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A Review Of Africanisation, Decolonisation And Transformation Processes To Re-Imagine And Redress Colonial-Apartheid Legacies In The South African Higher Education System

Yanda Bango, 2025

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A Review Of Africanisation, Decolonisation And Transformation Processes To Re-Imagine And Redress Colonial-Apartheid Legacies In The South African Higher Education System

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Director: Prof. Dr. Gabriele Sommer
Vice-Director: Prof. Dr. Stefan Ouma

University of Bayreuth

Universitätsstrasse 30
D-95445 Bayreuth

Phone: +49 (0)921 556902

www.ias.uni-bayreuth.de
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D-95445 Bayreuth
Phone: + 49 (0)921 55- 6937
www.bigsas.uni-bayreuth.de
bigsas@uni-bayreuth.de

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A Review of Africanisation, Decolonisation and Transformation Processes
to Re-Imagine and Redress Colonial-Apartheid Legacies in the South African Higher Education System

About the author

Yanda Bango is a PhD candidate in the field of sociology under the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Bayreuth. She holds two MA degrees, one in Development and Governance from the University of Duisburg-Essen and another one in Sociology from Rhodes University. Her research interests centre around issues relating to social and racial justice, freedom and equality. She is invested in exploring and further understanding the facilitating role that formal learning and governing structures, civic mobilization, public participation and critical consciousness ought to play in fostering social justice, the freedom and equality of particularly racialised people in this post-colonial society. Her PhD research project applies a decolonial lens to analyse the transformation agenda of higher education in post-apartheid South Africa.

email: ybango@gmail.com / Yanda.Tischmeyer@uni-bayreuth.de

Abstract

Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation are different conceptual ideas and principles that have emerged at different moments of South Africa's (SA) history as a way of engaging with colonial-apartheid oppression and its legacies. These three discourses tend to be engaged in isolation from each other and continue to be polarised by many. This non-combined approach, however, has limitations, as it risks limiting our (re)imagination of the future of South African higher education (SAHE) from multiple perspectives. Since the dawn of South Africa's democracy, transformation has been a favoured discourse and conceptual framework. However, the 2015 Fallist protests revealed that the transformation approach, when applied alone, cannot adequately redress South Africa's colonial-apartheid legacies in higher education; there is a need to include and be inherently guided by the anti-oppression ideologies that informed resistance against colonialism and apartheid because they articulate(d) a particular vision for what a liberated South Africa should look like. Inspired by Es'kia Mphahlele – who believed that after independence new ideas will demand expression and create organs of public opinion, and a hybridity of ideas will rid formerly oppressed societies of their oppressive practices – this article explores and analyses the discourses of transformation, decolonisation and Africanisation relative to the South African higher education system. Having considered South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid, and how it has impacted the present day higher education system, I ultimately propose a hybrid-pluriversal approach that combines insights from all three frameworks. Potentially, this approach can positively impact the ongoing process of redressing colonial-apartheid legacies in the South African education system.

Keywords: Africanisation, decolonisation, transformation, higher education, colonial-apartheid, hybrid-pluriversality

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A Review Of Africanisation, Decolonisation And Transformation Processes To Re-Imagine And Redress Colonial-Apartheid Legacies In The South African Higher Education System

Yanda Bango

1 Introduction

Ezekiel (Es'kia) Mphahlele[1] (1962:226) wrote that "there is this rich promise to console us: there are definite signs that after independence, old stock allegiances and affiliations will fall away, and that new ideas will demand expression and therefore create organs of public opinion. This way, there is bound to be a cross-breeding of ideas that will in time purge the country of unsavoury practices". For a very long time, the conceptual ideas and principles of Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation have been engaged with in isolation from each other and there is a tendency for these ideas to be polarised. This can be viewed as a shortfall which runs the risk of limiting our (re)imagination about the future of South African higher education (SAHE) from multiple perspectives. It is Mphahlele's words that should make one ponder on the following

[1] Ezekiel (Es'kia) Mphahlele, also referred to as the father of African humanism and one of the founding figures of African literature, was a South African anti-apartheid activist, author and teacher. After having been considered unemployable by the apartheid regime, amongst other African teachers in South Africa, he went into exile from 1959 to 1977. This saw him residing in Nigeria, Kenya, France and the United States. It was during this period in exile that his literary career gained prominence. Amongst some of his influential contributions is the idea of an African personality.

thought: perhaps now is the time for us to consider Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation (all conceptual ideas and principles that have emerged over different periods in South Africa's (SA) history as a way of engaging with colonial-apartheid oppression and its legacies) as a cross-breed, henceforth hybrid-pluriversality, pluriversality and/or hybridity (interchangeably) of ideas that can be applied in the approach of redressing the historical legacies that are still present in higher education. Hybrid-plurisversality, in this sense, denotes applying an approach that combines the three schools of thought in the process of redressing SA's colonial-apartheid legacies of injustice. Overall, this article, which is both a descriptive and prescriptive analysis, offers a theoretical review of the three schools of thought (Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation) and the hybrid-pluriversal approach as a solution.

One good thing that the progression of time teaches us is the fact that nothing is permanent, change is inevitable. However, when we consider the atrocities of the enslavement, colonialism and apartheid, and their direct impact on the lives of South Africans, it is important to critically pay attention to the trajectory of change, lest we fulfil the French prophesy "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose", which is said to have been coined by the French novelist and journalist, Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, in 1849. In English, this translates to "the more things change, the more they stay the same". When we do not critically reflect on history, we risk reproducing historical injustices. If we are serious about social justice, this is something to take into serious consideration.

Other important words to remember are echoed by Ralpha Waldo Emerson (2005: paragraph 261) who wrote that "the universe is fluid and volatile. Permanence is but a word of degrees". Again, this reminds us that no situation is permanent; change is inevitable, even though it may seem like it is not happening. In this world filled with so much injustice and despair, these words are important. They remind us to pay attention to the direction that change takes, at least to influence its impact, even if it may at first appear meaningless.

Having a historical awareness helps us to understand the trajectory of change better, and in the case of this paper, the context under which Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation (can) operate(s). To engage with the topic, I will first start by providing a contextual background of this paper. I will then move on to provide an overview of the historical formation of the country that we know as South Africa. Afterwards, I will look at the historical formation of universities in the country to clarify why and for whom they were established, and how this impacts the current context. This discussion will also touch on the role of universities during colonialism, apartheid, and, ultimately, the postcolonial-apartheid era. After this, I will critically engage with the three schools of thought (Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation) by contextualising their use(s) within the different political stages that South Africa has undergone. Guided by this assessment, I will finally show why all three schools of thought, despite their distinctive features, have an important place in the narratives and dominant public discourse around how we should (re)imagine and re-shape higher education (HE) in SA today. I will show how Mphahlele's cross-breeding idea, which I appropriate as hybrid-pluriversality or pluriversality (interchangeably), may help us reconcile the conceptual differences of these three schools of thought in the interest of constructively and completely eradicating colonial-apartheid legacies and their negative impact on HE for social justice.

2 Contextual Background

South Africa, a country with a history of systematised racial inequality, continues to battle with successfully redressing its colonial-apartheid legacies across all of its spheres of life. Existing programmes of redress have not fully achieved their policy goals (see, for example, Sihlangu and Odeku, 2021; Sader, 2020; Seekings, 2008; Habib, 2008; Muller, Mason and Cloete, 2006). This creates the impression that nothing is changing because institutional culture remains rooted in these legacies. The education system is one of these spheres. The 2015 Fallist protests, in particular, returned our attention to this pressing issue, and this time the discourse was focused on colonial-apartheid legacies, cushioned by institutional cultures, where the students called for a decolonised and Afro-centred education system.

Sadar (2020:123), for example, asserts that "the Fallist movement, that is, the #Fees Must Fall, #Rhodes Must Fall campaigns, served to highlight racialised socio-economic and gendered injustices that emerged post-1994". He adds that "it also focused our attention on the lack of transformation in higher education in terms of equity and redress, and called for radical social change towards a decolonised, just South Africa and decolonised universities. The Fallists called for the removal of colonial symbols, which they saw as symbolising the violence of colonialism. They also called for an end to the academic capitalism reflected in the corporate university, greater access to higher education for historically excluded people, institutional changes away from the dominant westernised patriarchal culture, employment equity and decolonisation of the curriculum" (Sader, 2020: 123).

Mahmood Mamdani, who has had a personal experience of coloniality in the higher education sector, particularly at the University of Cape Town back in 1998 when he advocated for post-apartheid universities to critically engage South Africa's history and for the African Studies curriculum to not reproduce a version of Bantu education, contextualises the post-apartheid higher education as follows: "the university is one of the most racialised institutions in South African society – as racialised as big business. The only difference is that while big business is sensitive to this fact, universities are not. The university is proud of its exclusivity, considering it an inevitable consequence of the pursuit of excellence" (Mamdani, 1997:2). It is due to this exclusivity, which has manifested as a culture of institutional racism, that the fallist movement transpired. The Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) movement characterised historically white universities as colonial, Eurocentric, white(ly) and patriarchal. The Fees Must Fall (FMF) movement argued that the fee-paying structure systematically excludes the same black majority that the colonial-apartheid state systemically imposed inferior education on in order for white supremacy to flourish. Coupled together, these systemic issues that perpetuate unequal access to higher education are widely accepted as what characterises the culture of historically white universities in SA.

