PART I

Reviled Bodies of Knowledge in the South African University

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Abstract

In this paper, I argue that our conception of knowledge cannot be separated from the bodies that are involved in its creation. Resisting the decolonization of the curriculum and how we come to know goes cheek by jowl with which bodies are acceptable and which are unpalatable in higher education. It is not just particular knowledges that are therefore reviled but black bodies that signify those knowledges—that have to fight to belong or are ejected. The paper focuses on critical moments when high-profile black bodies have faced expulsion from the Universities of Cape Town, Witwatersrand, and North-West to illustrate the relationship between what I term "reviled bodies" and "knowledges" in higher education. It suggests that it is no coincidence that "recalcitrant" black bodies are expelled from those universities that assign no value to indigenous ways of knowing. Finally, the paper posits that geo- and body politics of scholarship should be advanced to ensure that Southern and black bodies are at the center of the academy.

Keywords: discordant bodies, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, colonial universities, historicization, epistemic disobedience

Something came to a head in 2014. South Africans witnessed unprecedented sustained print and social media attention on the paucity of black academics in South African higher education in the twentieth year of democracy. In 2015 and 2016, the students joined in with a much more militant energy leading with a raft of demands including changes to the colonial and apartheid symbols and imagery within higher education institutions. 2016 ended with strident student demands for free decolonized education spearheaded by the #FeesMustFall protests. Cleaning and gardening employees that had been casualties of the neoliberal privatisation wave demanded to be reinstated as direct employees

of universities. This was a demand for reversing the casualization of black labour. Perhaps feeding off this energy, some black scholars have demonstrated an air of restlessness, seemingly shaking off years of apparent docility. A closer look at the recent history of post-apartheid higher education, however, reveals that there are a number of black scholars that have sought to challenge the racial and curriculum hegemony characterizing the sector.

This paper locates the present Western and recalcitrant character of the South African university against a history of deliberate exclusion, ontological denial, and erasure of local forms and ways of knowing. By examining publicly available biographies of critical incidents of the expulsion of black scholars from formally colonial white universities, I posit that the expulsion of the threatening black body is intimately connected to the continuing reproduction of whiteness and its Euro-North American ways of knowing. I argue that while there are multiple ways in which hegemonic thought practices are maintained, the expulsion of bodies that threaten colonial lineages is really about maintaining reified ways of knowing. I call attention to the need to problematize the continuities of the colonial and apartheid South African university in the present. This will assist in drawing attention to the mutually reinforcing relationship between knowledge and material bodies.

Knowledge

> "What does it mean to teach in a location where the dominant intellectual paradigms are products not of Africa's own experience but of a particular Western experience?"[1]

When compared to the early days of democracy, counter claims as to what constitutes knowledge have been muted in the past decade. To be sure, the debate found more fertile ground in formerly black universities with the most advanced expression at University of South Africa (Unisa) where African knowledges or "indigenous knowledge systems" (IKS) were interrogated. For instance, Unisa has the South African Research Chairs Initiative (*SARChI*) which funds a professorial chair led by Catherine Odora Hoppers, who is a leading advocate of IKS; the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) has an IKS research group; the journal *Indilinga: African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems* provides space for interdisciplinary forms of producing, recognizing,

and disseminating local forms of knowledge centred on Southern Africa; the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) launched a digital indigenous knowledge recording system; and the National Research Foundation has developed the "Indigenous Knowledge Systems: Knowledge Fields Framework Document."[2] What these initiatives have in common is that they are funded by the government Department of Science and Technology, and they find expression in science councils and formerly black universities, which rely heavily on government funding. Even at these institutions, however, IKS is ghettoized to certain knowledge fields and departments and does not permeate the institutional ethos of knowledge generation and their orientation to the world. On the other hand, those formally white universities that have positioned themselves as research-intensive have not embraced the idea of IKS, and they do not have knowledge streams dedicated to advancing it. Instead, they have critiqued the notion of indigeneity as conceptually flawed, exclusionary, reifying geography, and as a misunderstanding of the development of knowledge.[3]

