The Politics and Feasibility of Free Decolonial Education in South Africa

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Abstract

The concept of free education in South Africa has been used as a buzz word following the student-led protests of 2015-2017. It is worth noting that there are two descriptors attached to the concept of education in this paper. The one is the free aspect of education and the other, the decolonial aspect. The paper uses the decolonial theory to critique coloniality of knowledge and advances the argument that free education is not so much of a challenge, as free education is at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The significance of this paper is that it unmasks the politics of education in the post-modern and capitalist world, particularly in South Africa. The paper uses the qualitative methodology to interrogate literature on the politics and politicization of education from publicly available archives. Secondary sources were used. A historical analysis and interpretive approach are used to interpret data. The paper is a desktop study. The main finding of the paper is that business and the private sector are reluctant to support Government finance decolonial education because it liberates and empowers formerly colonised subjects, a necessary tool for cheap labour. The main recommendation made is that Government must fund an education system that derives from immediate

problems of society to correct and address past injustices and create an equal playing field for learners across political, cultural, religious and social divides.

Keywords: *Bantu Education; Capital; Coloniality; Decolonial; Education; Modernity*

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to expose the politics behind what manifests as problems in the education sector in South Africa today. The paper briefly historicises education in Apartheid South Africa to give context to why there is need for free decolonial education. Decolonial education seeks to decentre European education, culture, knowledge and context from South Africa to bring about meaningful education that is meant to solve current societal problems for South Africa, while preparing learners to remain globally competent.

In answering the question of whether free decolonial education is feasible in South Africa today, the paper juxtaposes its argument by reviewing the education system during the apartheid era and in the democratic era in South Africa. The paper notes the two education systems that were operational during the apartheid era, one designed for White people (Standard Curriculum), and one designed for Black people (*Bantu* Education), intending to subjugate Blacks into servitude to White people. In the so-called historically White Universities and their students' formations (NUSAS *et al*), they were well-funded by private businesses through the government and amply resourced and therefore, aided, making free quality education feasible for White students (McKeever, 2017: 118; Chisolm, 2012: 84). On the other hand, in Black institutions, students were expected to pay tuition fees. However, when compared to their White counterparts, they were rarely afforded scholarships and bursaries (Thobejane, 2013: 2). The conditions were stringent for Black students to get admitted to scholarships and bursaries when compared to White students. Bunting (2006: 48) notes that:

> By 1994, the landscape of 36 higher education institutions included ten historically disadvantaged universities and seven historically disadvantaged technikons designated for the use of black (African, coloured and Indian) South Africans, while ten historically advantaged universities and seven historically advantaged technikons were designated for the exclusive development of white South Africans. Two

distance institutions-be specific- catered for all races (Bunting 2006: 48).

This points to the very systemic and systematic manipulation and control of who got resources that supported their education, and who did not. The very infrastructure built for Black students was of poor quality. It is noteworthy that government and private businesses aided this. A question therefore arises: why was education for White students subsidised and made available to White students by their government and business, and the same is not symmetrically afforded to Black students today now that Government is comprised of largely Black people? The main contention of the paper is that money or resources are not the real problem; instead, it is free decolonial education that faces resistance, not so much from Government, but business and the private sector.

2. Literature Review: Situating the Problem in the Education System in South Africa

The under-performance of Black South African students, particularly at institutions of higher learning, points to a deeper problem than meets the eye (Msila, 2011: 5; Bayat, Wynand & Ravinder, 2017: 41). The high numbers of unemployed college/university graduates in South Africa alone, and the high unemployment rates in the general Sub-Saharan Africa are alarming. South Africa's unemployment rate in 2017 was pegged at 27.7 %, up by 1.2%, from the 2016 statistic that pegged it at 26.5%. Youth Unemployment Rate in South Africa increased to 54.3 % in the first quarter of 2017 from 50.9 % in the fourth quarter of 2016 (Trading Economics, 2021). This number has quantum leaped due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. As of June 2022, statistics indicated that the unemployment rate was pegged at 34.5% (South African Government News Agency, 2022). Furthermore, the Youth unemployment rate was pegged at 63.9% (Trading Economics, 2022). This situation is largely because of the apartheid systematic control of a knowledge system that was taught to Black students then.

