

Decolonising the Curriculum Why, What and How

Open Lecture

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Scotland-Malawi Partnership

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Introduction

“... Epistemic privilege is in the side of the colonizer [not the colonized ...]”
(Mignolo, 2007: 459)

Of Black History Month, (Anti/Neo)coloniality and Hashtag Activism



- This October is Black History month.
- Has decolonisation lost its lustre? Who is afraid of decolonisation (Hall, Ansley and Connolly, 2023)
- Anticolonial movement (Marmon, 2023)
- Postcolonial environment (Fanon, 1967; Ngugi, 1986)
- #BlackLivesMatter (Busey and Coleman-King, 2023),
- #RhodesMustFall (Pillary, 2016)

Scottish Context

“Yet I live here, I live here too ...” (Heaney, 1990: 22)

Scottish History, Colonialism and the Curriculum

Curriculum exists in and responds to socio-cultural context

Collusion with colonialism as part of the British Empire.

- Connections with slavery and the slave trade.
- River Clyde, ship building and Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.
- Scottish slave owners beneficiaries of a secret British government pay (£1.5 billion) for the loss of “property”.



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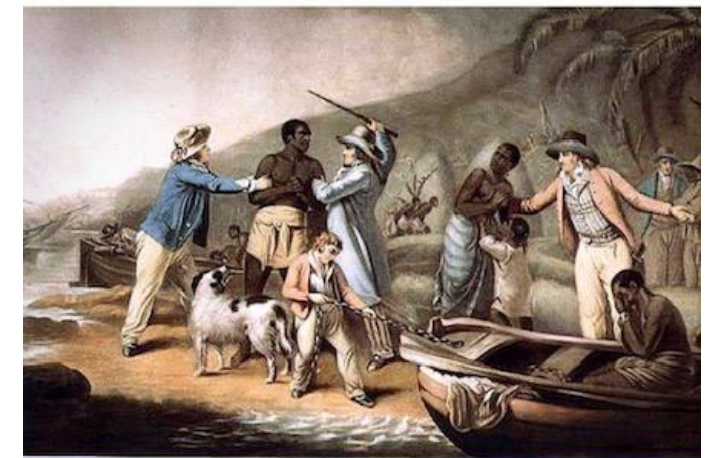
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News Scottish News Health Education Transport

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28th February 2013

SCOTLAND



Glasgow councillors agree to largest repatriation of museum items in Scotland

HeraldScotland Online
7 April 2022 · 4-min read

In this article:

Oba of Benin

Traditional ruler of the Edo people centred on Benin Ci...



Edinburgh's Dundas statue to be dedicated to slavery victims

10 June 2020
Updated 11 June 2020



Scottish missionary movement's complicity with British colonialism.

Scottish museums' colonial legacy

Scottish street names, statues, and other monuments

Scotland has a sizeable immigrant population

Jamaica Street

Jamaica Street, named after the largest slave plantation island in the Caribbean, was opened in 1763 at the height of Glasgow's rum and sugar trade. Jamaica was Glasgow's premier sugar producing centre. It is therefore no surprise that the street was given this name by West Indian merchants in Glasgow.



Complexities of the Curriculum

“Curriculum is a complex phenomenon” (Johnson-Mardones, 2015: 123)

The Curriculum

What is the Curriculum?

- Totality of students' regular learning and related experiences occurring in the educational process, whether planned or not.

Types of Curriculum

- Formal/official curriculum
- Actual/delivered curriculum
- Informal curriculum
- Null/excluded/hidden curriculum

Purpose of the Curriculum

Encapsulates norms, values and philosophies society thinks will benefit the child.

Curriculum aims/outcomes

- Political
- Ideological
- Propaganda
- Educational
- Cultural
- Economic

Curriculum not value-neutral

Assumptions

Ambitions

Beliefs

Ideologies

Selective tradition

Selection/deselection of knowledge - what is included or not in the curriculum, and why (Apple, 2004)

Hegemonic epistemologies as 'official knowledge'.