Accustomed to its power, Western scholarship has positioned itself as generalizable to the rest of the world.[4] The Western scholar has therefore taken on the position of the sovereign eye. Nirmal Puwar states that Western scholarship is imbued with "latent categories and boundaries that tacitly inform who has the right to look, judge and represent."[5] Opposition to IKS represents discomfort with the idea that the sovereign eye can be challenged. According to Rey Chow, "what confronts the Western scholar is the discomforting fact that the natives are no longer staying in their frames."[6] Further, critiques of IKS in part reflect an anxiety about the possible conflation of indigeneity with race and place of origin. In this regard, those that study the European canon might fear displacement by those whose work focuses on the continent, the region, and the country. To be sure, IKS should not be about replacing other knowledges but advance reflexive local knowledges in recognition of the historic fact that they were deliberately marginalized and received little or no sustained scholarly attention.

In advancing IKS, there is value in seeing knowledge as interwoven and interdependent for mutual growth. This is to say that it is not possible to conceive of knowledge that is "pure" in the sense that it has not had some contact or influence from other

forms of knowledge in its development. Theoretically then, there should be no Western or Southern knowledges. Knowledges are simultaneously all indigenous as they are also global. In this paper, IKS is seen as a political posture that is necessary for recuperating and advancing neglected forms of knowledge. It is also a call for an ontological orientation that sees the world from a Southern location. In the process of advancing the agency of Sarajie Baartman, Yvette Abrahams has ably illustrated the violence that is wrought on the black and brown body when Western scholars treat Southern bodies as objects.[7] Commenting on the need to speak from Africa, Jesse Weaver Shipley, Jean Comaroff and Achille Mbembe contend:

> When it comes to matters African, our language always seems to hollow out the experience it is called upon to represent and to bring to life. Until we resolve this crisis of our language, we won't be able to bring Africa back to life. In any case, writing the world from Africa, is how I understand the project of critique—to bring back to life that which is asleep, that which has been put to sleep.[8]

Part of writing the world from Africa is to write it on our own terms, as illustrated by Steve Biko, and not as appendages to a bigger sibling elsewhere.[9] Weaver Shipley, et al., further note that as ostensibly equal occupants of the world, we should be involved in "a new, radical form of criticism that is required by the mere fact of our sharing this world; a world that is, as a matter of fact, a multiplicity of worlds and of interlaced boundaries."[10] This multiplicity is inclusive of knowledges from all corners of the world.

South African knowledge generation has been oriented towards mastery of the Western canon and ways of knowing.[11] There has been scant regard for how the local context supports, repudiates, or parallels Western norms. This is inherent to all the disciplines. Fields such as psychology have tended to understand ideas of child and human development in line with Piagetian, Freudian, and other received knowledges of Euro-America with little interrogation of the values underpinning the conceptual logic of these. Mimicking textbooks and journals, student work pays a cursory "application" to context in the concluding paragraph of assignments. For Neo Lekgotla Laga Ramoupi, after the South African transition to democracy, "the epistemology

and theoretical underpinnings of the content and curriculum of our education . . . remained unchanged and unquestioned."[12] According to Kopano Ratele, there is very little in the curriculum about African, anti-colonial, de-colonial, and postcolonial social thought.[13] He adds that the danger of thinking within dominant discourses is that "our higher education system, the curriculum we design, classes we teach, and research we generate, continue to reproduce, or simply adjust, values supportive of racist, hetero-patriarchal, fundamentalist-capitalism."[14] Ramoupi labels this as the failure to decolonize the curriculum.[15] What remains implicit in the valorization of Western ways of knowing in the local context is that Euro-American is better, and local is underdeveloped and of dubious value. Taken further, this prejudicial assessment maintains that Western knowledge owes its development to white people while the darker peoples of the South have depended on imported knowledges as they have no capacity to generate their own.