The apartheid policy was a brainchild of Dr Hendrick Verwoerd, who was an academic and Psychologist attached to Stellenbosch University. Dr Verwoerd argued that apartheid was a policy, like any other national policy, which promoted "good neighbourliness" and separate development (Dubow, 2014; Keyan, 1990; Thumbran, 2022:

836). So, in the Apartheid protagonists' view, they pursued development for everyone, although the development was differentiated according to race and social or cultural groups. Separate development meant that people would live in separate neighbourhoods that were distinguished by their races. Whites would live separately from Indians; Coloureds would live separately from Blacks. So, the apartheid policy distinguished development according to race. Further to that, apartheid distinguished development according to tribes in Black communities, hence we still have places like Soshanguve – which is an acronym for Sotho, Shangaan (a dialect within the Tsonga community), Nguni and Venda tribes among the indigenous natives of South Africa (Mashabela, 1988: 138). So, the distinction in places of residence cascaded to other aspects of life. Social life was separate (Seidman, 1999). Healthcare was separate (Andersson & Marks, 1988). Education was separate too (Chisholm, 2004). The common thread that enveloped the apartheid system is that it was an unequal, brutal, inhumane and racist society. Thus, with separate development, each sub-group of the Union of South Africa, at the time, had to ensure that it develops its healthcare systems, social services systems, financial systems and more importantly its educational systems, including the kind of education it would offer its people.

It is understood that the educational systems that were designed especially for Black communities were deliberately, systemically, and systematically meant to subjugate them into accepting the apartheid system as a natural phenomenon that needed not be questioned, otherwise doing so, would be rebelling against it. This worked very well for the apartheid protagonists. Thus, the current educational systems in South Africa, have as their antecedents, the enduring legacy of inequality, poor quality of education, and systemic and systematic asymmetry in what they aim to achieve in the students' lives (Branson, Garlick, Lam & Leibbrandt, 2012; Rogan & Reynolds, 2016).

Therefore, it is necessary to ask: Is the current education system and curricula useful for South Africa's needs, given the high unemployment rates of young people, but particularly skilled and educated people? The unemployment rates suggest that the problem may not even be unemployment but rather unemployability because of a substandard education system designed to disempower the recipients. This calls for the exploration of the genesis of the high unemployment rates that South Africa is confronted with, as well as an explanation of how this came about.

The *Bantu Education* Act is also known as the *Bantu* Lion Bill; these two are used interchangeably in this paper. On introducing the Bantu Lion Bill, Dr Verwoerd, quipped that:

> Above all, good race relations cannot exist when education is given under the control of people who create wrong expectations on the part of the Native, if such people believe in a policy of equality … It is therefore necessary that Native education should be controlled in such a way that it should be in accord with the policy of the State (Hansard, 1953: 10, Quoted in, Tabata, 1979: 15).

The purported wrong expectations of the native included, but were not limited to, thinking, a quest and desire for freedom, equality, dignity, fairness, voting rights and economic empowerment and all the other things that were denied to Black people during apartheid. Tabata (1979: 19) notes that prior to the introduction of the *Bantu* Lion Bill, "it had been the policy of every successive Government … to see to it that as few non-Whites as possible received education"; hence the argument that a Euro-North American-centric education - what is camouflaged as the Standard Curricula such as, Cambridge and Harvard, *inter alia* - was not designed with the Black person or non-White person as a recipient in mind. Not that, that matters, because it could be argued that Black people or non-Whites should design an education system that would suit their own needs. A position that is contingent on the idea that Africans have agency and indeed should provide solutions to their own problems.

However, it is the control element in the standard curriculum that was targeted at the Black person that was, and still is, problematic. The control which was supposedly in accordance with the apartheid state policy was meant to ensure that Black people had no access to emancipatory knowledge that could change their fortunes. The subservient education that was meant for them was to ensure that they were dependant on the colonial, imperial and divisive apartheid system.

In a sanctimonious environment such as the apartheid condition, it was clear that Black schools, let alone institutions of higher learning, were not meant to be centres of education; but rather, they were centres of domination and indoctrination for the docile acceptance of a racial hierarchy that favoured Whites and placed Blacks at the bottom of that ladder. In that sense, Black schools were not meant to be education centres of excellence, but of indoctrination for the pliant acceptance of this position.

Elsewhere, Dr Verwoerd argued that the *Bantu* Education was meant to "serve as an instrument for creating and ensuring the continuance of a vote-less, right-less and ignorant community whose main purpose in life, apart from reproducing their kind (for there is not yet a specific law against that aspect of their life) is to minister to the Whites" (Tabata, 1979: 16). What Verwoerd's position reveals is the real intention behind the creation of the *Bantu* Lion Bill, and that it was an instrument to control the minds of Blacks and non-Whites by convincing them and indoctrinating them into believing Whiteness was superior and that, without Whites, Blacks and non-Whites would amount to nothing and would perish. Sadly, this is something that is still believed by some sections of the Black society in South Africa and still very palpable in the tensions that arise at the mention of inter-race relations and dialogues. This could also explain why even after 30 years of a democratic government in South Africa, the education system especially at primary and secondary level still reproduces the patterns inaugurated by Apartheid.