Reflecting on the question of decolonising the university, particularly the Statue of Cecil John Rhodes, which the students used to catalyse their RMF protest at UCT, Mbembe (2016: 29) argues that "there are a number of issues for which it is easy to cut through the cheese. For instance, Rhodes' statue has nothing to do on a public university campus. Then we are told that he donated his land and his money to build the university. How did he get the land in the first instance? How did he get the money? Who ultimately paid for the land and the money?". For Mbembe (2016: 30),

colonial figures are problematic because they are "figures of people who tormented and violated all that which the name 'Black'stands for while they were alive". These figures, he argues, "are figures of people who truly believed that to be Black was a liability, and if this was not clear enough, it had to be made so" (Mbembe, 2020: 30). Essentially, Mbembe believes that even though the movement won a tactical battle, the struggle has only started. For him, the RMF protest "revealed numerous lines of fracture within South African society and has brought back on the agenda the question of de-racialization of this country's institutions and public culture" (Membe, 2016:32).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020) asserts that student-led formations such as the RMF and FMF movements stand on the shoulders of visionary leaders and freedom fighting giants such as Kwame Nkrumah, Steve Bantu Biko, Samora Machel, Thomas Sankara, and Amilcar Cabral. For him, what makes the fallist movement distinct is that it "emerged within the centre of what Julie Cupples (2019:2) termed 'the westernized university' as a site where learning and the production, acquisition and dissemina-tion of knowledge are embedded in Eurocentric epistemologies that are posited as objective, disembodied and universal and in which non-Eurocentric knowledge such as black and indigenous knowledges were largely ignored, marginalised or dismissed" (Ndlovu-Gastheni, 2020: 10). Furthermore, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018: 222) informs us that the RMF movement, at a continental level, "is part of the three phases of African protest movement (anti-colonial protests of the 1950s and 1960s; the 1980s and 1900s waves of anti-austerity protests that dragged into the Arab Spring/ Arab Awakening that engulfed North Africa)". At a planetary level, he argues that the movement is "part of those political and epistemological decolonial formations that are targeting global coloniality as it is currently represented by neoliberal capitalism" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018: 222).

Before 2015, the dominant discourse and approach of redressing the legacies of colonial-apartheid in SA was transformation and this is evident in the higher education policy framework such as the *Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation* (South African Government, 1996), the *Higher Education Act 101 of 1997* (South African Government, 1997a), and the *White Paper 3* (South African Government, 1997b). However, prior to 1994, many anti-apartheid activists subscribed to the discourse of Africanisation. For example, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) which arose from the need for black people to be more organised and united in the struggle against their oppression, embodies the principles of Africanisation. Steve Biko (1987:87), who viewed Black Consciousness (BC) as a quest for true humanity for the human beings whom the colonial and apartheid governments classified as Native, Bantu and black, argued that "the 'Black Consciousness' approach would be irrelevant in a colourless and non-exploitative egalitarian society. It is relevant here because we believe that an anomalous situation is a deliberate creation of man".

For Biko (1987), the BCM was the antithesis of white racism in South Africa. During his South African Students' Organisation/Black People's Convention Trail (also known as the Black Consciousness Trail) in 1976, he defined BC and the BCM as an attempt to get at humanity by challenging the very deep roots of the black man's belief about himself. In this trail, he states that their aim of choosing to use the word Black, which had been connoted with negativity, was to "elevate it to a position where we can look upon ourselves positively; because no matter whether

we choose to be called brown you are still going to get reference to black in an inferior sense in literature and in speeches by white racists or white persons in our society" (Biko, 1987: 105). Earlier on, in 1971, at a student conference sponsored by the Abe Bailey Institute for Inter-racial Studies and held in Cape Town, he argued that "the philosophy of Black Consciousness, therefore, expresses group pride and the determination by the blacks to rise and attain envisaged self… thinking along the lines of Black Consciousness makes the black man see himself as a being, entire in himself, and not as an extension of a broom or additional leverage to some machine" (Biko, 1987: 68).

Ultimately, for Biko (1987:117), the BCM was about creating a space for black people to realistically grapple "with their problems, to develop what one might call awareness, a physical awareness of their situation, to be able to analyse it, and to provide answers for themselves". The purpose behind it, as he asserted during the trial, was to provide some kind of hope. This is because he thought that there was a need for this hopefulness, for black people to be reminded not to give in to the hardships of life, for them to "develop some form of security to be together to look at their problems" and, "in this way build their humanity" (Biko, 1987: 114).

During colonial-apartheid times, as it is today, formal education directly impacted community well-being. The BCM movement understood this very well, hence their student activism in institutions of learning. Beyond the South African context, it is due to this understanding about the impact of education that scholars such as Paulo Freire (1970), in Latin America, and bell hooks (1994), in the United States, for instance, advocated for a critical pedagogy across the globe. These scholars felt that it is only through a problem-posing, liberating type of education that the recipients of education can have a good idea about how they can use their education to completely dismantle and redress the systemically embedded injustices that normalise the oppression and dehumanisation of certain people in society.

Back in SA, it was also due to the realisation of the role that formal education played in legitimising, maintaining and reproducing racial oppression and inequality that anti-apartheid fighters such as Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe and Clarence Makwethu, before the BCM was established years later, called for Africanisation and decolonisation. Departing from the African National Congress (ANC) 's political vision and policy of multi-racialism (which led to them forming their own movement, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania), they rather advocated for one human race and therefore non-racialism (see Kondlo, 2017; Kondlo, 20009; and Hoeane, 2005). This view was guided by the belief that racial classification is a myth that had been pronounced and propagated by imperial colonialists to justify their exploitation of indigenous Africans (see Bishopsgate Institute, 2024). Ultimately, the post-apartheid discourse, spearheaded by the ANC's much admired and iconised Nelson Mandela, came to be known as one that advocated for transformation.

Indeed, race is a social construct (see April, 2021; Dladla, 2020; Suyemoto et al., 2020; Modiri, 2012; Mignolo, 2008; and Ford and Kelly, 2005). Guided by Markus (2008), Smedley and Smedley (2005), Tate and Audette (2001), Suyemoto et al. (2020: 3), for instance, define race as "a social representation created for the purpose of devising social grouping related to physical appearance in order to create and maintain a power hierarchy between groups and enforce systems of privilege, most specifically between White people and people of color". Similarly, Mignolo (2008),

who regards race as a matrix of power and therefore calls it the racial matrix of power, argues that its main purpose, at conception, was to justify the control and exploitation over those earmarked for domination and exploitation. Suyemoto et al. (2020) make a distinction between race and racialisation. They note that "'Race' sometimes refers to the broad concept but can also refer to the specific categories within the construct, while 'racialisation' refers to the process of being socialised into the sociosystemic hierarchy and worldview" (Suyemoto et al., 2020: 3).

Garcia et al. (2022: 2) define ethnicity as "the state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition". For Suyemoto et al. (2020: 2), ethnicity, which is a multifaceted and dynamic concept, "develops and strengthens relationships through the formation of communities coming together around cultural similarity". As Suyemoto et al. (2020: 2) note, the meanings and boundaries of categories of race and ethnicity "change in relation to social discourse across historical time and context". It is based on this that they (Suyemoto et al., 2020: 22) assert that one could argue that "there is no real meaning to these concepts or categories, and that social scientists should therefore resist using them". In the same breath, they do quickly state that "however, most scientists agree that these concepts are relevant to lived experience in ways that have significant psychological, interpersonal, and material impact" (Suyemoto et al., 2020: 2).

Racism, which is a product of racial construction, is something that cannot be ignored when the topic of race comes up. It is based on this that Dladla (2020: 6), for example, informs us that "racism rests on the underlying ontological-biological claim that the quality of being a human-being, possessed by some segments of homo sapiens is different from that of others". Furthermore, he argues that "this ontological-biological claim becomes the basis for the ethical differentiation or discrimination between those who regard themselves as human beings proper and those whose humanness is arbitrarily claimed to be defective" (Dladla, 2020: 6). I will discuss how racial and ethnic classification, and consequently inequality, was legitimised in South Africa when I reflect on the country's historical formation. Pertinent to note here is that in SA race politics, as Mellet (2020) informs us, structurally began in 1903 when the British government, after their victory in the Anglo-Boer war in 1902, set up a census committee for the purpose of racially, ethnically and nationally classifying the people living in the region.