Scholars of the history of knowledge, such as Cheikh Anta Diop, of course reveal that Africa and the global South were pivotal in contributing to world knowledge. However, by disinvesting in African education, colonialism, apartheid, and neoliberalism led to Africans being objects of study rather than the creators of validated knowledges. For example, Mahmood Mamdani observes:

> Historically, African Studies developed outside Africa, not within it. It was a study of Africa, but not by Africans. The context of this development was colonialism, the Cold War and apartheid. This period shaped the organisation of social science studies in the Western academy.[16]

This means that very particular historical events conspired to stifle knowledge generation on the continent. In the void created by the imperial occupiers, Africans were studied under a lens colored by the exotic, and our agency to write back or to examine the West was disabled. Against this background, IKS is disorienting in part because it strives to center the local and read the West in relation to Southern histories, identities, and ways of knowing. Properly applied, theory from the South will lead to a paradigm shift where both the content and form of knowledge will be dislodged.[17] In this act of epistemic disobedience, the center will shift to the South and raise the significance of the black body and its ways of knowing.[18] The center of the South should after all be in

the South. Importantly, Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff argue that the global South can be seen as a source of theory that can help explain world historic events.[19] This is not a valorization of the South but a way of seeing it as important and equal and thus as central to explaining the world. In addition to identifying the epistemic privilege of the West, for Mamdani, the challenge is not to "oppose the local to the global [but to] seek to understand the global from the vantage point of the local."[20]

Aime Cesaire captures this position aptly in his juxtaposition between provincialism and disembodied universalism:

> Provincialism? Absolutely not. I'm not going to confine myself to some narrow particularism. But nor do I intend to lose myself in a disembodied universalism. There are two ways to lose oneself: through walled-in segregation in the particular, or through dissolution into the 'universal.' My idea of the universal is that of a universal rich with all that is particular, rich with all particulars, the deepening and coexistence of all particulars.[21]

The life work of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is an exemplar of thinking about the particular in order to shift the seemingly neutral universal. He suggests that the universal is not equally constituted by the richness of all the particulars. Some particulars matter more than others.[22] Contestations between different ways of knowing do not necessarily occur on the big stages but in the curriculum, in departmental meetings, in university corridors, in the work that is accepted for publication by journals, and in whose stay becomes untenable within the academy. Given the deep fissures of race in Southern Africa, the character of decolonization has come to be associated with blackness while that of colonialism is aligned to whiteness. Of course, the overlap between ways of thinking and race is not absolute, and the expediency of coloniality, even among black scholars, is a powerful ally for career advancement. For Andreotti, Stein, Ahenakew, and Hunt, "coloniality" may be understood as "a system that defines the organization and dissemination of epistemic, material, and aesthetic resources in ways that reproduce modernity's imperial project."[23]

The attention to IKS and decolonizing the academy comes at a time when the university sector is reeling under the pressure of catching up to the Northern university on the global ratings tables,

while simultaneously dealing with local challenges of access for large numbers of students. Attention to knowledge development laboratories like IKS are perceived as a nuisance when seemingly established disciplines are unable to publish fast enough. If they want a space in the academy, black academics are required to join the race on the condition that they advance particular forms of knowledge. This expectation calls for a denial of truths fundamental to one's place in the world. It means that worlds that the black scholar has access to by virtue of history, language, location, and experience are effectively closed. To survive in the academy, the black scholar must put on her white mask, swallow her language, and mimic Western norms and standards of competence.[24] Besides the psychological disempowerment, muting the local perspective is counterproductive, as we can only productively engage in global discourses from a perspective steeped in our location.

Methods

This study reflects on the critical incidents that signal epistemic contestations that have shaped some of the discourses of the post-apartheid academy. Jonathan Jansen advises that an instructive means for understanding change is through the study of critical incidents.[25] He states, "one understands transformation much better when someone throws the proverbial 'spanner' in the works."[26] This disequilibrium wrought by crises is illustrative as it allows the institution to either seize the crisis as an opportunity to learn and change or to jerk itself back into place. Crisis exposes the underbelly of institutions as it goes beyond carefully crafted statements, brochures, slogans, and policy documents. Through the direct and indirect expulsion of certain discordant or untenable bodies (bodies of knowledge inscribed in physical bodies), the institution reveals its foundational values. What follows is a discursive examination of a selection of critical incidents that have been the "fly in the ointment" of post-apartheid transformation at the Universities of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Cape Town (UCT), and North-West University (NWU).[27] I explore the meanings of the expulsions of Professors Malegapuru William Makgoba and Abebe Zegeye from Wits, the dismissal of Dr. Ingrid Tufvesson from NWU, and the departure of Mahmood Mamdani from UCT. The exploration of these incidents is based on publicly available

information generated by the controversies and written by the various protagonists and higher education commentators. The selection of these universities is based on the location of the critical incidents. This does not mean that the other South African and African universities are any more or less beholden to the colonial project.

