

Alter/natives and im/perfect futures: Education sites and communication for transformative democracy

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Abstract

The decolonial project in postcolonial Africa is suffused with quests for a panoramic regime that bestows a sui generis, immanent aura of sacredness on the highest ranking values - human dignity, human rights, freedom, justice, equal respect, respect for pluralism. Education, specifically at the tertiary level, has been touted as the singular platform for redress, reform and re-articulation of hope and redemption for the marginalised people. What has not happened in Sub-Saharan Africa is a strategic appropriation of the education sites and processes for the development of a pedagogy of hope. Half the world's one hundred largest economies are not countries, but transnational corporations (TNCs). These TNCs have crafted and disseminated powerful messages predominantly in the English language that essentially constitute what we understand today as globalisation. This insatiable demand for English as the language of teaching and learning (LoLT) has invariably enabled the deployment of an ensemble of electronic communication and computer-aided technologies to move massive amounts of financial capital across the globe, predominantly out of Africa to metropolitan Euro-American capitals. The same strategies have been used to globalise distance education, which has become massive business for American, Australian and British universities. In the new communicative apparatus and strategies that are owned by TNCs, globalisation has been disseminated simplistically to mean a multiplicity of international relations, diversity, personal encounters with foreign peoples, obscene dances, musical profanities and the spread of the internet. In tandem, globalisation has witnessed the proliferation of private schools, Curro Academies, Heritage groups of schools, Anglican and Catholic sites that offer Cambridge International Examinations to rival the stymied domestic curricula. The same private schools use English as media of instruction from Grade One to exit Advanced level examinations and therefore justify their exorbitant fees: not one private school in South Africa has an indigenous language policy. The clamours for universal literacies and communicative competencies are subverted by the way in which postcolonial states privilege the English language, private schools and the modalities of the internet. Indeed, the weakening of the postcolonial state is a principal characteristic of the process of globalisation: who gets globalised into what. Globalisation is a capitalist market economy that surreptitiously strengthens former colonial languages to the detriment of translanguaging encounters that could generate new assemblages and knowledges. It is a maelstrom whose vortex is the supremacy of coloniality. Globalisation is epistemic and linguistic violence, marked by a deleterious businessification of tertiary education institutions in Africa. Transformative democratic communication can only be realised if democratisation will not forever remain synonymous - as it has been for a long time - of Westernization and will truly open up to diversity.

Keywords

literacies

translanguaging

epistemic violence

transnational corporations

voice and agency

subversive practices

Introduction

The iambic pentameter ...cannot carry the experience of the hurricane...

(Edward Kamau Brathwaite)

Education in postcolonial Africa, particularly at the tertiary level, has been touted as the singular platform for redress, reform and re-articulation of hope and redemption for the marginalised people. What has not happened in this postcolonial Sub-Saharan Africa is a strategic appropriation of the education sites and process for the development of a pedagogy of hope. Phillipson (1999: 1), writing about the ways in which the English language has been actively promoted as an instrument of globalactics (Ngugi, 2012) and domination, submits the following chilling observation:

To put things more metaphorically, whereas once Britannia ruled the waves, now it is English which rules [the waves]. The British Empire has given way to the Empire of [the English] language.

Further on, Phillipson (1999:5) states that English Language Teaching (ELT) has boomed over the last 50 years, and this has witnessed a proliferation of university departments, private 'chain' academies, language schools, journal and book publications, international conferences and colloquia, and all the paraphernalia of an established and menacing multi-transnational corporation.

Ways of understanding language and its role in education have been a focus of local and international research for many years (Gee, 1996; Lisa Delpit, 2006; Stroud and Kerfoot, 2013). The notion of Linguistic Citizenship (LC), as developed by Stroud (2001, 2009, 2015) and others (e.g. Stroud and Heugh 2004, Williams and Stroud 2015), has particular resonance with the decolonial project as it challenges dominant notions of languages as separate, bounded entities, and seeks to conceptualise it 'in ways that can promote a *diversity of voice* and contribute to a *mutuality and reciprocity* of engagement across difference' (Stroud 2015: 20). Based on an understanding of languages as 'constructed and contested' (2015: 23), linguistic citizenship conceives of language as a semiotic resource which speakers use and reconfigure 'through the creation of new meanings, the repurposing of genres and the transformation of repertoires' (Stroud, 2015: 25). By disrupting normative (read British standard) language ideologies, LC (as a theoretical lens) draws attention to the diverse, creative and dynamic ways in which people use their linguistic and semiotic resources to assert their agency and voice; in other words, to act and be heard as citizens. For Stroud (2009), citizenship discourses are the medium through which politics is enacted, including the potential 'to bring about alternative worlds' and a sense of 'utopian surplus' (Stroud 2015: 23).