Given SA's background of political discourse where anti-colonial-apartheid was concerned, it should be mentioned that there was consensus about the fact that a democratic SA needs to break away from all of its colonial-apartheid legacies radically and intentionally, even though it cannot be conclusively asserted that there was absolute consensus about whether this should be guided by the principles of Africanisation, decolonisation or transformation. The ANC and PAC Azania's ideological differences which are illustrated by members of the ANC resolving to break away and establish the PAC, are indicative of this[2]. Nonetheless, transformation became the dominantly favoured and accepted discourse of postcolonial-apartheid SA. This alerts us that as an initial approach to breaking away from racial colonial-apartheid oppression, whatever the discourse, it

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[2] Due to limitations, I will not get into this discussion here. However, Kwandiwe Kondlo's book *In the Twilight of the Revolution: The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa) 1959 - 1994* , details the ideological differences that led to the PAC breaking away from the ANC.

was very clear that a non-colonial-apartheid South African state would need to commit intentionally and unapologetically, through systemic efforts, to (re)shaping the country into a mutually representative and beneficial one that especially regards the historically disregarded human beings.

Even though there was clarity about the necessity to break away from colonial-apartheid ideology and system, it appears that adopting a new ideology for what would embody the new democratic principles and systemic approaches was an ideological battleground. The transition negotiations between the ANC and the National Party (NP)[3] serve as a good reference point. Cloete (2015), for instance, mentions that transformation quickly became the favoured term to articulate the conception of change in SA, during the negotiations to transition the country from apartheid to democracy back in 1991. The reason for this, as Cloete (2005: no page number) puts it, was because "no self-respecting, Left-leaning individual at the time could claim that a revolution had occurred (they were, after all, still negotiating)". He adds that "former apartheid prime minister PW Botha and the National Party had given the word 'reform' a bad name. As a result, both the Left and Right enthusiastically embraced the term 'transformation' (Cloete, 2005: no page number). It is out of this that the discourse of transformation came to characterise the process of transition and redress in SA.

Ultimately, as the new dawn of democracy arrived in 1994, Desmond Tutu's rainbow nation ideology was adopted to symbolise the ANC's longstanding national ideal of non-racialism, which translated to multi-racialism, multi-culturalism and multi-lingualism. This ideology came about after Tutu's speech during what is known as the Peace March in Cape Town on the 13th of September 1989. This march, which was an act of support for peace and the end of apartheid, is estimated to have been attended by "20 000 to 35 000 people of all races, many dressed in white" (Evans, 2017: 202). It was provoked by De Klerk and his administration's violent response to the six-week-long 'defiance campaign' that the United Democratic Front (UDF) had called for. The UDF's plan, as Evans (2017: 203) informs us, was "to march throughout city centres and in white suburbs". In one of the marches, Evans (2017: 203) informs us that the "police sprayed a crowd of Cape Town protestors with purple dye from a water cannon for easy identification of their targets before hunting them down, and then beating and arresting them". In the speech that Tutu made at the Peace March, he asserted that "there is nothing wrong with this beautiful country except for apartheid! There is nothing wrong with this beautiful country except for injustice! There is nothing wrong with this country except for the violence of apartheid" (cited in Evans, 2017: 205). He further went on to state that "This country is a rainbow nation! This country is technicolour. You can come and see the new South Africa!" (cited in Evans, 2017: 205).

It can be argued, therefore, that the ANC-led government chose transformation as its discourse because for them it best articulated the vision of the non-racial South Africa that they were known to advocate for. Coupled with Tutu's rainbow nation ideology, it encapsulated the democratic South Africa that the post-apartheid state envisioned. From reading and learning about the ANC's

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[3] For information about the ANC and NP's history, the reader can consult the following:
https://www.anc1912.org.za/history/ ;
https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/site/q/03lv02424/04lv02730/05lv03188/06lv03210.htm .

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discourse (such as Nelson Mandela's well known statement from the dock during the Rivonia Trial in 1964, and Tutu's speech, for example) one can say that transformation, as it was articulated and presented to South Africans, appeared to be a balanced approach that would appease both the historically oppressed and their oppressors. It carried the hope that South Africans would be able to re-construct a new society in which everyone would participate as an equal as they collectively play a constructive role in setting things right.

Therefore, in this democracy that resulted from what is commonly referred to as a negotiated settlement between the ANC and NP, the discourse of transformation can be said to have been a more acceptable compromise at the time. It ensured that violence and bloodshed would not ensue as a result of the threatening racial tensions and uncertainty that had befallen the country. True to the policy of non-violence that the ANC had held on to, one can say that the discourse of transformation created an atmosphere for all South Africans, under the narrative of 'a rainbow nation', to subscribe to Mandela's encouragement which prompted them to live in harmony while grappling to reconcile with colonial-apartheid injustices. On this score, it can be said that the transformation discourse helped to settle the ground; it influenced South Africans of different racial backgrounds to come together as they heal from historical trauma, reconcile and try to reshape their present and future. Transformation continues to guide the national policy frameworks and implementation for higher education institutions in SA.

However, due to the 2015 student-led fallist protests, we were forced to revisit and seriously consider the forgotten, often devalued, ignored and silenced concepts of Africanisation and decolonisation. This is because the 2015 student-led fallist protests, in their contestation of colonial-apartheid legacies (displayed by institutional cultures), were effectively telling us that the transformation approach has not systematically changed the conditions of the historically oppressed that the anti-colonial-apartheid resistance movement dedicated itself to changing. The dehumanisation of the historically oppressed continues to be normalised and systematised despite existing policy frameworks designed to redress this issue. Guided by this backdrop, this article attempts to look at the theoretical arguments of the three conceptual schools of thought (Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation) and their implications on the higher education system. I am mainly guided by the view that HE (as many anti-colonial-apartheid activists and critical pedagogic scholars envision/ed) should not maintain nor reproduce racial hierarchies and superiority-inferiority complexes amongst human beings, it should instead play an active role in rehumanising the dehumanised and effectively promote social justice.

3 The Historical Formation Of The Country Known As South Africa

The Anglo-Boer War provides a useful starting point for understanding the politics of naming, territorial claims, and ideological discourse in SA's formation. Although this period does not provide a representative and full overview of the region's history and its people, it provides a sufficient account of the force of imperialism, and because my aim is to do exactly that, it is appropriate to start here. As the name suggests, the Anglo-Boer War was a conflict between the British Empire and the Boers. The first one took place from 1880 to 1881, and the second one from 1899 to 1902. It was a fight for the region's natural wealth and resources (see Badsey, 2011; Wasserman, 2011). Claiming to be the original Africans because they were the first Europeans to settle in the region back in 1652, the Boers (who referred to themselves as Afrikaners to affirm

the claim that they are the 'true' and 'original' Africans) while referring to the British as 'uitlanders' (outsiders), claimed that they were the rightful bearers of the region and should therefore have bureaucratic control over it. However, the British, who wanted to create a single unified state and gain territorial control over the region (including territories controlled by the Boers) as part of their expansion and ambition to control trading routes through the Cape of Good Hope, disputed this claim (see Badsey, 2011; Wasserman, 2011; and Porter, 2000). The conflict was essentially a competition for control through geographical and material power.

This region was attractive and lucrative to both settler communities because of its mineral and agricultural wealth. For example, diamond (which had been discovered in Kimberly in 1867), explored and mainly exploited by the British from the period of 1868 onwards, was a huge source of wealth (see Macfarlane, 2019). Figures such as Cecil John Rhodes and the de Beers family played a prominent role in the process. Gold, said to have been discovered in the Witwatersrand in 1886, was another mineral that served as a source of conflict. As a result, the first Anglo-Boer War took place from December 1880 to March 1881, resulting in the Boers winning and gaining independence of the South African Republic as they named and called it (see Badsey, 2011; and Wasserman, 2011). A little over 18 years later, the second Anglo-Boer War, which took place from October 1899 to May 1902, transpired, this time resulting in a victory for the British (see Porter, 2000; Barnes, 2003; Wassermann, 2011; Wessels, 2011; Judd and Surridge, 2013). At this time, the country's currency was directly linked to gold.

In 1910, the British renamed the country from Zuid-Afrikaanische Republiek (South African Republic in English) to the Union of South Africa, which was to be officially a 'whites only' country. Although the blatant disregard, dispossession and exploitation of indigenous Africans had already taken shape, this formal declaration, under colonial British governance, systemically excluded indigenous South Africans from the wealth and opportunities of their ancestral land. Thus, from this point onwards, they were officially declared immigrants in the 'whites only' Union of South Africa.

Mellet (2020:271) mentions that "the British colonists prioritised a different form of subjugation and control over the indigenous African majority population by using a 'divide, conquer, rule and reconfigure' strategy to deal with what they called the ' Native Problem'". He further notes, "priority one was to separate indigenous Africans in South Africa from the rest of the continent through indoctrination that emphasised that South Africa was a European political entity not part of the rest of Africa", which relied on the "terra nullius doctrine of discovery of empty land, which proceeded from an older papal bull called Inter Caetera promulgated in 1493 by Pope Alexander VI that European monarchs used to colonise non-Christian territories across the world" (Mellet, 2020:271).