Historicizing the White South African University in Relation to its Reviled Bodies

Weaver Shipley et al. urge the historicizing of the academic institution in relation to its long-term sedimentation of experience.[28] Understood in relation to the sovereign eye and the colonial settler relationship, the West is not spatially limited to the metropolis but has created institutions based on its values in the colonies.[29] Many white liberal institutions of education pride themselves on an active history of opposition to apartheid.[30] The hypocrisy of this pride is exposed by the fact that the negligible number of black people that studied at these universities had to gain ministerial permission.[31] The ontological position of privilege and ownership of white people's space was unquestioned. The University of Cape Town's refusal to employ the amply qualified black scholar Archie Mafeje in the 1960s and again in the 1990s is illustrative of the shortcomings of liberalism.[32] The assistant position assigned to the revolutionary Robert Sobukwe at Wits is another example of the limits of liberalism. Thus, universities that ostensibly embraced liberalism perpetuated racial discrimination by marginalizing exceptionally qualified black scholars. Even though Cloete, Maasen, Fehnel, Moja, Perold, and Gibbon point to a remarkably changed post-apartheid higher education landscape, in marked continuities with the apartheid era, the post-apartheid university has illustrated its commitments to coloniality when faced with threatening black bodies.[33] The threat of new or "foreign" bodies is epitomized by famous clashes with Malegapuru William Makgoba, Abebe Zegeye, Ingrid Tufvesson, and Mahmood Mamdani. These are examples of the expulsion of discordant bodies that have sort to promote IKS in post-apartheid South African higher education.

The Expulsion of Malegapuru William Makgoba

Appointed in 1994 based on his impressive academic credentials, which included a PhD from Oxford and a supposedly "clean" record untainted by activism, Malegapuru William Makgoba appeared a safe black candidate for leadership in the year that South Africa held its first democratic elections.[34] This image, however, quickly unravelled when Makgoba was cast as a rabble-rouser in what has become known as the Makgoba Affair. Besides the employment of a few black people, the institution did not see the need to introduce IKS. Makgoba championed African epistemologies, but this move was seen as an effort to lower academic standards. Led by Charles van Onselen, a group of thirteen senior academics set about poking holes in Makgoba's academic credentials.[35] Here was an example of a black body under scrutiny for transgressing the terms under which it had been given permission to occupy consecrated space. Makgoba left Wits in 1996, less than two years after his appointment as the first black Deputy Vice Chancellor in 1994. With reference to the saga, he notes, "No one could convince me that refocusing the curriculum to Africa. . . could lower standards."[36] Like de-colonial scholar Walter Mignolo would argue, the culture and humanity of local people had to drive the character of knowledge generation.[37] Makgoba notes: "It is very difficult to find a black South African academic who has not been a victim of white liberal South Africans. It has become our trademark."[38] Nearly twenty years later, Makgoba informed me that university leaders who sought to change the Eurocentric nature of the university were destined for expulsion or even stress-related death. This was his experience at Wits.