Zannie Bock (2019) observes that decoloniality has been a topic of scholarly concern and local activism since the historic Bandung conference of 1955. Much of the groundwork has been laid by scholars such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (*Writers in Politics* and *Decolonising the Mind*), Lisa Delpit (*Teaching other people's children*), Walter Mignolo (*Epistemic disobedience*), Boaventura de Sousa Santos (*Epistemologies of the South: Justice against*

Epistemicide, 2014), Quentin Williams, Christopher Stroud (*Linguistic Citizenship*) and others. In developing an approach to decoloniality, Mignolo (2009, 2013) writes about the need for 'epistemic disobedience', which, he argues, entails delinking from the dominant Euro-American derived epistemologies by changing both the *content* and the *terms* of the disciplinary conversation. In higher education, changing the *content* becomes a call to critically interrogate those epistemologies which are valued and included in the national curricula of postcolonial states. It means recognising that many African knowledges - and semiotic resources - have been made invisible or 'non-existent' (Santos 2012) because they have been relegated to the status of the 'local, limited and particular languages'. Thus epistemic disobedience requires critically confronting Anglo-American knowledge archives and re-centring those languages, epistemologies and practices which have historically been marginalised. What needs to be inserted into the content is a fuller understanding of the 'unruly and disobedient black body as an agent' as Kei Miller (2019) would script it.

Mignolo (2009, 2013) further argues that the process of 'delinking' from the grand narrative of Anglo-American modernity entails changing the *terms* of the conversation. His argument is that all knowledge is shaped by the context in which it is produced. However, this situatedness is often concealed by the fiction of 'language standards, proficiency and articulacy' manning the disciplinary rules conversations (Mignolo 2009: 4). Asking questions about *who* produces (or consumes) *what* knowledge, *when*, *where*, and *why*, argues Mignolo (2009), serves to shift attention from the 'enunciated' (or 'the known') to the 'enunciator' (or 'knower'). It is about opening up epistemic sites that have been negatively shaped by colonialism and modernity and making visible (and audible) the experiences and perspectives of people who live and work in these spaces. The spectacular invisibility of the victims of the Bhopal Gas Disaster in India in 1984, then one of Union Carbide's multinational corporates, calls for an alternative politics of looking.

For Santos (2012) and Blanch (2016), the decolonial turn is about developing theories which are anchored in an understanding of the world as infinitely diverse. There is an 'immensity of alternatives of life, conviviality and interaction with the world' not recognised by northern theory (Santos, 2012: 51). For him, the construction of southern epistemologies includes four core tenets: *the sociology of absences, the sociology of emergences, the ecology of knowledges, and intercultural translation*. This framework informs this paper in charting alternatives for hope and democratic participation in the im/perfect futures where the institutional and communicative repertoires of and in the English language have been privileged in science, technology and computers; in research engagements and the dissemination of such research in books, accredited journals and software; in international relations, non-governmental organisations and global news agencies such as BBC, CNN and Al-Jazeera; in mass media entertainment, hip-hop youth culture such as YouTube and the corporatisation of devoted ESL Championship channels on DSTV. The functional load carried by and in English in these domains presents new anxieties about the cultural, linguistic and political risks staked against the decolonial project. The following research questions are the primus of this paper:

What communicative strategies do students need to understand, interpret, and analyse the world and produce knowledges in the different ways that inaugurate academic advancement and for civic democratic participation in the knowledge economy?

What are the institutions and matrices necessary in the cultural and linguistic quest, identity-formation and history of the decolonial project?

This paper therefore commences by arguing and illustrating that the national and transnational mobilities of students in the tertiary education systems in Southern Africa is dependent on the selection, assembly and efficient performance of particular bricolages of linguistic resources that construct them as grassroots research labour and not as agents in the construction of new epistemologies. The various institutions and social actors involved in this epistemic infrastructure include the state, transnational funding and research agencies, plus the students as disempowered intellectual workers themselves. Finally, the paper concludes by observing that the products of the tertiary education systems become templates that index domesticated workers; their graduation con/scripts them as embedded in large-scale and everyday processes that produce labouring subjectivities awaiting their selection and purchase by potential employers. In this sense, intellectual and research work, which is inscribed in tran/scripts, is highly ideological and it includes material processes of distinction, stratification and commodification.