It is during this period of British colonialism in SA that social groups were formerly classified according to 3 distinctive racial groups, namely European, Native and Coloured. The purpose of this classification was to socially divide indigenous Africans, impose an inferiority-superiority binary and complex between human beings according to the established racial and ethnic groups in order to ultimately legitimise conquering and ruling them. For instance, the 'Natives' who made up more than 150 social groups were further classified and assimilated into nine ethnic groups according to their spoken languages, namely "Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Sotho, Ndebele, Pedi, Venda,

Swazi, and Shangaan-Tsonga" (Mellet, 2020: 290). With this classification, after having established that SA was a 'whites-only' country, the 'Natives' were legally classified as aliens and migrants in their own ancestral land.

Trying to keep the other group of indigenous Africans (the Khoi and the San people) separated from the larger indigenous community of 'Natives', by classifying them as Coloured, served two purposes. The first one was to assimilate them with the minority group made of the (formerly) enslaved Asians (known as Cape Malays) that the Dutch had brought into the region with them (see Maart, 2020), and (mixed-race) people who were born as a result of interracial (African and European) relationships. To this point, Maart (2020) argues that the act of renaming indigenous South Africans and enslaved people was an attempt to erase their indigeneity and history. This way, they would gain the burden of upholding the European cultural code of conduct.

According to British colonial logic, the group of 'Natives' made up of Khoi and San people did not look dark enough to be classified as Native (and later black by the apartheid government), but they were also not light enough to be classified as white. Coupled with this, as Mellet (2020: 272) informs us, they claimed that the Khoi and San people "did not speak 'Bantu' languages but rather mainly English and Afrikaans and faint traces of San and Khoi languages and other vast vanishing creole African-Asian-Arabic elements mixed with English and Afrikaans". This leads to the second purpose. Staying true to their strategy of divide, conquer, rule and reconfigure, keeping this group of indigenous 'Natives' separated from fellow 'Natives' was to serve a tactical purpose. The government would use them as a strategic minority to purposefully strengthen and further legitimise their control over the larger 'Native' majority while also sowing division, resentment and mistrust amongst them (see Mellet, 2020).

The group of people classified as coloured is an interesting group which reveals the intricacies of social engineering, it also exposes the absurdity and inconsistency of racial classification because of the fact that a) it is made up of a diverse group of people who would otherwise not be classified as one unified social group and b) the reasoning used to delegitimise the Khoi and San people's kinship to the 'Natives' was illogical and incorrect from an indigenous African perspective, particularly when one traces their roots through the clan-name system which accurately informs us about their patterns of family, cultural and linguistic interaction predating 1652 and post 1902.

For example, it is in the clan-names of black South Africans where we learn about the kinship that so-called Natives have with the Khoi and San so-called coloureds. A clan name such as Gaba, for instance, informs us that this group of people are descendants of the Korana Nama, Griqua Khoi and San people who formed kinship with abaSotho before some of them ultimately settled in the Eastern Cape amongst the Xhosa ethnic group. It is out of their ancestors' long history of cultural and linguistic interaction with the communities they came in contact with and lived with that they named themselves Gaba, Msuthu, Cihoshe, Thithiba, Nozinga, amaNgqosini and abantu Bomlambo, because they came from all of these lineages and they acknowledge them as what forms part of their identity. Their clan names, in this sense, are a record, an oral documentation, of their history.

It becomes clear, therefore, that the 'divide, conquer, rule and reconfigure' strategy not only ensured racial divisions amongst people living in Africa, but it also ensured tribal, ethnic and

xenophobic divisions amongst people who previously related well with each other. Put together, all of these were strategic techniques that the British and Boers used to ensure that the indigenous Africans were alienated from each other, a situation which would make exploitation for capitalistic gain an easier task for the colony.

During their apartheid rule, the Boers later re-classified the Europeans as white, Natives as black, while the Coloured remained Coloured (see Mellet, 2020). Added to this classification were Indians who, for strategic apartheid purposes, needed to be alienated from the indigenous communities and reminded of their alien status lest they try to undermine the authority of their colonial masters who had brought them into the country as indentured labourers. The Boers also added more stringent biometric rules to restrict and prohibit inter-racial interactions, which would threaten 'racial purity', decrease the white race and disempower them. This, for instance, was done through laws such as the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of of 1949, Population Registration Act of 1950, Group Areas Act of 1950, Immorality Act of 1950, Natives Law Amended Act of 1952 (also known as pass laws), Bantu Education Act of 1953, and Separate Amenities Act of 1953. It was clearly a numbers game of racial power.

We learn, from Mellet (2020:289), that the period of racial classification, which the British called the 'Native Problem', "sealed a relationship between colonial government and academic centres in the country". For instance, he notes that the University of Cape Town (UCT) was commissioned by the Union government "to create Ethnology, Bantu Philosophy, and Anthropology and Linguistic Phonetics departments to assist…[them], in return for vital funding" (Mellet, 2020:289). It is from the findings of this research that the indigenous people were classified into multiple ethnic and two racial groups (black and coloured) that continue to be used in SA today. Mellet (2020: 289) clearly shows how racial and ethnic classification, which was to be viewed as a solution to the 'Native Problem', was simply a tool to disempower Africans for the strategic purpose of strengthening Europeans in their colonial mission for conquest. For instance, referring to the study of African culture, language and ethnicities, he notes that "the solution that was already emerging at that time from both the white political world and the race-obsessed academic world of those times was that linguistics and ethnicity should be combined to rationalise the number of African sub-societies, rather than to attempt to come to grips with real African social history" (Mellet, 2020:289). This clearly informs us about their interests.

By the time apartheid rule came into effect in 1948, it was possible to maintain white domination because the British had already laid the foundation 38 years prior. However, threatened by their lack of numerical strength and cultural and economic control, the Boers felt it necessary to increase racial segregation and inequality across all areas of life. This, which became the order of the day and essentially the main distinction between British colonial rule and Boer apartheid rule, set indigenous Africans, both black and coloured, generations behind the white population in SA. Renaming the country to the Republic of South Africa (in 1961) and changing the currency to Zuid-Afrikaanse Rand (South African Rand) was an important symbol for asserting Boer nationalism; it marked a change of ideology, cultural discourse and power (away from their English rivals). Separate development, which accorded privilege and superiority to the white race while enforcing underdevelopment and inferiority to the black majority, became the main policy of apartheid

governance. Scholars such as Sparks (2020), Mbakwe and Osuangwu (2015), More (2003), and Parker (1972) have written on this.

Education would play an important role in this process. As a result, the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which served as one of the structural tools for separate development, allowed the government to structurally separate the access and quality of education according to race. It was envisioned that the black majority would receive inferior education that would prepare them to serve their white masters while superior education would be reserved for whites and a select few 'Natives', under the 'master's' supervision, only if it served the purpose of maintaining their imperial domination. Funding was one of the processes that ensured this. To this end, the government's school budget, per child, was racially unequal: "R17 for an African child, R40 for a coloured child, R40 for an Indian child, R128 for a white child" (SABC, no date).

At a curriculum level, the vision of inferior education (known as Bantu education) which was openly advocated for by Hendrik Verwoerd and supported by his cabinet, was to distinguish people classified as black from those classified as white, and systemically create a socio-economic condition in which those classified as black remain inferior to their white counterparts. Christie and Collins (1982:60), for instance, note that "the control of black schooling would be viewed as a main purveyor of ideology wherein, it is argued, the black would be taught not merely the value of their own tribal cultures but that such cultures were of a lower order and that, in general, the blacks should learn how to prepare themselves for a realistic place in white dominated society, namely (at that point in time) to be 'hewers of wood and carriers of water'". They continue to argue that "to this purpose, the Nationalist government set out what was allegedly the greatest piece of ideological manipulation of the young, since Hitler" (Christie and Collins, 1982: 60).

Christie and Collins (1982:60) assert that "for apartheid followers, it is alleged, Bantu Education signifies education for subservience and cultural domination precisely by imposing outmoded tribal customs, languages and governance on to unwilling blacks. Blacks must learn how to find their tribal pace in white dominated society. To that effect, schooling must be centrally controlled". It is at this pivotal historical point that the present role of higher education institutions in SA requires critical engagement. Here, in my zoom back to history, I will focus on the formation of universities in SA.

4 The Historical Formation Of South African Universities

The first institution of higher learning in SA was established in 1829, the South Africa College, today called the University of Cape Town. Le Roux (2013:6) states, "in keeping with the country's colonial status, the first universities began life as colleges which initially offered secondary education, and then examinations through boards in London". Darko-Ampem (2003:124) and Le Roux (2013:6) mention that the University of the Cape of Good Hope which was later established in 1873 (today known as the University of South Africa) served the purpose of an examination centre and awarding degrees for all the colleges that existed and were constituent members at that time. Le Roux (2013:6) informs us that "in 1916, the Universities Act established the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch as autonomous institutions, which could conduct their own examinations. The University of Fort Hare was founded in the same year, in a move to provide separate education for African students".