The Expulsion of Abebe Zegeye

The ejection of Abebe Zegeye from Wits is an illustration of the battle for epistemic control. Zegeye was an eminent academic originally from Ethiopia who was appointed to head the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WiSER) after the departure of the previous director, who left to head a centre at UCT where her spouse had assumed the position of Vice Chancellor. Steeped in global influences but with an African bias, Zegeye's appointment was not without opposition and contestation.[39]

Over the years, WiSER had positioned itself as an elite institute in conversation with eminent institutions in the global North. These Northern academics, in turn, saw WiSER as a legitimate and ideologically aligned port of entry into African Studies on the continent. Its employment practices valorized South African white liberalism and its extensions in North America and Europe. Elsewhere, Zegeye and Maurice Taonezvi Vambe had cautioned against African scholars that write Africa to the West. Vambe and Zegeye described this as African "orientalism" which they characterized as follows:

> . . . particular vocabularies and discourses are authorized that, on the surface, seem to show genuine concern for the well-being of Africa but in reality reinforce the understanding of the multiple identities of Africa, a fact that entrenches the image of Africa as a 'modern heart of darkness' where everything that can go wrong in the world is to be found.[40]

The authors that Vambe and Zegeye believed were practicing a form of African "orientalism" did not take kindly to this characterization. Vambe and Zegeye had caused unhappiness by critiquing prominent scholars. The fears of those with interests vested in the continued trajectory of the institute as a conduit of the global North were realized soon after Zegeye's appointment.[41] The consequent departure of celebrated academics at WiSER could be read as either a purge or an orchestrated protest against Zegeye's appointment and leadership. Again, Puwar is instructive here. She argues that "the 'look,' 'terror,' and the 'monstrous'; help to consider what is disturbed by the arrival or entry of 'new' kinds of bodies in professional occupations which are not historically and conceptually 'reserved' for them."[42] When elite spaces are infiltrated by the "monstrous," the value of the spaces depreciates in the eyes of the related elites.

In response to WiSER's pattern of employing scholars trained in the global North, Zegeye began planning to fill the vacancies with prominent black academics from South Africa, Africa, and the African diaspora.[43] Here, Zegeye could be interpreted as practicing Mignolo's body politics.[44] Borrowing from Mamdani's critique of UCT, I posit that underlying Zegeye's staffing plan was an attempt to access Africa through post-independence African debates and not the North American academy.[45] For Zegeye,

WiSER perfected the latter. In elite spaces that exclude black bodies, the debates happen beyond South Africa or through web-streaming and conferences at Northern universities.

The international networks of the old WiSER soon paid off. Three prominent academics from the global North wrote a letter pointing to suspected plagiarism in Zegeye's work.[46] They or their informants seemingly sat down in a library and combed through his work. Puwar explains the nature of power within and between institutions when she points out, "Institutions exist in relation to each other. A web of institutional networks which overlap and compete with each other affect the social life of organisations. Their long-distance reach and porous nature create a criss-crossing of global and international networks."[47] A follow-up investigation led by Wits advocate Gilbert Marcus SC was launched under the auspices of the Vice Chancellor's Office and overseen by Bozzoli, the spouse of van Onselen, who was a prominent figure in opposing Makgoba. Zegeye was found guilty of plagiarism and resigned. In response to his expulsion from Wits, Zegeye had this to say about his intentions for the institute:

> . . . my plans [are] to ensure that the institute graduates the next generation of African scholars; that it builds a pan-African institute that draws on the wealth of intellectual capital on the continent and does not privilege the West; that it works with scholars who take Africa seriously. My plan to change Wiser's [*sic*] direction disrupted the plans of some colleagues. They therefore marshalled support of scholars in the north to assist in undermining my purpose and its legitimacy.[48]

While I am in no position to judge the merits of the findings of plagiarism, it is clear that the institute was effectively returned to its rightful heirs. Throughout his long career, Zegeye had not been scrutinized with this level of detail. The scrutiny bore fruit and he was jettisoned. Zegeye took up a position in Australia. However, armed with the accusation of plagiarism, the tentacles of the South African colony reached out to the Australian colonial outpost, and there too, Zegeye was compelled to leave. He had effectively become a tainted imposter within the global networks of higher education.