Books, banks and bullets

The question of agency, as a vector of identification and belonging, is a *strategic installation* for fields of activity within socially, linguistically and politically constructed territories. In the formulation of Braj Kachru (1986), those in possession of English benefit from an alchemy which transmutes into material and social gain and advantage. The singular question then remains whether or not the purposefully structured English-language dominated public and private education system that churns out cultural eunuchs is a sustainable alternative, given the structural and cultural inequalities characterizing North-South capital flows? What kinds of lives are possible after democracy in the light of corporate globalisation, the media glut and the ascendancy of fake news and alternative truths?

In an incisive article called *Books, Banks and Bullets: Controlling our minds – the global project of imperialistic and militaristic neo-liberalism and its effect on education policy*, Hill (2004) identifies five aspects through which globalisation has entrenched itself as a capitalist enterprise:

The first embraces the ‘businessification’ of education – privatization, deregulation of controls on profits, the introduction of business forms of management, and the intensification of labour.

The second is a *deepening of capitalist social relations* with the commodification of everyday academic and research life. This is carried out, in particular through the electronic and computer enabled media and educational state apparatuses, to recompose human personality.

The third takes the form of *increasing use of repressive economic, legal, military, and other state and multi-state apparatuses globally* and within states. This ensures compliance and subordination to multinational capital and its

state agents. The means used include repressive state apparatuses: the police, incarceration, legal systems and surveillance procedures.

The fourth is a more sinister enterprise: *increasing use of ideological state apparatuses in the media and education systems*. On the one hand, they are used to both 'naturalize' and promote capitalist social and economic relations, for instance through research collaboration and exchange programmes where the Southern academics collect raw data and the Euro-American partners distil the data into esoteric theories that explain the Other. On the other hand, they are used to marginalize, demonize, and justify punishing resistant, anti-capitalist, hegemonic, oppositional ideologies, actions, and activists.

The last of the pentagon: *increasing concentration of wealth and power (power to retain and increase that wealth) in the hands of the capitalist class*. This embraces fiscal policy, cutting back social and public welfare programmes and policies, and opening to the market divisive, marketised, stratified programmes in schooling and higher education. Such programmes increase hierarchies of provision, resulting in increasing racialised and gendered social class inequalities.

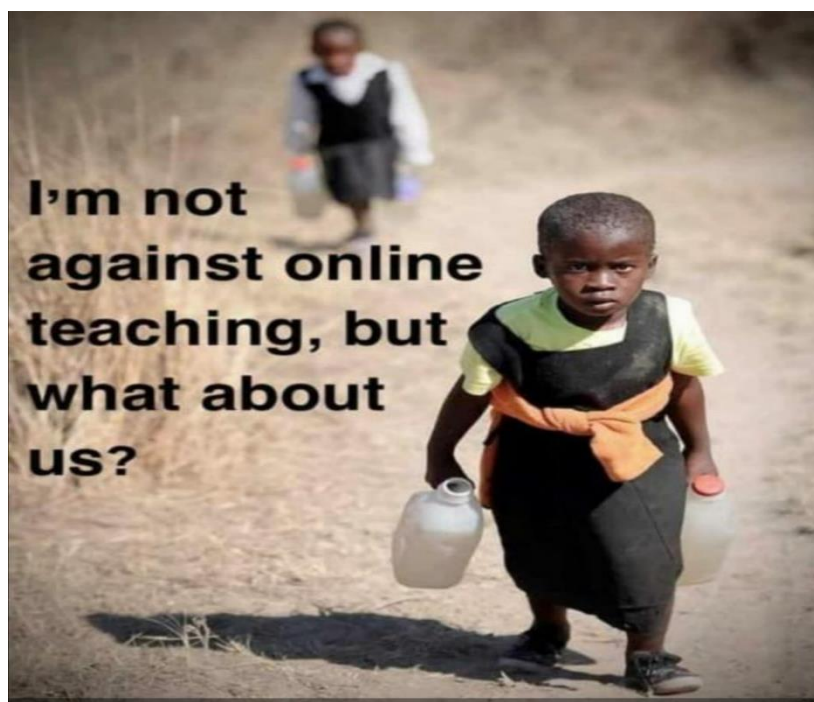
This paper teases out the first and second enterprises of globalisation as capital-driven ventures. In a conference paper that I provocatively called *Circuits of Plunder* (2019), I interrogated the world-wide web as a communicative assemblage whose totalising presence has become a ubiquitous feature of this age of asymmetrical communication. The presentation invited a more nuanced critique of Google and Yahoo and other web-developers to demonstrate how the ensemble of digital technology shapes and disrupts societal organisation. For Deleuze, "control societies function with a third and fourth generation of machines, with information technology and computers," which are inextricably intertwined with "a mutation of capitalism" (1990:180). Indeed, Deleuze makes a distinction between the capitalism which informed and operated within disciplinary societies, and the capitalism associated with Google-Yahoo-Apple-Hewlett Packard control societies. Accordingly, the mutation in control and regulatory surveillance occurred through a move away from nineteenth century capitalism – which was "concentrative, directed towards production, and proprietorial," and which rendered sites of education and sites of production into sites of confinement – and toward a capitalist orientation that "is no longer directed toward production." Rather, present-day neoliberal capitalism, control and regulation is orientated toward "meta-production," outsourcing various aspects of production, focusing on the selling of services, and operating as an assemblage, in which everything is "transmutable or transformable." Thus, in contrast to the contiguity and confinement of disciplinary societies, in control societies, everything becomes "short-term and rapidly shifting, but at the same time continuous and unbounded." Deleuze's excellent summation is that, within control societies, "a man is no longer a man confined but a man in debt" (1990:180–181). It is therefore urgent to commence dismantling colonial iconography not as an erasure of the historical past, but as a radical re-insertion, privileging and disseminating new circuits of southern cultural knowledges.