Moreover, as argued by the Departmental Committee on Native Education (1935) Report, in Tabata (1979: 12), "the education of the White child prepares him (*sic*) for life in a dominant society and the education of the Black child for a subordinate society … The limits (of Native Education form part of the social and economic structure of the country". What was disguised as the Standard Curriculum of Education prepared the White child for "life in a dominant society" and the *Bantu* Lion Bill or Education Act, was to prepare the Black child for a life in a "subordinate society" (Tabata, 1979: 12). This goes to prove that inequality and the resultant asymmetrical socio-economic structure and relations that besiege South African society today, have their antecedents in the colonial condition of apartheid. Furthermore, the inequality that manifests today is indeed a social construct. This means that, if inequality was created by governing structures and policies of 'apartheid', it is the government of the day that will have to undo that pervasive structure and the unjust system of the past.

2.1 The Nature of Decolonial Education

The challenge that arises is the nature of the decolonial education to the current status quo. The decolonial aspect seems problematic in this equation than the aspect of free. The paper argues that, if free refers to making money and resources available to enable students to access

quality education, then it is feasible; but, if free decolonial education is accessible to particularly Black South African students, then it becomes a threat to the very capital that makes the education free in the first place. Decolonial education is meant to liberate the recipient, in this case native Africans, from falsehoods that are peddled as objective and scientific by a Euro-North American-centric scientism. What scientism hides is the fact that all knowledges are relative to their ecologies. Therefore, it is a misnomer to hold that knowledge is objective and universal. This is what a Euro-North American-centric tradition of knowledge has peddled universally. Of course, it was universalised through the violence of colonialism - the barrel of the gun.

To offer decolonial education to the very people that sustain the capitalist market with unwaged and low-waged labour and to ask the beneficiaries of that exploitative system to fund the project of emancipating the people their system seeks to keep in perpetual slavery by other means, is to ask for the near impossible. Be that as it may, the system as it stands is unsustainable and must confront the reality that Black persons are rightfully demanding their right to relevant education and asserting their existence in a society that seeks to obliterate them and banish them to the silences via social death. Young Black persons in South Africa specifically, but Africans generally, through the #OpenUpStellenbosch (Schuhmann, 2017: 296), #FeesMustFall (Luescher, Loader & Mugume, 2017: 231) and the #RhodesMustFall (Nyamnjoh, 2016: 59) movements, among other 'fallist' movements, continue to defy the Aristotelian logic that was appropriated by Eurocentrism to exclude Black persons from the ambit of rationality.

The #FeesMustFall and its sister movements had at the core of their protests a quest and desire to be liberated from global coloniality through education. For instance, Luescher *et.al* (2017: 231) highlight that the #FeesMustFall and other fallist "movement(s) [served to] challenge apartheid legacies and white colonial culture, contending that campuses are still dominated by racist symbolic and economic orders"; as such, an education that result under these conditions only festers and safeguards the established economic, and otherwise, orders. Similarly, Chaudhuri (2016: 3) highlights that the #RhodesMustFall movement was meant "to bring out into the open institutional racism in university life in South Africa and Britain, and to decolonise education – speak to concerns that many have had for a while", among other things. Chaudhuri intones of deep seated coloniality of knowledge that compels and requires to be

decolonised; this, further consolidates the need for a decolonial education (Chaudhuri 2016: 3).

A decolonised education system must be produced outside the scope of what produced the subservient curriculum that allowed for the deferential acceptance of the standard curriculum, so called. Therefore, a decolonial education is an education that should have as its starting point, inquiry from the peripheries of the so-called standard curriculum – which is Eurocentric. Not that a Eurocentric education is invalid, but rather that we need to recognise that a Eurocentric education is one among many educations. A Eurocentric education is not the canon or standard with which every other education or knowledge should be assessed or judged.

A decolonial education or a decolonised curriculum, is set to ensure that other forms of knowledge are not dismissed because they lack the approval of the Eurocentric curriculum. In any case, the #FeesMustFall and its sister movements do not need approval from Europe; in fact, this is what they were revolting against. The protests were a bold statement to the South African government to take charge of reconfiguring the education system to start serving South Africa and Africa at large. Africa must develop its own knowledges to respond to its diverse realities as presented in its various ecologies of knowledge.