The Expulsion of Ingrid Tufvesson

The story of Ingrid Tufvesson is an example of a black woman who disturbs. While at UCT, Tufvesson understood her role as championing the cause of staff facing social justice infringements and styled herself as an activist. Her academic writing and administrative work illustrate this orientation. She wrote that her research and practice areas address "transformation, women and gender, transitionary societies, African understandings of Indigenous and settler issues, whiteness, Black feminist theory, intersectionality, and the politics of loyalty."[49] The humanity or body politics of Southern people is her abiding interest. Moreover, she critiques the South African academy for its structural complicity with giving voice to senior managers and well-known academics and their powerful networks. Like Ramoupi and Makgoba, Tufvesson attributes this to old lineages embedded within the unexamined history of higher education.[50] Referring to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, she notes that academia "was the only public sector left unexamined and/or held to account for the truth of their collusion and complicity in furthering, fortifying and sustaining the apartheid regime and agenda."[51]

Tufvesson left the University of Cape Town in 2011 after years of frustration and lack of recognition. She moved to North-West University, an institution born of a merger of three older institutions, which were the former Afrikaans university, Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education; the previously black-only University of the North-West; and the Sebokeng Campus of another mainly black university, Vista. This merged institution was led by the more powerful Potchefstroom University, where Afrikanerdom ruled for many years. Tufvesson soon famously clashed with the white Vice Chancellor and management of the university. In explaining her departure in 2013, after less than two years at the institution, management stated that she "had an uncompromising attitude with regard to her style and approach" and that "most of her targets had not been achieved."[52] In turn, Tufvesson told the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper: "I'm not the first and, if unchallenged, possibly not the last person to be brandished a 'difficult person' in the tried and tested process of getting rid of people—some white but . . . predominantly black."[53] Even though Tufvesson put up a spirited fight for her values and

against her expulsion, ultimately she had to leave like those before her that had been conceived of as aliens of the colonial university of South Africa.

Puwar has illustrated that institutions are created with certain people in mind and that it is only through a historicization that we can get a deeper understanding of who belongs and who is a "space invader."[54] For Nellie McKay, "to be black and female in the academy has its own particular frustrations because it was never intended for us to be here."[55] The location of black women in the margins of academia means that they are seen as the cause of unhappiness when they complain about their marginality and that of others.[56] In this respect, then, black women are space invaders of academic spaces. This is not to say that they were not borne in mind in the creation of the university. Rather, their position was regarded as that of the invisible cleaner of the grime generated by the first-class citizens of the university.[57] Pumla Gqola reflects on her experience of being mistaken as a student by her own pupils, who were unable to reconcile the image of a black, woman, and young person with that of an academic. She contends that they had come to associate the person of the academic as white, male, and older.[58] Puwar notes that the entry of the black woman or male figure "is still capable of inducing a state of ontological anxiety. It disturbs a particular 'look.'"[59] The disturbance referred to here is a disruption to the original design.

The Expulsion of Mahmood Mamdani

In the final case study that I present to illustrate the resistance to epistemic disobedience, I discuss the story of Mahmood Mamdani. He ranks as one of the most important African scholars alive today. Born in India and raised in Uganda, he completed his post-secondary school education in North America. No doubt taken up by the post-1994 euphoria and committed to working on the continent, Mamdani headed to UCT, where he was appointed as a Professor of African Studies and subsequently as the head of the Centre for African Studies. Structurally, he read his appointment as the only academic at the centre as a farce, as he had no students to teach and no colleagues with whom to grow the discipline. While there, Mamdani wrote: "A colonial power does not easily tolerate the development of a native intelligentsia, for such an

intelligentsia would challenge the claim to tutelage that is central to every form of colonial rule."[60] This can be seen as a critique of whiteness and an insertion of a body politics within the academy.

Mamdani fell out with his colleagues and left in 1998, just three years after his appointment. Mamdani is at pains to point out that while race may have been involved, he foregrounds the academic aspect because he sought to question the ontological and epistemic position of African Studies.[61] Following Mignolo, I argue that the body is inseparable from knowledge.[62] The black body is not intolerable on its own. Rather, it is the IKS advancing and outspoken black body that is a problem. In *Citizen and Subject*, Mamdani notes that even when the South African academy was opposed to apartheid politically, it was deeply affected by it epistemologically.[63] At issue was what he and others have termed "South African exceptionalism" that views South Africa as economically, socially, culturally distinct, and better than the rest of Africa. His attempts to write Africa into South African history angered some scholars within the UCT academy. Mamdani was suspended from the course that he initially conceptualized. His sin was disobeying the standard tropes of thinking, writing, and teaching about Africa. Although an apology was issued to him, he was subsequently demoted as leader of the foundation course that was to be taught to first- year students across the Faculty of Humanities.[64] When the matter was not resolved, Mamdani left UCT in protest. Therefore, while he was not expelled, his stay had become intellectually and personally untenable.