Digital technology makes such control possible - from electronic tagging devices to electronic cards that allow or disallow (and record) access to certain areas at specific moments in the day. The major implication of such a form

of societal organisation is that one is constantly engaging with the features that the capitalist state aims to promote. Accordingly, this regulation debilitates populations far beyond the docility engendered through colonial societies by effectively disallowing citizens the time to operate in an autonomous manner outside of statutory confines. That is, Deleuze suggests that within the disciplinary societies thematised by Foucault, one was always beginning or starting again, as one moved from the school, to the barracks, and from the barracks to the factory, etc.; consequently, interstices existed between disciplinary institutions where the formation of resistance – or the generation of difference – was in principle always possible. *Circuits of Plunder* amplified the singular fact of the communicative apparatuses: control societies, on the one hand, replace signatures with numbers and codes or “passwords,” which one gains and utilises for the purposes of access to the ‘businessification’ of the school and university through compliance with the status quo. On the other hand, within control societies it is no longer possible to distinguish between the “individual” and the “mass” – as it was in disciplinary societies – but only between “**dividuals** and ... **samples**” (1990:179–180). Deleuze’s “notion of the dividual grasps a vital part of the dynamics of modern communication technologies: the intersection of human agency and high technology in the constitution of selves.” From Deleuze’s pessimistic viewpoint, what this entails is the progressive loss of the agency still possible for disciplinary subjectivity, through the dissolution of critical individuality and its transformation into coded economic data, **dividualised** to the point where resistance is not only difficult, but de facto unimaginable.

There are several other ways in which societies of control operate in the architectural design of coercive effects of digitality on personal relations and desires. Societies of control “utilize constant and rapid communications (memos, emails, advertisements) to inform people where they stand in the constantly shifting field of interpersonal relations.” Bell (2009: 150) argues further that if one does not participate in this field, one risks falling off the grid, as it were, and thus becoming an undesirable “unknown variable,” who will undoubtedly begin to “fall behind.” As Bell darkly notes, “the net result is that we come to desire the very systems that control and monitor us” (2009:151). The immense popularity of social media sites such as Facebook, where users willingly disclose their personal information, innermost thoughts and anxieties, along with their successes – however arbitrary these might be – under the auspices of a belief that one only *is* insofar as one is *digitally articulated* in this way, immediately come to mind when considering Bell’s argument.

Jakub (2018) highlights the ways in which Facebook users fail to make the distinction between digital (virtual, online) space and their offline (actual) lives. He elaborates the pernicious ways in which the robotic moment has privileged the triumph of information over the recognition of existence. Julian Assange, in an interview with *The Huffington Post*, discusses some of Google’s current infrastructure and its plans at expansion. According to



Assange, “Google controls 80 percent of Android phones now sold, [and] YouTube,” a subsidiary of Google’s, bought in 2006, and “is buying up eight drone companies. It’s deploying cars, it’s running...Internet service providers,” and it even “has a plan to create Google towns.” Likening Google to a “high-tech General Electric,” Assange proposes that the company represents “a push towards a technocratic imperialism” in which “Google envisages pulling in everyone, even in the deepest parts of Africa, into its system of interaction” (in Grim and Harvard, 2014).