A decolonial education curriculum must, primarily, assess the needs of society. For education to be relevant, it must speak to issues that solve societal problems (Ahmed, 2020: 521). Therefore, it must address and resolve the ongoing problems in society. The current education curriculum, particularly the curriculum that is commonly accessible to most Black people, does not address issues of land, at least at the primary and secondary school level. Apartheid dispossessed Black people of their land (Evans, 2012: 117). This is a thorny issue that must be resolved for land is both of material and non-material value to Africans. Land is wealth, so if the wealth of Black people was stolen due to dispossession during the Apartheid era, it is incumbent on the Black government to find solutions to resolve this injustice through an education system that speaks truth and reality so that solutions are devised.

Furthermore, and closely tied to land is the issue of mining. Meaningful economic activity is intertwined with the land through mining (Evans, 2012: 117; Manson & Mbenga, 2014: 42). It is the majority Black people who work the land and who mine the land in search of minerals. Black labour is instrumental to mining in South

Africa (Tabata, 1979: 4). However, the current education system downplays this fact and does not teach how to get into the mining field, at least at primary and secondary school level. Those that are lucky, may start to interact with such knowledge at the tertiary schooling level. Yet European history, the liberal arts and the so-called Caucasian-dominated sciences are taught from the basic levels in the current curriculum. Not that, it is bad in and of itself, however, it does not serve people who are in the Global South, South Africa to be precise.

Moreover, the land provides for the sustenance of lives through tilling it and cultivating it. Farming is another major pillar in the economy of South Africa (Manson & Mbenga, 2014: 42; Davenport, [n.d.]). Agriculture and animal husbandry are not subjects that are prioritized in the current education system, yet these could provide immediate jobs when people have the skillset and knowledge of farming. This also has potential for entrepreneurial enterprise. With such skill sets, people would not need to be looking for jobs because they can create jobs and work. This is the kind of knowledge that South Africa needs. This is also the kind of knowledge that Capital seeks to control so that Black people do not have it. This is where the Government should come in to regulate the transition from a standard curriculum to a decolonial curriculum that will teach these issues to delink from the control of the capital.

3. Theoretical Framework: Coloniality of Knowledge

Coloniality of knowledge refers to the Euro-North American intellectual thought as the referral point upon which all other epistemologies and knowledges are measured against (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 487; Quijano, 2007: 168). The control of knowledge production and what knowledge should be and what it should not be is what is defined as coloniality of knowledge. At the centre of coloniality of knowledge is controlling who gets what education and for what purpose (Mignolo, 1999: 5).
Knowledge production, and the capacity to think and generate is a preserve of Euro-North American-centric modernity resulting in the creation of "border thinking" (Escobar in, Mignolo, 2001: 179). Thinking therefore becomes a preserve of the West. The thinking is in the Euro-North American civilisation, beyond that geography, there exist no rationality. Such is the thinking of Euro-North American-centric civilisation.

Now, turning on to South Africa, the paper contextualises and historicises this tradition and legacy of European thought on Africa and its implications. Apartheid South Africa's ideology, in so far as education was concerned, was a matter of controlling who gets what education and for what purpose. The Whites, Christians and Afrikaners controlled what Blacks learnt, which in turn fashioned the latter's thought process (McKeever, 2017: 118). So, providing a subservient education system to Blacks during Apartheid was a form of controlling Blacks into submission of what the Whites desired and designed, not only for themselves, but for the role the Blacks were to play in their civilization, so called (Ramose, 2003: 2).

4. Research Methodology

The qualitative research methodology is deployed in this paper. It allows the researcher to critically interrogate literature as publicly available and provides for interpreting this literature according to new developments and realities (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 49). Moreover, the qualitative research methodology is suitable for the nature of this study because it seeks to understand how things became what they are today (Gibbs, 2007: 3). Since it is a literature study that aims at connecting the dots in terms of reconciling what presents today to what transpired before in terms of the education system, the genealogical approach that is undergirded by the qualitative research methodology is thus appealing and suitable. The genealogical approach was used to trace the genesis of the underperformance of learners in the South African educational landscape. The genealogical approach entails a chronological analysis of events that lead to a particular outcome (Lichtenstein, 2024: 731; Lorenzini, 2020: 2175). In other words, the genealogical approach seeks to explain the presenting phenomena by situating it in its historical genesis (Rockhill, 2020: 85; Sauka, 2020: 1). As such, the genealogical approach was used to demonstrate how the challenges of underperformance and learner drop out continue to manifest, thereby providing a nuanced understanding of presenting poor performance in the education sector in South Africa today. Conveniently, secondary sources were consulted. The critical literature method was used to review the sources that are publicly available. These sources were identified using the Google Scholar search engine, Scopus and Web of Science search engines using key words on the subject matter of the education system in South Africa. Some key words and phrases that