Le Roux (2013:80) also informs us that "the origins of the University of the Witwatersrand may be traced to the South African school of Mines, which was established in Kimberly in 1896 and transferred to Johannesburg as the Transvaal Technical institute in 1904". She further states that a "struggle ensued between the Afrikaans and English-speaking groups for control of higher education in the Johannesburg-Pretoria region. After several name changes (from Transvaal University College in 1906, to the South African School of Mines and Technology in 1919), the name settled on University College in 1922. Once university status was granted two years later, the College became the University of the Witwatersrand. The University of Pretoria emerged out of this same tassel for university status, evolving from the Transvaal University College in 1908. It achieved full university status in 1930".

From the above historical information, it is not difficult to see that education and the establishment of formal learning institutions in SA were directly linked to the ruling class' ideological and institutional assertion of their identity and power. In other words, HE interchangeably operated around the ideals of British colonialism and Boer nationalism. It is precisely because of the competition for domination between the British and the Boers that the NP was intent on restructuring HE after it came to power in 1948. It is based on this that Le Roux (2013: 6) asserts, "the academic culture of local universities was thus initially coloured by colonial ties with England, and by scholars who had studied in the imperial metropole. Over time, this shifted to include a politically emergent group of Afrikaans speaking scholars, who were often closely allied with the governing regime after 1948". Le Roux (2013:6) adds that it is "the imposition of apartheid policies on the higher education system from the 1950s onwards [that] led to considerable changes to that [British colonial] system".

The battle for ideological power between the British and Boers through education shows us that policies play an important role in systemically legitimising an ideology and practically manifesting it through the implementation of structural processes. It is out of this psychology that the apartheid state felt it necessary to impose its monopoly over universities through policies and state funds. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 is a direct result of this (see Badat, 2002).

Similarly, Le Roux (2013:82) also makes us aware of the fact that the Universities Act of 1955 and the Extension of University Act of 1959 served the same purpose, to legitimise and strengthen the dominance of apartheid rule. They also systemically forced universities (including the historically English ones) to comply with and accept their ideology. For example, under the Extension of University Act, new universities were to be established along racial lines. This is how historically Black universities that were established after the University of Fort Hare came to be.

Le Roux also informs us that it is around this period that more universities for the Afrikaans-speaking community were established. Citing Bunting (2002) and Davies (1996), Le Roux (2013) notes that these universities were strategically established to further the dominance of the apartheid state and not necessarily as primarily research institutes. Similarly to Christie and Collins (1982) Bunting (2002:74), cited in Le Roux (2013:83), also asserts that universities were instrumentally set up to "train black people who would be useful to the apartheid era, and political in the sense that their existence played a role in the maintenance of the overall apartheid socio-political agenda". Davies (1996) notes that "Bantustan universities were appendages of the central state which appointed their governing bodies, dictated their academic standards and prescribed

the curriculum and ensured that government supporting Afrikaans dominated administrative and academic positions" (cited in le Roux, 2013:83).

It is against this background that higher education operated in SA. It is also against the legacy of this background that it continues to operate today; the ideals of Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation therefore need to be understood and engaged against this backdrop. In their respective ways, these three ideological discourses seek to explore ways in which the higher education system can break away from colonial-apartheid legacies of racial oppression and inequality. I will now turn to discuss these three discourses.

5 The Three Discourses

5.1 Africanisation

Sesanti (2016) provides a very good summation, using the work of scholars such as Nadoury (1990), Diop (1994), Tyledesley (2003), Lefkowitz (1997), and Makgoba (1997), to explain what Africanisation in HE is all about. Guided by his article, Africanisation can be summed into the following 6 points: 1) it is a struggle for self-determination; 2) it is an attempt for Africans to articulate ideas from their culturally influenced perspectives and lived realities; 3) it is an attempt for the university in Africa to actively think differently from the old establishment of racial oppression and inequality; 4) it "is about reclaiming what is indigenously African" in the face of the "disempowering disinformation that claimed that Africans had made no scientific contribution to the world" and are inferior beings who lack intelligence (Sesante, 2016:214); 4); it is therefore concerned with paying attention to African value systems, for these value systems to enjoy the same level of respect as other cultural value systems from other nations in the world, particularly Eurocentric ones (see Makgoba, 1997);5) it seeks to reject the imposition of assimilation on Africans (which forces/d them to be ashamed of their indigenous cultural identity in favour of adopting a Eurocentric way of life) as the way of articulating and freely enjoying their humanity; 6) finally, it seeks to create a landscape in which social reality can be engaged with from a contextually based approach. In Africa, this approach must be guided by the African context (all encompassing), as Europe is guided by its European context.

As noted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013a: 135), today Africanisation is "one of those counter-discourses that emerged from various layers of resistance to the politics of racial difference". Furthermore, it is a discursive process "within which identities germinated and were reconstructed and contested", as evidenced in the definitions above (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013b: 148). Indeed, when we travel back in time, we become aware of the fact that Africanisation is not a new concept in SA. For instance, the formation of the PAC Azania (an ANC breakaway party) in April 1959 was informed by Pan-African thought, which in turn allowed them to articulate Africanisation as a form of self-expression (see Kondlo, 2009 and 2017). Therefore, when we go back in history, the first angle from which we are led to look at Africanisation is an identity (formation) perspective. Here, the ideas of scholars such as Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Ezekiel Mphahlele and Steve Biko, ideas that made an immense contribution to African intellectual thought and activism, become helpful. For instance, when we look at the notion of self-determination, Mphahlele (1962) also makes us pay attention to the concept of 'African personality', which was popularised by Kwame Nkrumah back in 1958. He begins by stating the

following words: "yes, the white world is still a pretty dark one for the man of colour, especially in the so-called 'Free World'" (cited in Mphahlele, 1962: 15).

Mphahlele (1962) admits that the phrase 'African personality' captured him such that he felt elevated by it. He further notes that "a thrilled sensation shot up my head and the roots of my hair caught it. I was sure that I was speaking the same language – I, a South African exile – with my fellow-Negroes from East, Central, West and North Africa. In a sense, I was right. And this idea of an African personality took on a palpable shape: something that could express the longing and ambitions, aches and torments, the anger and hunger of our people and shout them out to the outside world" (Mphahlele, 1970:19).

An important question that arises from the concept of Africanisation, therefore, is: why was there a need to build a narrative around an 'African personality ', consequently 'identity' during such a time? The short and straightforward answer is: because black people (in SA, across the entire African continent and in the diaspora) were treated as an inferior race. Through the systems of enslavement, colonialism and apartheid, they were systemically prevented from freely exploring their fundamental right to self-determination, because they were not considered to be fully human and therefore worthy of dignity, respect and agency. Paying attention to the notion of 'self-identity', therefore, enabled them (and us in our analyses today) to engage with Africanisation from the angle of understanding the significance of identity on the basis of self-determination. Based on this rationale, it may be possible to understand that it was born from the yearning desire that Africans had developed across all different parts of the continent, in their shared oppression and dehumanisation, to have power over defining themselves. A desire to articulate their humanity and interests, to re-affirm their existence in a world that had tried to disregard and render them sub-human and inferior; it was a shared desire for them to actively, confidently and unapologetically express their humanity and inherent freedom by seeking to break away from the unethically imposed chains of political, social, economic, spiritual, psychological, cultural and linguistic bondage.

As Mphahlele (1962:19) states, the concept of an African personality was important because it allowed them to reach out "for each other in order to understand one another's peculiar problems. And we found a unifying factor in this one thing: the aching desire to be free". Even during this time, it was clear that European traditions were alienating black people from themselves and each other. This alienation perpetuated (through the normalisation of Eurocentrism and demonisation of Africanism and by consequent blackness) racial oppression by imposing whiteness as superior and, consequently, a blueprint of humanity.

Although Mphahlele was not completely sold on the notion of an 'African personality' and ídentity' in the end, the concept, which guided and continues to guide the cornerstone of Africanisation, makes us pay attention to a fundamental point. That is, it is through their dehumanisation, alienation, frustration, resentment and anger towards the oppressive system that Africans developed a strong desire to come together and find solutions for their subjugation. To assert and claim their right to exist was to negate the imposed and normalised narrative that was based on an ignorant lie; a lie which said they were sub-human, barbaric, savage, uncivilised, non-entities, third-class citizens and therefore legitimate subjects for exploitation, abuse, violence, dispossession, victimisation and oppression. It was a refusal (and continues to be) of a

classification and identity that they had no active role and control in constructing. It is exactly out of this realisation, in apartheid SA, that the BCM came to be, as explained by Biko (1987).

For instance, addressing the issue of Black campuses and emotions at the time, Biko (1987:18) notes that even though most students were sure of what they did not like and were quite harsh in their criticism of old approaches, they still "lacked a depth of insight into what can be done". BCM was therefore established as a formal structure and platform of solidarity, shared responsibilities, mobilisation and activism against the system of colonial-apartheid, one through which students would be able to coherently critique the oppressive elements of the higher education system, and society at large during that time. One of Biko's main concerns was that you cannot effectively fight the system if you have not properly diagnosed it. Therefore, his diagnosis of apartheid SA was that it hid behind integration as a form of legitimising separate development, and consequently, inferiority and superiority complexes amongst the different racially classified social groups.