But before this paper engages with the technocratic imperialism and digital politics of the world-wide-web consolidated in the meme above, there is need to situate the raging battles in knowledge generation and dissemination evident in the book publication and journal industry. University presses such as Cambridge, King’s College, Oxford, Massachusetts and Tilburg strive to stifle all southern-institutional publications. By virtue of hiring the ‘knowledgeable other’ professoriate, their monographs and books in English become prescribed readers for courses in postcolonial states. The same institutions have intricate networks with journal platforms such as SAGE Publishing, Palgrave, Bloomsbury Linguistics, Routledge, Aosis, Taylor&Francis, all ‘authenticated’ by the committee on publications ethics (COPE). They have the most sophisticated archive repositories on Academia.edu, Corwin, EBSCOhost, Working Papers in Urban Language & Literacies, beyond having developed artificial intelligence (AI) analytics such as SPSS, ATLAS.ti and NVivo and surveillance apparatuses such as Turnitin. Southern alter/native journals and publishing houses such as MJSS, International Journal of Current Advanced Research (IJCAR), the Taipei-Taiwan Conferences that host the somewhat dubious Engineering Science Research & Development Board (ESRDB) and the Indian-Pakistani consortium have quickly turned into

massively treacherous enterprises by publishing plagiarised scholarship and concocted researches to their own peril. This 'established' publishing conglomerate therefore legitimises and turns the whole academic enterprise into a knowledge production and dissemination economy regulated by these establishments. A new tech-imperialism is at work here to dis/able any alter/native quest for hope.

Schooling and languaging in postcolonial Africa (after Bowles and Gintis)

Rikowski (2002) argues that 'globalization' is essentially capitalist globalization: the globalization of capital, which is at the core of all the economic, social, political, educational and cultural trends that have been associated with conventional and more superficial notions of 'globalization.' He points out that capital's social universe is an expanding and ever-increasing one. Rikowski (2002:1) identifies three forms: spatially, through differentiation and through intensification. Differentiation helps us to examine the practices and institutions of schooling and tertiary education in postcolonial Africa. Capital expands as the *differentiated form of the commodity* through the invention of variegated types of commodity. This is capital's *differentiation*. For example, there are different types of schools and universities placed in the market of 'choice'.

We have already hinted at the growth of private schools and historically white, privileged universities with immense cultural capital in the postcolonial state, but it is quite relevant to add that this phenomenon is a prime exemplar of capital's differentiation. In South Africa, the public school system is under siege from Curro Group of Schools, Taal Net Group of Schools, the Metropolitan Group of Schools, Magaliesburg Group of Schools, Gems Group of Schools, Pearson Group of Schools, Lincoln Group of Schools, Ryan Group of Schools and another consortium called Heritage Group of Schools. Historically black universities trail behind those that were formerly all white and materially privileged in terms of resources and communicative technologies. Against all decolonial aspirations, these academies re-inscribe the Anglo-American centred map, in spite of the stellar 2015-2016 student movements, #RhodesMustFall and the #FeesMustFall.

The Heritage Group of Schools has expanded frontiers into Zimbabwe, together with another consortium called Petra Schools. These establishments have constellated into the massive Conference of Heads of Independent Schools in Zimbabwe (CHISZ), a confederacy that boasts of former Group A schools and private tertiary chains such as the Peterhouse Group of Schools. This 'local confederacy' is a replica of the British behemoth, the Independent Schools Conference that parades its inexorable connections with Cambridge Examinations Syndicate. This umbrella confederacy seeks to preserve the independence of its schools, spurred against 'contamination and lamination' by the Latin motto "*Quod Susceptum Perfectum*" – What has been undertaken has been achieved." The five core tenets of independence are articulated in unambiguous terms, where the school must:

- follow its own distinctive mission (including its particular ethos, faith and philosophy);
- determine its learner admission and promote policies;
- choose its curriculum and exit examinations;

- determine how it will be governed, financed and staffed;
- manage its operations.

In the inauguration and expansion of these private academies, capital expands through *intensification* – it deepens and develops within its own domain; in the ways in which it is increasingly penetrating educational institutions where profit-making and profit-taking enter the ‘public sector’. Globalisation facilitates the penetration of education services by corporate capital: the CHISZ schools choose their curriculum and exit examinations (read Cambridge); they determine how they are funded and staffed (read exclusion of ‘other’ racial profiles). It opens the door to the commercialisation of education services in English, made more versatile through the ubiquity of information technologies and interactive Promethean boards in such institutions. In the current postcolonial period in Africa, education has been increasingly subordinated, not just to the general requirements of capital, but also to the specific demands made of postcolonial governments by the capitalist class. This increasing subordination of education to national and international capital runs through school education and teacher education to university education. Education and humanity itself have become increasingly commoditised, with education being restructured *internationally* under pressure from international capitalist organizations.