One cannot read the exit of Mamdani without thinking about the ontological and bodily denial of Professor Archie Mafeje by UCT. Mafeje was an eminent scholar of anthropology who was denied an academic post at the institution in both the 1960s and 1990s. Mamdani and Mafeje's fortunes collide in relation to the AC Jordan Chair, a position that Mafeje had applied for a few years earlier but which Mamdani subsequently occupied.[65] Both Mamdani and Mafeje presented an epistemological threat to how UCT wanted to continue thinking about Africa. Ramoupi is instructive when he states: **"**the appointment of Professor Mafeje, a distinguished international scholar, at UCT would have been a threat to the long-established university curricula, value system, and institutional culture based on Europe and Europeans as focal points of knowledge and knowledge production."[66]

The presence of a black authority who is senior in his field and has international acclaim is a threat to institutions with parochial lenses developed within an insular country.[67] It inverts the order of things of who should be the expert and who should be the student. Mafeje and Mamdani are the proverbial insubordinate natives that speak back through IKS and do not stay in their frames.[68] Mafeje was denied access to UCT, and Mamdani left when his efforts at epistemic disobedience were blocked.

Body Politics of Knowledge

The colonial and apartheid character of the South African university expands beyond UCT and NWU. South African universities were designed for white men. Walking down corridors of faculty offices at the liberal Wits University, one is confronted by rows of mounted photographs of senior students, faculty, and academic leaders. They are all white and nearly all are male.

Figure 1: The photographs that line the corridors of an academic department. (Picture by Author)

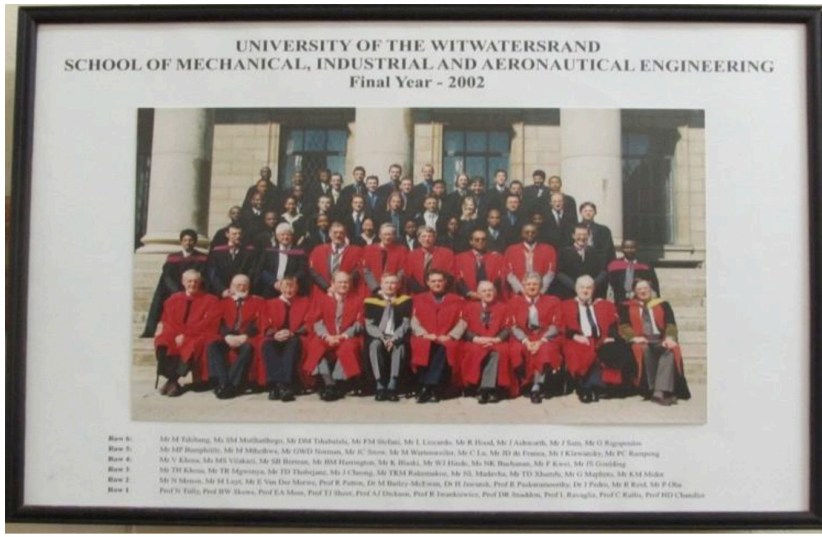

Figure 2: The class of 2002. (Picture by Author)

Figure 3: Deans. (Picture by Author)

The photographs mark and create the space and show who can claim historical belonging and whose history has no trace. There are, therefore, those who belong, while the recent arrivals can be read as imposters in a space that was not created for them. This was despite the fact that black bodies were present at the establishment of these universities. Their labor secured the foundations upon which they were built. When walking down corridors whose territory is so clearly marked in terms of teachers, students, and academic leaders, as in figures 1, 2, and 3, it becomes apparent as to who feels mirrored and who is bodily unsettled.