were used in the search included: *education in South Africa*, *South African education landscape*, *politics of education in South Africa*, *politicization of education in South Africa*. The analysis was a critical literature review.

5. Discussion and Findings

That free education is feasible is not debatable as governments and the liberal capitalist system, underpinned by a Euro-North American-centric modernity, have the capacity to throw money at problems. Under the apartheid government, subsidised-to-free education was sponsored by apartheid policies of repression of Black students. So, the government manipulated taxpayers' money to fund historically White universities. Admittedly, there is no 'free' money lying around somewhere; however, as it was the duty of the apartheid government to generate money using the tax system, so too the democratic government must make similar provisions for education. Bunting (2006: 46) notes that "under apartheid, higher education in South Africa was skewed in ways designed to entrench the power and privilege of the ruling white minority". This confirms that government has the authority to generate money through taxation to fund priority areas. Thus, the current democratic government of South Africa could easily fund the 'subsidised-to-free' education via taxation. Besides, the current democratic government is mandated by the 1955 Freedom Charter – which is one of the guiding documents that has continued to inform the African National Congress[1] (ANC) election manifestos over the years - that explicitly speaks to the issue of providing free quality education for all qualifying students. The Freedom Charter underscores that "education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children; higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit".

The paper grapples with not just the feasibility of free education, but free decolonial education. The debate on free education that was catapulted into public discourse by the fees must fall movements in South Africa is triggered by the fact that money is not a problem, as capital has a propensity to throw money at problems (Mackenzie, 2017; Horne, 2012; Hanushek, 1981). The throwing of money to problems is

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[1]   The African National Congress (ANC) was the ruling political party in South Africa at the time of writing this piece; It ushered in democratic rule in 1994. Currently, the ANC is in a coalition Government of National Unity.

to silence them. Bursaries, scholarships and student loans attest to this. The problem, therefore, is not capital (money and/or resources), it is free decolonial education.

Political independence from colonialism and apartheid has only been superficial and therefore could be argued that it was flag independence; it has not translated to economic independence, financial independence, cultural independence, social independence, and more importantly, epistemic and ontological independence of native Africans. The current education system is imbedded in European modernity which is beneficial to the West than to Africa in general and South Africa specifically.

Capital is predominantly White and, therefore, Whites remain the captains of industries. White capital worked hand in glove with the apartheid administration to fund education initiatives during apartheid. Post 1994, Capital remains White, and therefore, does not cooperate with the democratic "Black" government. So, the question why decolonial education now is prompted by the realisation that the current education system is only beneficial to capital which is a product and legacy of apartheid. The major problem that the current education system poses to decolonial education is that the former reproduces the subservience of Black people to capital and the markets that are in the hands of Whites. Free decolonial education is aimed at disentangling the coloniality embedded in the legacy and institutions of apartheid and thereby, freeing Blackness from the epistemic and ontological violence, thereof.

5.1 Answering the Question: Is free decolonial education feasible for South Africa?

The current economic conditions are undergirded by capitalism and capital is still in the hands of White businesses, especially in the private sector. White capital worked together with the apartheid regime to control the kind of education provided for Black students. The kind of education system that ensured that Blacks continually provided cheap labour for capital. Since the capital is still in the hands of Whites, it is plausible that capital will frustrate efforts to decolonise the curriculum because it is capital that stands to lose the exploited cheap labour that Blacks provide. Therefore, under the current economic, epistemic, political, and legal conditions, unfortunately, it is not feasible to for South Africa to operationalize decolonial education. Not that it is not

feasible in principle, but rather that the system of governance that sustained the apartheid system has not transformed, let alone evolved. The levers of control of knowledge production that are born out of colonialism and apartheid are still intact – primary and secondary schools, universities and institutions of higher education that remain Eurocentric.