EAST ASIA

China's New Mandatory Curriculum Focuses on 'Xi Thought'

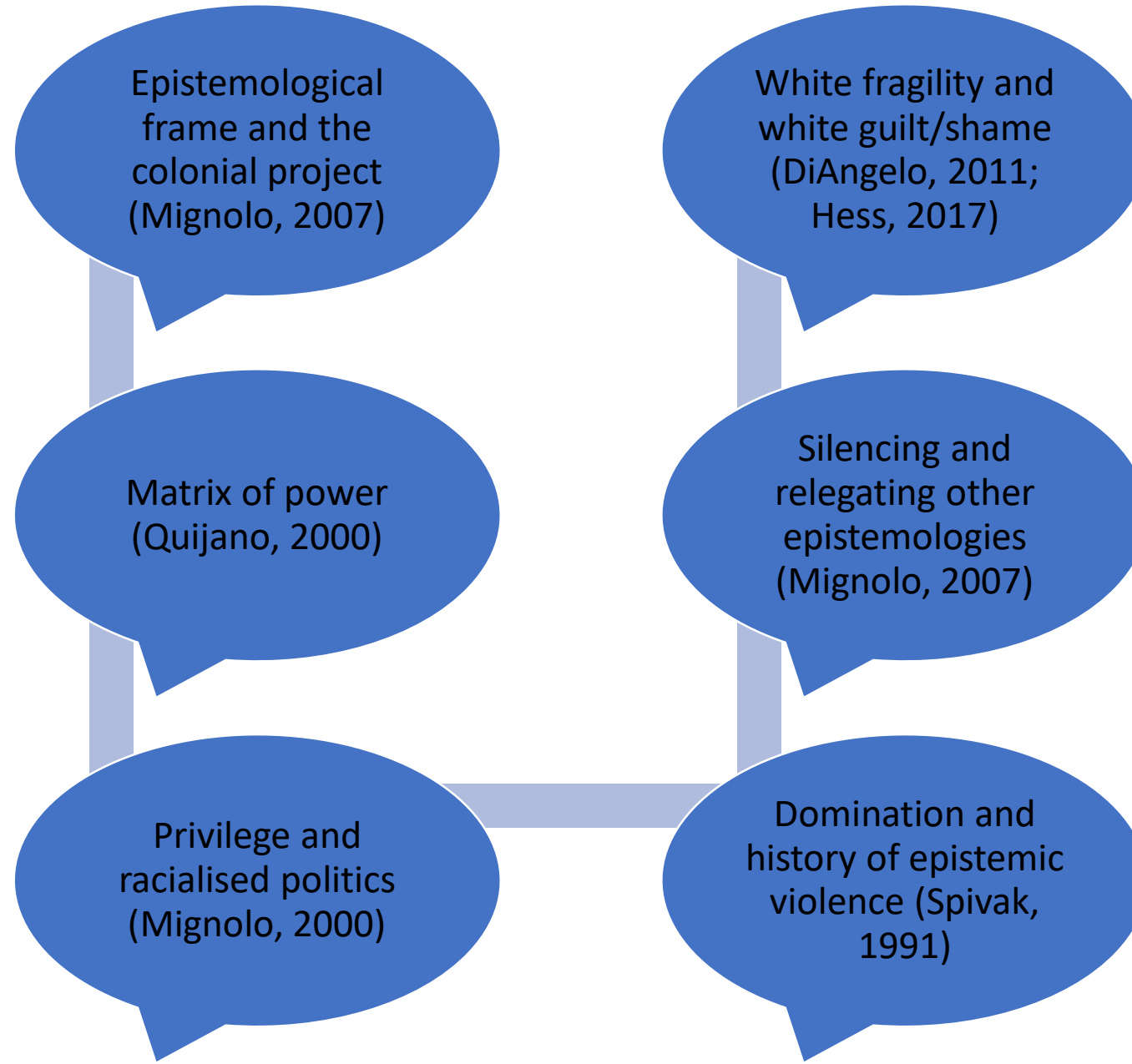
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