Henri Lefebvre notes that space is perceived, lived, and produced through the body.[69] In addition to moving through space, our bodies also simultaneously constitute space and are constituted by it. Normative bodies for which the space was created are disturbed by the arrival of different bodies.[70] Even though all bodies, including that of Tufvesson, now have legal rights to enter previously forbidden spaces, they are still reserved occupational spaces that demand epistemic obedience. The white male body continues to be the somatic norm through a process of historically embedded relationships.[71] This is intimately tied to the project of knowledge generation that has been colonized by white males for centuries. Those who have occupied spaces for hundreds of years naturalize these spaces as theirs and set the agenda of what to research, how to research, and who should research.

Mignolo critiques the racially configured geopolitics of knowledge by observing that Third World bodies are seen as cultural while those of the First World are associated with theorization.[72] By centering geo- and body politics, I attempt to illuminate the role of the body in generating knowledge. Moreover, the case studies that I present here are to illustrate that there is a price to be paid when bodies racially marked as black intervene as knowledge generators. For Mignolo, recognizing Third World bodies as generators of knowledge is fundamental in imbuing them with humanity beyond being objects of knowledge.[73] He argues that we should not see thinking as coming before *being* and that we should instead assume "that it is a racially marked body in a geo-historical marked space that feels the urge . . . to speak, to articulate, in whatever semiotic system, the urge that makes of living organisms 'human' beings."[74] As human beings that contribute to the generation of knowledge, black bodies refuse to be told who they are.

For Mignolo, decolonial thinkers are racially devalued bodies that engage in epistemic disobedience by affirming their epistemic rights. They unveil the knower and not just the known. He contends, "The knower is always implicated, geo- and body-politically, in the known."[75] Body politics matter in that they take the lived experience of the knower seriously in ways that "neutral" generators of knowledge are generally unable. For instance, black feminists engaged in body politics when they theorized intersectionality in recognition of the limitations of narrow Euro-American feminist thinking. It was Franz Fanon who used body politics to point to the limits of Freud's psychodynamic approach when he argued that a fuller understanding of the black man was better accounted for by a social analysis rather than a psycho-analytical one.[76] In South Africa, the black scholar should have epistemic privilege over the white scholar when pursuing a decolonial scholarship of thinking from the body. This is not to suggest that there is no role for the white scholar. Mignolo suggests that the Euro-American scholar that lives in the former colonies has no business leading or advising local people and scholars.[77] Her role is to work in collaboration with the local knower.

Conclusion

The South African academy was not built with the black transgressive body in mind. To demonstrate this, I have argued that the colonial university should be historicized so that we can see it for what is it—epistemically exclusionary. The colonial universities of South Africa were built to advance the colonial project of valorizing the imperial centers. The Universities of Cape and Witwatersrand are celebrating centenaries based on deep colonial foundations. North-West University, the erstwhile University of Potchefstroom, is 146 years old. These institutions have played a role in shaping the country in which we live. The paucity of black senior scholars, limited integration, and neglect of locally situated knowledges in the post-apartheid university must therefore be understood against the backdrop of this history of exclusion. The expulsion of discordant black bodies from the colonial university is also best understood in relation to this template.

This paper has attempted to illustrate that the black body cannot be understood in isolation from epistemological alienation

and contestation. The denial and subjugation of African and Southern ways of knowing over the period of colonization and apartheid occurred with the complicity of the colonial universities that sought to mimic the global North. The thrust to rewrite and develop local ways of knowing through IKS has not had traction in the research and curriculum of the old liberal and conservative colonial university. Through a discursive focus on critical incidents, I have shown how those at the forefront of attempting to change the university have been expelled. As with most qualitative research, breadth is sacrificed in favor of depth. This has meant that only four people whose stories are publicly available could be addressed in this paper. Of course, the figures that I have looked at are contentious. Their behaviour might be called into question by people on all sides of the racial spectrum. But I note that throughout history, subalterns who have disobeyed or been unable to play to middle-class colonial rules have been targets of the disciplinary gaze. We need to spur the South African academy to move from rhetorical inclusion to a body politics of epistemic disobedience. Should we fail to act with a sense of urgency, the strident calls by students to decolonize the academy may leave us little choice in the matter.

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