He observed that integration, in the way that it operated under apartheid governance, was an artificial response "to conscious manoeuvre rather than to the dictates of the inner soul" (Biko, 1987:20). He went on to argue, "people forming the integrated complex have been extracted from various segregated societies with their inbuilt complexes of superiority and inferiority and these continue to manifest themselves even in the 'nonracial' set-up of the integrated complex". This, for him, made integration a one-way course in which black people were being dominated (intellectually, spiritually, psychologically and physically), while white people were dominating. It created, maintained and reproduced an unjust political system in which social and economic opportunities were confined to race.

BCM, therefore, as an organised and formal structure that affirmed black power (as a negation of its deliberate and committed disempowerment), articulated the discourse through which the oppressed majority of SA would systemically reject the apartheid system without shame, guilt and doubt. Biko (1987:21) explains that Black Consciousness was necessary because "it became clear that as long as blacks are suffering from inferiority complex – a result of 300 years of deliberate oppression, denigration and derision – they will be useless as co-architects of a normal society where man is nothing else but man for his own sake". It was applied as a prelude for black people to assert themselves and claim their rightful place in society, equally amongst their oppressors.

This particular account of Africanisation – which accepts and applies Black Consciousness thought as an intellectual project that guides the process of re-claiming, re-building (through self-constructed and contextually applicable narratives of self-articulation) and liberation of the oppressed – informs us about the following: at this point Africanisation operated as an action that rejected the expectation that was imposed upon the oppressed. The expectation that they require permission from their oppressors in order for them to freely live and enjoy their inherent right of human dignity and equality. It was them loudly and openly saying 'not anymore! '. Biko (1987) informs us that at this point, they were done trying to convince and beg the colonial-apartheid master for a place at their table by entertaining their integration. By reclaiming their blackness (asserting, for instance, that they are 'black and proud!' 'black is beautiful '), a racial classification which had been used as a symbol for their dehumanisation, Black Consciousness thought allowed black people to reclaim and restore what had been dispossessed from their identity. It allowed them to reclaim and restore their sense of love, dignity, and pride for who and what they are in

this world (equal and worthy human beings). With this consciousness, Biko (1987) felt they would be capacitated to restore their humanity. This restoration of the black race's dignity was necessary for SA to become a just society. Franz Fanon (1963), Amilcar Cabral (1973) and Thomas Sankara (2007) also inform us that the restoration of the human dignity of the dehumanised is a necessary condition for social justice to emerge.

By the time Professor Malegapuru Makgoba, the former deputy vice-chancellor of the University of Witwatersrand, called for Africanisation in 1995, this concept was certainly not new. As we have seen through the accounts from Mphahlele (1962), Biko (1987) and PAC Azania, it had travelled across time and different parts of the continent; it had massively gained prominence amongst black intelligentsia; it had been critically engaged with, accepted and rejected by some within the black community as many imagined and crafted a humanising way forward for black lives and their place in a racially oppressive and divisive society. However, it seems to have not travelled much and successfully enough outside the black crowds because somehow this discourse that Makgoba re-introduced the SAHE system to had not yet reached a certain level of acceptance, let alone dominant resonance, despite the long-standing groundwork of anti-colonial-apartheid activism and intellectual thought.

Instead, it had been (and continues to be) accused of racial hegemonism, a black version of nationalism comparable to Boer nationalism. Knowing what we know about colonial-apartheid SA and the persisting legacies today, this accusation which is a complete distortion and denial of historical facts and injustices, under the pretence of calling the right to self-determine the equivalent of an atrocious and traumatic system of racial oppression, is either a deliberate obstruction of truth or a careless disregard of the implication of colonial-apartheid history on the lives of those who experienced it and their descendants.

In 1995, when the higher education system was still freshly out of apartheid systemic rule, realistically, it is not difficult to imagine that Africanisation would never be accepted because these institutions, historically white ones in particular, still strongly held on to their foundational ideologies which were tied to racist colonial-apartheid discourses. Today, however, should be a different story because we have had 30 years to engage with the legacies of colonial-apartheid and their implications in HE since 1994. It is at this point that we should start asking: what has democratic SA and its HE institutions achieved in redressing colonial-apartheid legacies in the past 30 years? Due to the scope of this paper, I will not engage with this question. I will, instead, leave it to the reader to do their own probing.

5.2 Decolonisation

Similarly to Africanisation, decolonisation is not a new concept in Africa. Intellectuals such as Franz Fanon (1963) and Amilcar Cabral (1973) engaged with the concept, in reference to the (post)colonial conditions of Algeria and Guinea-Bissau, respectively, in their own work. Biko (1987) also engaged with the idea of decolonisation from colonial-apartheid oppression in SA. Ngugi wa Thiongó (1986 and 1997) has also theorised and well articulated coloniality and decoloniality within the context of Kenya. In our current times, it is scholars such as Anibal Quijano (see for example 2007 and 2000), Walter Mignolo (see for example 2011 and 2007), Sabelo Ndlovu Gatsheni (see for example 2020 and 2013), Catherine Walsh (see for example 2023 and 2020), amongst others, who have contextualised decolonial thought and practice. Achille

Mbembe's work (see, for example, 2021 and 2016) has offered valuable insights which legitimately contribute to decolonial scholarship that seeks to contextualise the African context.

In SA, the 2015 student protests can be credited for calling the entire nation to start paying attention to decolonial thought and practice. It is due to their call for a decolonised higher education that decolonial thought started to seriously inform dominant public discourse. Ndlovu (2024: 35) states that "one of the fundamental challenges facing higher education is the much-needed confrontation of the legacies of colonialism which are hidden behind the claims of universality, neutrality and objectivity in knowledge production". The SA students' voices were heard, and today the higher education system is grappling with how to decolonise itself. Due to the calls for a decolonised higher education, it can be said that most institutions, particularly the historically white ones, have entered a new era of re-imagining and re-creating ways of engaging with their colonial-apartheid legacies and the continued impact that they have on the lives of South Africans.

Cesaire's (see 2000) work teaches us that in order for decolonisation to succeed, it is important to first study how colonisation works. wa Thiong'o (1997:7) argues that colonialism is "a practice and not a theory. It is a historical process and not an abstract metaphysical notion. Above all, it is a relationship of power at the economic, political and cultural levels. So to talk about colonialism in Africa is to talk about a definite power relationship between Europe and Africa at a particular moment in history". Cesaire' (2000: 32) informs us that colonialism is "a disruptive, 'decivilizing', dehumanizing, exploitative, racist, violent, brutal, covetous, and 'thingifying' system". wa Thiong'o (1972:9) observed that "colonial imperialist domination creates theories about the colonizer and the colonized which are 'nothing but crude racist formulations'. Racism and racist doctrines formulated through culture become an integral part of the 'permanent siege' of the indigenous population".

Mignolo (2011:xiii), who informs us that decolonisation is "the horizon of thinking and being that originated as a response to the capitalist and communist imperial designs", views it in terms of decoloniality. He explains that decoloniality "means decolonial options of confronting and delinking from coloniality, or the colonial matrix of power" (Mignolo, 2011; xxvii). For him, the decolonial option "is an option of claiming its legitimacy among existing ones in the sphere of the political, in the same way that Christianity, Marxism, or liberalism house many options under the same umbrella" (Mignolo, 2011: xxvii-xxviii).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018:3), who views decolonisation as an epistemological project, argues that it is "a double task of 'provincialising Europe' and 'deprovincialising Africa'". Borrowing from wa Thiong'o (1993. xvi-xvii), he asserts that "'provincialising' is a process of 'moving the centre'" in two senses, firstly from its assumed location in the West, Eurocentrism, and secondly the dominant social stratum, patriarchy (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018: 3). He goes on to state that "the processes of 'provincialising' and 'deprovincialising' are inextricably linked as they speak to how what appears on a global scale as European thought could be claimed as human heritage rather than a thought from one geographical centre" (Ndlovu-Gatheni, 2018: 3). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018:4) renders the process of 'de-Europeanising' as 'provincialising Africa'. This, according to him, is "an intellectual and academic process of centring of Africa as a legitimate historical unit of analysis and epistemic site from which to interpret the world while at the same time globalising

knowledge from Africa" (Ndlovu-Gathseni, 2018:4). This move, for him, "constitutes epistemic freedom as that essential prerequisite for political, cultural, economic and other freedoms" (Ndlovu-Gatheni, 2018:4). This intellectual process of centering African, and ultimately obtaining epistemic freedom is crucial because, as Wynter (2003) , Miginolo (2011), Ndlovu-Gathseni (2018 and 2020) and others inform us, the colonial world system created a knowledge system that disregarded non-European ways of knowing and being, they reduced these knowledges as "curious practices of strange people and, in another domain were demonised" (Wynter, 2003: 263).

