowledge = deal with these competing knowledges (because not in the official arena it is dismissed)= multiperspectivities
- For Mamdani this will be achieved through “building a scholarly community that is equipped to rethink in both intellectual and institutional terms”.
- For teachers it means dealing with all that alienates learners from their culture, religion and ethics = teach for life

# Decolonised Methods of teaching: Going back to basics

- Integrative: Learner and teacher = based on the philosophy of botho/ubuntu
- Botho/ubuntu = focuses humanising/non judgemental/ developmental = umuntu  
akahlwa= cooperative working
- “Im who I am because of others” as Durkeim said kids are not tabula rassa = empty vessels = work together with their teachers in making knowledge
- This requires us to use their world/communities as resources = move from the traditional western classroom. Engage in the African classroom too which is = out there = community focusing oral tradition = practicalities to develop creative, critical analytical skills
- Group work = African (letsweta group work)
- Literature states that group work is not widely used in schools of which it is a decolonised style of teaching
- Group work = instills = human rights values = respect of others, cooperative working skills, participation = these

# Decolonised Teaching Resources

- Classrooms outside = community use
- Indigenous games
- Oral tradition (invite gogos and mkhulus instead the so called learned westernised academics)
- Nature = stones for maths / trees = history / rivers = geography – pollution and population/

# WAY FORWARD: DECOLONISATION AGENDA FOR TEACHERS

- We have to fundamentally rethink and reframe our curriculum and bring South Africa and Africa to the centre of teaching, learning and research.
- Need to reconstruct the African continent from various perspectives - The continents history, the way its cultures and civilisation are studied  
= engage in Giroux Border crossing pedagogy
- Introduction of decolonized curriculum implementation in terms of Quotas = 50%decolonised
- Rewriting textbooks where we involve experts in indigenous knowledge
- Re-evaluating English as language of instruction of teaching and learning e.g UKZN/ Stellenbosch/UFS - Language can be transformed = Afrikaans they did it the Dutch, Huguenots and Germans here in South Africa
- Be bold for change = urgency pivotal = get off our gomma gomma chairs of comfort