Overarching and overseeing the education system is the capitalist economic system that continues to be administered by a system of political governance that remains Westphalian. These remain factors that militate against transformation and the evolution of the African state. These, however, can be changed for they are all but social constructions. That notwithstanding the fact that the Black Government stands accused of not doing enough in terms of reversing the legacy of Apartheid (Mungadi & Rouhani, 2010: 176; Tikly, 2011: 90). By no means is the paper making excuses for the failures of the Black Government in transforming the economy and education systems they inherited from the Apartheid regime. The Black governing elite has been implicated in massive cases of corruption over the years (Chisholm, 2013: 8) and the looting of resources meant for the development of education curricula specifically (Serfontein & De Waal, 2015). The Black Government has benefitted from the *Bantu* (so-called separate) education itself in that, with a population that has not been empowered through the right and correct education as in the past, it can be manipulated, and the very *Bantu* education, is then instrumentalized by the current ruling elites to keep themselves in power through propagandizing to the unsuspecting majority Black citizens.

Social constructions, however, can be changed for they are malleable; governments have a vantage position to lead, in an orderly manner, societies to realise and conceive of imagined realities. Social constructions start as imagined possibilities; therefore, it is possible to transform most of societies' social ills. Moreso, it is possible to decolonise the education system and that is where the work of decolonisation should be concentrated and focused.

6. Recommendations

Government should intervene between its citizens' quest for free decolonial education and capital which, while it requires cheap labour for its survival, must come to the table to assist and fund the Black majority who form the greater part of its resource base. Since capital is

about profiteering at the expense of human labour, it cannot survive if the cheap and unwaged labour is to be done away with. The reluctance of capital to fund free decolonial education is thus forgone and unsurprising. The government must investigate two important questions at this crossroads. The first one is, what does capital stand to gain with the status quo? Secondly, what does capital stand to lose if decolonial education is made available and accessible? About the first question, if things are left to continue as normal, capital will continue to exploit Black people and their labour as is its nature. Economic transformation will continue to be illusory and a nice pipedream. Therefore, the government must step in to provide direction to changing the economic, educational, social, and political landscape of the country. As such, the argument is that that can be possible by first transforming the minds, through a decolonial education, of people who would take up positions of leadership in a decolonised society. Education is the fundamental bedrock of transforming the minds of societies. Ahmed (2010: 511) evinces that "it is necessary to consider education as transformation and education for transformation". The paper concludes that a decolonial education is commensurate to Ahmed's (2010) education for transformation.

Regarding the second question, if decolonial education is materialised and realised, capital stands to lose its grip on control, not only of the minds of Black people especially, but the very exploitative economic structure that militates against the Black conditions of poverty. Without emancipatory enquiry and the requisite combative epistemic tools to fashion a decolonised society, capitalism will continue unabated to do what it does best – exploit, underpay, overwork, denigrate and silence Black people and their struggles. It is this picture that cannot be allowed to continue unchallenged. It is precisely this picture that gave rise to the #FeesMustFall, #OpenUpStellenbosch and #RhodesMustFall student movements in 2015-2017.

Therefore, the Black government must assert the Black epistemic position that affirms Black people as rational people who can think and are endowed with reason in pursuance of changing their fate. The Euro-North American-centric tradition of knowing and being cannot and must not be allowed to trample other civilisations in the name of progress. Africans, through their governments, must assert their place in the world where the monstrosity of modernity would want them to think that they are small and insignificant. If the government does not lead this endeavour of African societies, societies themselves will

eventually take over and liberate themselves. There is no doubt that when that happens, chaos, pandemonium that borders on impunity and disruption - as witnessed in the #FeesMustFall and its sister movements' protests, violence will be the order of the day. Violence is not desirable, although it may be necessary.

7. Conclusion

The 'decolonial' aspect clearly is problematic in this equation than the 'free'. The paper concludes that, if 'free' refers to making money and resources available to enable students to access 'quality' education, then it is feasible; but, if 'free decolonial' education is accessible to particularly Black South African students, then it becomes a threat to the very capital that makes the education free in the first place.

Therefore, there is need to amplify the demand for free decolonial education in South Africa in all public spaces, particularly epistemic and academic sites and sessions such as conferences, colloquia, symposia and lectures, particularly by the academy. There is need for ongoing debate on decoloniality, but coloniality of knowledge, as knowledge is vital in liberating and emancipating civilisations. The role of Government is to ensure that it funds education that benefits society; an education that derives from immediate problems of society to correct and address the problems. The post-1994 Government is not doing enough to address the legacies of *Bantu* education, as such, it should and must direct a decolonial education to realize economic independence. Education must serve society and address societal needs.

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