This paper strives to consolidate the point that capital expands through intensification and illustrates this from the entrepreneurial mission statement of the Peterhouse Group of Schools, an academy where this researcher was the first black teacher of English and head of the English department:

The Peterhouse Group is widely regarded as one of Zimbabwe’s top independent schools and arguably the country’s best for boarding (Peterhouse Boys [PHB] and Peterhouse Girls [PHG]) and weekly boarding (Springvale House [SVH]). Pupil numbers at all levels are healthy...the marketplace is becoming increasingly competitive. The Peterhouse Group has an enviable reputation for breadth of education/opportunity...

The Rector is an overseas’ member of the Headmasters’ and Headmistresses’ Conference (HMC), which represents 300 top independent schools in the UK and beyond...

The explicit mission statement is embossed in the vocabulary of the corporate enterprise:

Peterhouse aims to provide a specialist environment which is flexible and responsive in fulfilling the academic, social, emotional and physical potential of all our young people, equipping them with the skills, knowledge and understanding to be a successful adults.

One of the most expensive corporate-driven schools is the Crawford Schools. The table below shows the tuition fees payable in South African rands for 2020.

	Fee option 1	Fee option 2	Fee option 3
	Annual (Discounted)	10 monthly	12 monthly
Grade 00	76 920	8 230	6 960
Grade 0	86 520	9 250	7 830
Grade 1	99 500	10 760	9 100
Grade 2	99 500	10 760	9 100
Grade 3	113 370	12 130	10 260
Grade 4	113 370	12 130	10 260
Grade 5	119 750	12 810	10 830
Grade 6	119 750	12 810	10 830
Grade 7	120 540	12 890	10 900
Grade 8	141 010	15 080	12 760
Grade 9	141 010	15 080	12 760
Grade 10	144 030	15 400	13 030
Grade 11	144 030	15 400	13 030
Grade 12	151 290	16 180	Not applicable

Should the annual upfront plan be selected by the fee payer during the re-enrolment process, but the full annual amount not paid by the 17th January 2020, this will result in the account being automatically defaulted to the 10-monthly plan with the monthly instalment becoming due immediately. The school requires **one full term's written notice** in the event of a parent wishing to deregister a student. Should sufficient notice not be given, parents may be held liable for a full term's fees. This is the acme of the new gold rush: the private schools and academies whose curricula do not shy away from marginalising alter/native epistemologies. There is a dire need for an

alternative lexicon that historicises the complexities and complicities of capital disguised as globalisation and the neoliberal imperative.

A recent paper on mission statements in universities (and schools) contended that there is an embedded monetary drive in the institutions (Hove, 2018: 5):

Mission statements establish institutional legitimacy; they interpret institutional and global realities and are an outcome of competition in the realm of institutional politics. Strategic plans implicitly, and often explicitly, state a change in organizational structure or a move toward change. Change can be a difficult process and sometimes requires time. It is important to get stakeholders and employees on board with the decision-making process and an expertly articulated mission and vision statement accomplishes these imperatives for the organization. Articulating and repeating the positives of the move toward change in the organisation enables stakeholders and employees to stay engaged and motivated. Decision-makers and architects of goals should emphasize the current mission statement to employees, which clarifies the purpose and primary, measurable objectives of the organization and the entrepreneurial sponsors. As clients of capital universities craft the (o)mission statements in order to project efficiency and responsiveness to the overt and covert demands of local and global markets.

The shrewd business orientation of the private schools invites a direct contrast to the mission statement of an emerging university in New Zealand, founded on providing an alternative democratic communicative apparatus and epistemology:

Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi - Aotearoa is a Māori university headed by Sir Graham Hingangaroa Smith, a distinguished Māori scholar. This is the mission statement of this visionary institution:

We commit ourselves to explore and define the depths of knowledge in Aotearoa, to enable us to re-enrich ourselves, to know whom we are, to know where we came from and to claim our place in the future. We take this journey of discovery, of reclamation of sovereignty, establishing the equality of Māori intellectual tradition alongside the knowledge base of others. Thus, we can stand proudly together with all people of the world. This is in part the dream and vision of Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi. (Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi)

Within universities and vocational further education in particular, the language of education has been widely replaced by the language of the market, where lecturers 'deliver the product', 'operationalize delivery', and 'facilitate clients' learning' within a regime of 'quality management and enhancement'; where students have become 'customers' selecting 'modules' on a pick'n'pay basis (Pick'N'Pay is a South African TNC behemoth specialising in food, liquor and accessories whose presence is felt in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya and Nigeria); and where 'skills development' at universities has surged in importance to the derogation and marginalisation of the development of critical thought.