Turner et al. (2024: 1) define decolonisation, particularly within higher education, as "a radical process of redefining and redesigning systems and standards, which ensure that teaching and learning occur in and emerge from appropriate local contexts of relevance". They further state that it is a process of re-centering and de-centering, "that is, recognising and prioritizing Indigenous methodologies and ways of knowing, specifically, with regard to African contributions to the production, dissemination, application, promotion, protection, control and utilisation of knowledge" (Turner et al.: 1).

Reflecting on decolonisation, Fanon (1963:63) argues that "what is singularly important is that it starts from the very first day with the basic claims of the colonised. In actual fact, proof of success lies in a social fabric that has been changed inside out". Fanon (1963:63) goes on to say that "this change is extraordinarily important because it is desired, clamoured for, and demanded. The need for this change exists in a raw, repressed, and reckless state in the lives and consciousness of colonised men and women". Lastly, an important point that he raises is that "the eventuality of such a change is also experienced as a terrifying future in the consciousness of another 'species' of men and women: the colons, the colonists" (Fanon, 1963:63). Fanon's assessment is perhaps a good place from which we can start to engage with decolonial thought. For one, it informs us that decoloniality is an initiative of the oppressed, and, at the same time, it is a task for both the oppressed and the oppressor. Secondly, it critiques and debunks coloniality.

Indeed, Walsh (2012), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), Mignolo and Walsh(2018) and others have gone on to emphasise that decoloniality is a response to the (post)colonial condition, what Anibal Quijano (2000) has called the colonial matrix of power, otherwise commonly referred to as colonial legacies. In this colonial matrix of power, four interrelated domains are identified: control of the economy; authority; race, gender and sexuality; knowledge and subjectivity (see Mignolo, 2011). What supports these interrelated spheres of control, according to Mignolo (2011), is the radical and patriarchal foundation of knowledge. Relating to knowledge, Wynter (2003: 263-264) discusses how the invention of 'Man', which is essentially an act of European expression/ narration, was implemented by the West "to initiate the first gradual de-supernaturalising of our modes of being human, by means of its/their re-invention of the theocentric 'descriptive statement' Christian as that of Man in two forms", Man 1 and Man 2. This process, as she argues, was made possible "on the basis of the dynamics of coloniser/colonised relation" (Wynter, 2003: 264). These descriptive and prescriptive statements of what it is to be human, according to Wynter (2003), regrounded the West's secularising projection of human and sub-humanity, which, to this day, is accepted as a knowledge base that defines who and what we are. Considering the power of silencing, absenting, ignoring, and erasure of all intellectual thought, cultural

expression and essentially existence that does not come from Europe and the West in dominant public discourse, decolonial thought and practice enables us to understand and engage with coloniality in all of its interrelated forms.

From Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021: xv) we learn that what distinguishes the decolonial approach of the 20th century to the one of the 21st century is that the former "was characterized by political demands for self-determination and the storm-troopers were modern educated elites emerging from colonized societies aiming to take over state power from white colonial elites" while the latter "is expansive and its key trope is epistemic freedom". He goes on to explain that "at the centre of epistemic freedom is the imperative of cognitive justice, that is the recognition that all humans were born into valid and legitimate ways through which different people across the human globe make sense of the world and provide meaning to their existence" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021; xv). What makes decolonisation important, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018:3) informs us, is that it is a "drive for a restorative epistemic agenda and process that simultaneously addresses ontological and epistemological issues haunting Africa".

Keeping in mind the notion of change being inevitable, which I started this paper with, Fanon (1963) tells us that where changing the colonial condition is concerned, it can only be done by the oppressed because they are the ones who know and have experienced the bondage of their oppression. Even though they may not possess the material and physical power to change the oppressive conditions of the system, their voices are powerful enough to bring attention to these injustices. It is this attention that fosters change. Their mobilisation and activism are impactful enough to make oppressive systems crumble. There are many examples of this in history across the globe. Resistance against colonialism and apartheid in SA is one of those examples. The 2015 student protests have been referred to as a contemporary example (see Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018 and Mbembe, 2016). They took to the streets to tell the world about their struggles with institutional racism and the exclusion that they face in their pursuit to freely access higher education, and the world paid attention. Although the higher education system has not yet fully changed, it can be argued that shifts have started happening in many directions. Therefore, their voices and mobilisation had an impact, which is a testament to the fact that only the oppressed can fully articulate and engage their oppression. It is perhaps this that is required to make the necessary changes, because those changes will distinctly respond to specific issues that affect a specific group of people.

The main contribution that decolonial thought adds to the redress process is that it makes us pay attention to the dynamics of knowledge production and dissemination as seen in the works of Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020 and 2018), Mignolo (2011), Wynter (2003), Walsh (2020) and others. For instance, it makes it very clear that the current dominant structure of knowledge (which is Eurocentric but understood and engaged with as universal) makes it possible for certain narratives, systems and essentially ways of knowing and being in the world, to be marginalised and eliminated when they do not fit into the prescribed or rather imposed norm. Mignolo (2011:80) reveals that this is done by ordering forms of knowledge "on an epistemological scale from the traditional to the modern, from barbarism to civilisation… from the orient to occident" and it is through this that "scientific thought positions itself as the only valid form of knowledge production". Ultimately, it is due to this that decolonial scholars call for coloniality to be unsettled.

South African students, through the fallist protests, brought the above issues up. They recounted how the culture of historically white institutions ignores, dismisses, silences and attempts to erase their humanity and indigeneity by forcing them to assimilate to Eurocentric norms and values academically and socially instead of creating an inclusive environment that allows for diversity to thrive. Many racialised students and some racialised university employees found resonance with decolonial thought because it helped them to articulate the manifestations of the colonial-apartheid legacy in higher education as they experience them on a daily basis. It helped them to understand that Eurocentrism is imposed as universal and therefore the only way of engaging within institutions, through teaching, learning, administration and social interaction. Decolonial thought rather confronts and problematises this issue by calling out the tendency to pass off Eurocentrism as universal and objective. Mignolo (2011), for instance, argues that objectivity does not exist; instead, we all speak and act from an intersubjective place because social reality (although factual) is concept and therefore people dependent.

Roy Bhaskar (2011) and other critical realist scholars have dedicated their scholarship to explaining objectivity, subjectivity and intersubjectivity in the process of producing and disseminating knowledge. It is at the point of intersubjectivity that Mignolo (2011) brings up positionality (geographically and body politically located positions which are also impacted by bio politics) to reveal two things: a) we all speak and operate from specific positions and b) the way we speak and operate is also judged from these positions that we operate. When we consider SA's history, it becomes clear how positionality plays itself out through power dynamics along the lines of race, class, gender and religion. If you are not white, male, middle-class and christian then the system will not cater to you.

When we refer back to decolonial thought, it is due to the politics of positionality that de-linking is ultimately proposed as a strategy of unsettling coloniality. Wynter (2003: 268), for instance, argues that "one cannot 'unsettle' the 'coloniality of power' without a description of the human outside the terms of our present descriptive statement of the human, Man, and its overrepresentation". From Mignolo (2011:54), we learn that delinking means changing the rules of engagement in an attempt to move towards a more pluriversal, inclusive and all-encompassing way of knowing and being in the world. As Mignolo (2011) explains, by using the Zapatista movement as an example, delinking is about building a world in which many worlds can co-exist. Mignolo (2011) adds that building this peaceful world demands epistemic disobedience. In the South African context, delinking implies breaking away from colonial-apartheid roots in all academic and social areas of the university, breaking away from accepting Eurocentrism and the ways in which it universally expresses itself culturally, linguistically and religiously. It implies becoming systemically inclusive of all the different cultural, linguistic and religious knowledge systems that inform different people's ways of being in SA. This should result in the new humanity that decoloniality envisions, one in which equal humanity and mutual coexistence characterise historically white institutions.

5.3 Transformation
Out of all three concepts, transformation is the one that has enjoyed the most attention and use in South African higher education discourse since 1994. As mentioned earlier, it became a favourable term and, consequently, discourse during the transition talks between the ANC and NP. It also

informs HE policies and implementation at both national and institutional levels. However, after having had 30 years of ongoing transformation and realising that many things appear to stay the same and/ or are now taking a bad turn, people begin to increasingly wonder: how long will it still take until we get there? What does this transformation really mean anyway?

It is safe to say that transformation means different things to different people. However, it is also safe to say that given SA's history, transformation was understood to be a political undertaking focused on redressing apartheid legacies and the imbalances it has systemically created (see, for example, Vambe 2005). This even led to national policies being drafted in a manner that addresses these legacies. For instance, from the Education *White Paper 3: Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* (1997), it is evident that SA's vision of ensuring an open and democratic society involves a higher education transformation strategy which addresses racial, gender and class discrimination by focussing on redress (as a way of eradicating apartheid legacies) and justice. In 2008, 14 years into the democracy, the *Ministerial Committee on Progress Towards Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions* report (also known as the Soudien report) came about as a result of a racist incident, which sparked public anger, at the University of Free State (UFS).