Lincoln (2019) takes a trenchant critique of this incipient managerialism in the university. She is hard-hitting at the compulsive 'marketisation' and enumeration of researchers' publications to the expense of critical and scholarly engagement. She introduces her paper in a scathing indictment of the new culture of auditing of knowledge driven by a savage and fanatical capitalism: 'when Edward Snowden described the National Security Agency's bulk collection of telephone and email information from private citizens as the most dangerous weapon ever invented, he might as well have been talking about the neoliberal-cum-managerialistic rituals imposed upon public higher education faculties in the name of accountability (2019: 37). Lincoln (2019: 38) is unsparing in her attack on the regimen of the corporate university where the fact that audit technologies being introduced into higher education and elsewhere are not simply innocuously neutral, legal-rational practices; rather, they are instruments for new forms of governance and power. They embody a new rationality and morality and are designed to engender amongst academic staff new norms of conduct and professional behaviour. In short, they are agents for the creation of new kinds of subjectivity: self-managing individuals who render themselves auditable.

Lincoln (2019) extends her critique and observes that the growing influence of an audit culture contributes to the disappearance of the idea of publicness as traditional public service norms of citizenship, representation, equality, accountability, impartiality, openness, responsiveness, and justice are being marginalized and even replaced by business norms like competitiveness, efficiency, productivity, profitability, and consumer satisfaction. Indeed, in the global desire to produce "competitive" researchers, the value of collegial life, of colleagues teaching and sometimes researching in concert, sharing and constructively criticizing the ideas of others, collegiality, along with its norms of academic community, is slowly withering away. As competition for external funding becomes fiercer, colleagues view their peers as competitors for the same slice of the pie, with the consequence that the deep, amiable, conversational friendships between and among colleagues are likewise disappearing. Indeed, cutting across the postcolonial university in Africa, there is evidence of the increasing influence of corporate monies on academic curricula and on the research programmes of researchers.

There is even more palpable commodification of intellectual property, including publication (Lincoln, 2012; Spooner, 2018); the rise of top-down managerialism, including a sharp increase in a re-branded 'people and culture' administrative staff versus teaching and research staff; the pressing emphasis on entrepreneurial acumen as a criterion for academic staff promotion, tenure, and merit bonuses. There is also a palpable shift in thinking of students as consumers and clients, rather than as partners in academic citizenship and critical-thinking learning journeys; a focus on metrics and rankings as a measure of quality (Burrows 2012; Tuck 2003). There is the looming, strange, perverse, and utterly ridiculous idea that universities need a "brand," a twisted distortion of academic values in favour of quantitative, economic criterion; a view of teaching and research staff that demands ever more "accountability" measures, to assure that such staff are doing what they have been hired to do (teaching research and community engagement); an emphasis on external recognition and funding for the 'research agenda of the university, even when external fund priorities do not match the research entities' interests or those of the research niche areas. There is the increasing use of new generation of academics programme (nGAP) and

postdoctoral research fellows (postdoc) to raise the publication statistics and table these Excel spreadsheet tallies for institutional recognition and contingent income.

In the wake of a heightened demand for the English language, the businessification project has invariably enabled the deployment of an ensemble of electronic communication and computer-aided technologies to move massive amounts of financial capital out of Africa to the metropolitan capitals. The same strategies have been used to globalise distance education, which has become massive business for American, Australian and British universities. In the new communicative apparatus and strategies that are owned by TNCs, globalisation has been disseminated 'innocently' to mean a multiplicity of international relations, diversity, personal encounters with foreign peoples, obscene dances, musical profanities and the spread of the internet.

There is evidence that the capitalist re-engineering of third world post-colonial educational practices has been scaffolded by what Shoshana Zuboff (2019) calls 'the age of surveillance capitalism.' She sees in this subtle project a whole arsenal of apparatuses designed to create new frontiers of power. By extension, surveillance capitalism is indicted for educational and languaging practices that have become raw sources and material for performance and behavioural data. AI – call it machine intelligence – has taken the menacing task of producing 'predictions products' that are used in decision-making processes and sold in a new type of market that she calls the 'behavioural futures market (Zuboff, 2019: 8). The drive for market domination and profit maximisation is embedded in the English language, the data algorithms that shape Big Data enterprises. Again, Zuboff (2019:87; 399) has an apt nomenclature for this: the 'extraction imperative' where several permutations and combinations of the data generates a new terrain for rendition, calculation and prediction. In the educational systems of post-colonial states, surveillance capitalism accumulates behavioural and performance data at the lowest cost possible and then turns this into profit.