Amongst some of the findings of this report are the following: a) there was a comprehensive menu of policies, despite inconsistencies and gaps, already put in place to deal with transformation in South African higher education institutions (SAHEIs). For instance, the report found that all institutions had employment equity policies (which were treated like a compliance exercise), but some may not have racial and gender harassment policies in place, or these policies are not receiving enough attention if they are in place (Republic of South Africa, 2008). Ultimately, this report concludes that "it is clear from this overall assessment of the state of transformation in higher education that the experience of feeling discriminated against, in racial and gender terms in particular, is endemic within institutions. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that no institution can confidently indicate that the principles of non-racialism (…) have been achieved" (Republic of South Africa, 2008:50). Seven years after the publication of this report, the student protests put the same issues that were discussed in it (transformation, racism, institutional culture) on blast.

Ten years later, these continue to be pressing issues. All of this tells us that SAHEIs have not yet reached a qualitatively satisfactory level of transformation. It also implies that perhaps transformation alone is not enough, the discourse needs to be more distinct, specific and purposeful than what it currently represents. It is on this basis that I propose a hybrid-pluriversal approach that incorporates Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation to meaningfully, sustainably and effectively redress the existing colonial-apartheid legacies in the South African higher education system. Given that the transformation approach has fallen short, it makes sense to marry it with the anti-colonial discourses and practices of Africanisation and decolonisation instead of discarding it.

6 Hybrid-Pluriversality As A Solution

Considering that colonial-apartheid legacies continue to threaten equality and justice in South African higher education, a pluriversal approach combining multiple frameworks is necessary. Mignolo (2011) informs us that pluriversality implies negotiating different options, different truths, and different ways of knowing and being in non-imperial ways; it is founded on truth in parentheses. It is essentially diversity at play. In order for pluriversality to thrive, as Mignolo (2011) informs us, modernity needs to be unlearned and, in turn, a process of relearning needs to happen. Pluriversality is essentially what results from de-linking. Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation, in their distinct ways, both attempt to de-link from the colonial-apartheid legacies that characterise South Africa. They are interrelated schools of thought that engage with the country's history and seek to change it for the better. Thus, using the decolonial lens of pluriversality, here I appropriate Mphahlele's statement, particularly the meaning he attaches to cross-breeding, and sum it up as hybrid-pluriversality. Hybrid-pluriversality, in this sense, means bringing together the three schools of thought (Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation) and applying them in the process of redressing SA's colonial-apartheid legacies of injustice moving forward. These three schools of thought, which have indeed come to meet, are essential, particularly because the liberation promise has not yet been fulfilled through the transformation approach. 30 years into SA's democracy, we should now start actively applying the hybrid-pluriversal options that we already have at our exposure.

The benefit of applying a hybrid-pluriversal approach to redress and re-imagination is that it may allow us to notice evident shortfalls and critique blind spots. For instance, when we consider transformation, while it is useful, it also appears that its assimilation and integrationist patterns have silenced the historically oppressed into an uncomfortable position of complacency where they cannot equally and freely participate, enjoy, let alone benefit from higher education in terms of access and success. As a result, transformation alone has operated in assimilative and integrative ways, to the discomfort of the historically marginalised majority. Assimilation, which Lash (2018:101) informs us is "a process of cultural subtraction, whereby the ethnic elements of the individual are stripped away and replaced with Anglo-European cultural and linguistic norms" is dangerous; it maintains racial supremacy and inequality.

Given that the transformation approach has not achieved the liberation and equality goals in SA's higher education sector, it is evidently not enough to redress the colonial-apartheid legacies; it proves to be insufficient. Given that SA has come a long way since colonialism and apartheid – now 115 years to be exact – and a lot of narratives and ideologies have travelled and influenced public discourse, it makes sense to therefore include the founding ideas of anti-colonial-apartheid advocates into the present journey. This would help to promote a higher education system that is more inclusive and a true embodiment of justice. If we follow the rationale that only the oppressed can articulate their oppression and this must pave the way for liberation which must be an undertaking of both the oppressed and the oppressors, then assembling Africanisation and decoloniality into the approach of transformation will allow SA's institutions of higher learning to take much bigger strides in redressing their colonial-apartheid legacies.

Africanisation and decolonisation represent a vision that emerged during the colonial and apartheid eras. Transformation represents a vision that emerged at the turn of democracy,

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particularly as a compromise coming out of the negotiated settlement between the ANC and NP. Put together, all three schools of thought are significant and valid because they are a form of expression in the SA context. They all inform us about lived realities in SA from different lenses and across different periods of time. With these lenses (particularly the neglected ones, Africanisation and decolonisation), we can learn about the different ways in which South Africans understand/understood and engage(d) with their oppression. To ignore this wealth of information would be to silence and erase the voices of the historically marginalised today, it would be to devalue and delegitimise the fact that the experiences of those who lived during colonial-apartheid eras and those who continue to live under unjust colonial-apartheid legacies are an important and rich source of knowledge for our generation and the next ones to come, they are a pivotal part of the solution.

How then would a hybrid-pluriversality between Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation in higher education look? A transformed Africanised and decolonised higher education would de-link in a manner that considers the South African context in which it operates. It would explore and apply African knowledge systems — not as an appendix to Eurocentric universalism at the risk of reducing their legitimacy but respectfully and equally – in the same manner that Eurocentric knowledge systems enjoy legitimacy in their own geographical centres and all over the world. Perhaps this hybrid-pluriversal approach would allow redress to move from being treated as a compliance task to organically digging deep into the roots of institutional cultures and negating them. This approach would create spaces for collective unlearning and relearning in university administration, teaching and learning. Rather than claiming final answers, all participants would collaborate to address colonial-apartheid legacies. It would also put everyone in a position where they understand their positionality and the dynamics that come with this. It would, in a sense, encourage a proactive, responsible, accountable, respectful, mutual and trusting process of unlearning, relearning and ultimately co-creation of a more just higher education system.

Lewis Gordon states that "when the people are ready, the crucial question will be of how many ideas are available for the reorganisation of social life. The ideas, many of which will unfold through years of engaged political work, need not be perfect, for in the end, it will be the hard, creative work of the communities that have taken them on" (cited in Mignolo, 2011: 53). South Africa is at a fortunate time where people are presented with many ideas (such as Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation) to draw inspiration from. Now is therefore the time to engage in that hard, necessary, creative, healing and purposeful work of reorganising social life. After 30 years of democracy, 30 years of imagining and experiencing life post-colonial-apartheid, it should be clear what qualifies as injustice (colonial-apartheid legacies) and justice (dignity, freedom and equality for all humans, particularly the historically oppressed). With this clarity, many more should be prepared to enter a new era of change for social justice.

7 Conclusion

While South Africa has come a long way since the end of apartheid in 1994, colonial-apartheid legacies still remain stark and racial inequality and racism continue to be the order of the day; as a result of this, quality access to higher education remains a privilege. When we consider historical facts, it is the indigenous majority (the same group that British colonialism and Boer nationalist apartheid intentionally dispossessed and disempowered) that remains underprivileged and alienated. They are the ones who experience coloniality on a daily basis, hence their call for the decolonisation of higher education through the Fallist campaign. With this being a pressing issue that characterises SA's higher education system, a hybrid-pluriversal approach that incorporates Africanisation, decolonisation, and transformation discourses requires our attention. To engage with this, I have offered a theoretical analysis of the three schools of thought and the ways in which they can be incorporated to enhance the process of re-imagining and redressing the colonial-apartheid legacies that are present in the South African higher education system.

To aid this argument, I started the paper by offering a contextual background which informs us about the South African landscape and its higher education system. I then went on to reflect on the country's history – from its to the formation of its higher learning institutions – to reveal how this affects the present-day South African higher education system. In this history, I clearly showed how racial inequality, through white supremacy and black inferiority, was legitimised under colonialism and apartheid, and continues to be maintained by institutional cultures.

I then went on to provide a theoretical analysis of the three schools of thought (Africanisation, decolonisation and transformation) in reference to what they mean and how they have been applied. I showed how an all-encompassing hybrid-pluriversal approach can be beneficial for re-imagination and re-dress. Finally, I framed a picture of how a transformed Africanised higher education would look if it were to materialise. As Mphahlele (1962) informs us, ideological hybridity is inevitable; it is therefore in each society's interest and advantage to make the most out of it. Any critical pedagogic and decolonial mindset will attest to the benefits of engaging in pluriversal ways of knowing and being in this rich and diverse world because even though we may all be confined to our respective knowledge systems, there are others who know, understand and engage with the same phenomena differently, based on their own lived realities and experiences. This fact alone should be enough to compel us to look beyond what we think and believe is the best idea or solution for redressing colonial-apartheid legacies in the SAHE system, particularly when other ideas and solutions are being proposed by those who are directly affected by the existing problem of unsatisfactory transformation.

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Annex: Abbreviations

ANC: African National Congress

FMF: Fees Must Fall

HE: Higher Education

NP: National Party

PAC: Pan Africanist Congress

RMF: Rhodes Must Fall

SA: South Africa

SAHE: South African Higher Education

SAHEIs: South African Higher Education Institutions

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