In the extraction imperative and profit-making agenda, Google and Yahoo and Facebook and Android software products appear as disconnected establishments, yet these multinational behemoths google (a verb) their search engines; they have massive e-book projects (purchasable in hard currency through credit cards from publishing houses none of which is located in Africa). All these processes have one common denominator: the extraction of raw materials, no longer just the gold and platinum and diamonds, but African voices, and African-generated data. For those who are accustomed to Academia.edu, there should be an immediate experience of déjà vu: you need to subscribe a stiff deduction, again in hard currency, for one to identify their readers and to access bulk downloads of what is already esoterically theorised from western academies for you, depending entirely on your monitored reading history.

Surveillance capitalism is not just technological finesse. In order to dispossess entirely, surveillance capitalism has an amalgam of political, communicative, administrative, legal and material strategies that defines, demarcates and decides on im/perfect futures. AI and its architecture, designed to fulfil the prediction imperative, has the configuration capacity to 'nudge, tune, herd, manipulate, map, track and modify behaviour and performance in

specific directions. When one enters a specific search protocol by typing in key words, there are many times Google offers the following disclaimer:

In order to show the most relevant results, we have omitted some entries very similar to the 10 already displayed.

If you like, you can repeat the search with omitted results included.

This pops up immediately after the search engine has positively evaluated itself for generating “about 5 results...in 0.33 seconds.” Should one re-enter the query, the search engine provides even less relevant results to the key words! This is the largest computing network in the world, having enabled their machines to learn more and faster (in English). This extraction architecture is anchored on the unstated idea that highly predictive and therefore highly lucrative, behavioural surplus can be plumbed from the intimate patterns of the self (Zuboff, 2019: 201). This extends to the realisation that the ‘internet of things’ has broached a novel English-language driven instrumentarianism whose purpose is not the perfection of postcolonial society but the automation of the same locales for guaranteed profit outcomes. What alter/native digital and technological routes are possible in this Big Data and techno-utopia where the postcolonial African education and communication platforms are suffused with the power of algorithms in the English language? This is not a simple search for alternatives; it is a realisation of the alarming ideological production in technology-qua-technology imagined as an alternative for democratisation of education and communication.

In closing

The decolonial project should investigate how institutionalized hierarchies of racial and linguistic legitimacy are central to the processes of the postcolonial subject formation, specifically the agency in reading and writing in the English language, the over-estimated capacity of Google search engines, the tapestry of transnational corporations whose amnesia peripheralises the violence and pain of their heinous trade in bodies but parading as the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). There is a dire need to identify specific limitations in scholarship and research in and through the English language where there is curtailed capacity to unsettle the inequities that decolonial scholars and activists seek to disrupt. The sage voice of Toni Morrison names the alter/natives into those im/perfect futures:

The...very serious function of racism (and globalisation and marketising education and pedestalling the English language in communicative repertoires) is a distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being. Somebody says you have no language, so you spend twenty years proving that you do. Somebody says your head is not shaped properly, so you have scientists (read black scholars and academics) working on the fact that it is. Someone says you have no art, so you dredge that up. Somebody says you have no kingdoms, so you dredge that up. None of that is necessary. There will always be one more thing.

This paper strove to demonstrate several coterminous positions: explore the analytical and practical implications of the dissemination of the English language, globalisation and race across differing nation-state and postcolonial

contexts, linking the analysis of the pervasive use of the English language in postcolonial Africa and its educational sites to a transnational frame in which the postcolonial world is profoundly shaped by Euro-American capital flows and circuits of plunder. The paper analysed the continued re-articulation of colonial distinctions between colonial and postcolonial Africa and, by extension, online and offline, English language and 'other' languages. The extractivist capitalism is embodied in the TNCs whose identities are slippery, mutating into new credit card economies and linguistic scales. The macabre violence of the colonial period is engraved in the current re-commercialisation of the black body and takes the visual tapestry in the cinematic and the messiness of cultural entanglements. The decolonial project and the interrogation of tertiary education as sites for transformative democracy is neither diametrically opposed to nor irreconcilable with reflexivity. As a generative matrix, it mediates reflexive as well as intuitive contextually embedded practices. While undoubtedly constituting human agency, decolonisation is an *open system of dispositions* that is constantly subjected to archives of remembrance, experiences of marginalisation and exclusion, and therefore the imperative to confront the magisterial cynicism of globalisation. These distinctions anchor the joint institutional (re)production of categories of race and language, the rupture of alter/native archives, as well as perceptions and experiences thereof.

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