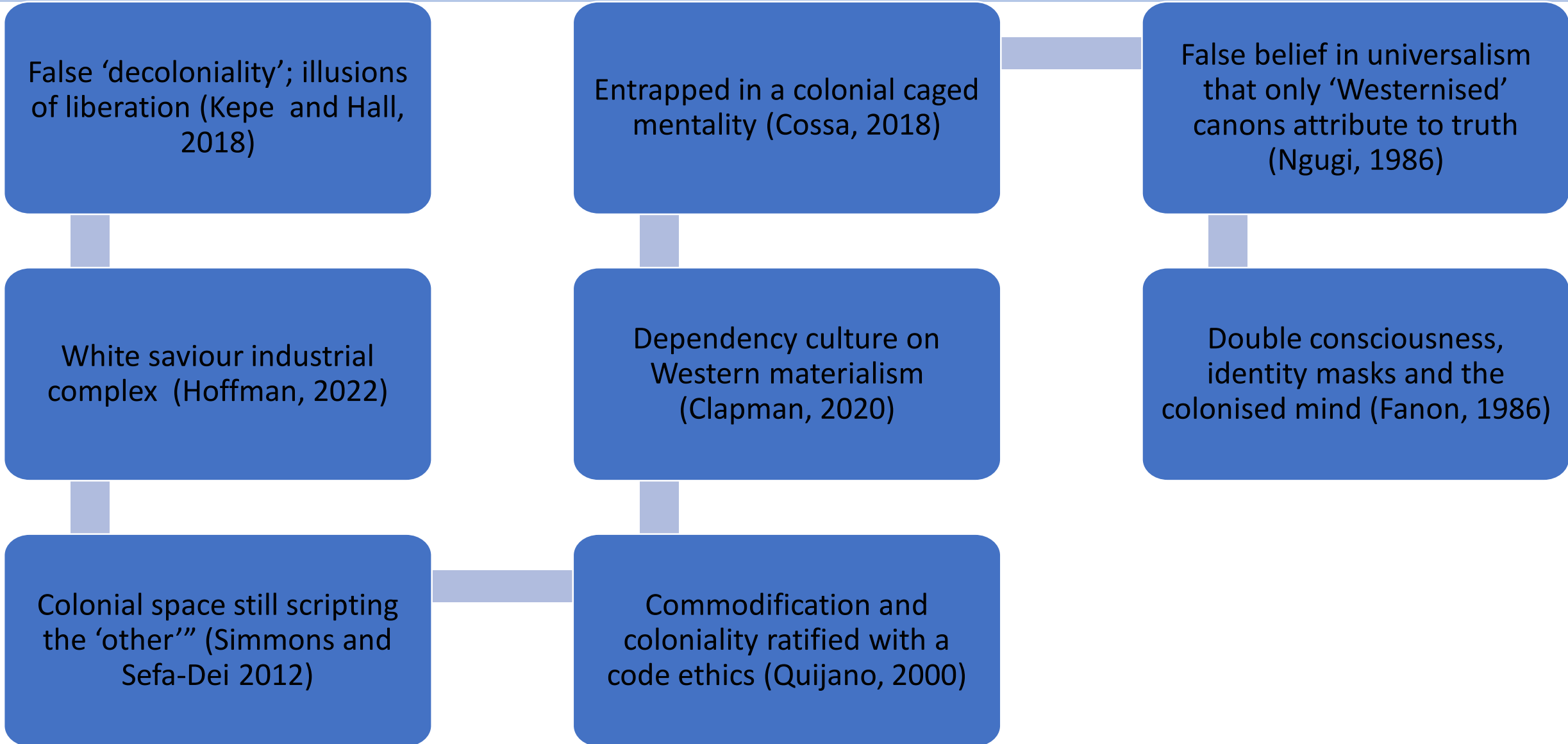
Colonial-Neocolonial Continuum

"Colonial exploitation is not the same as other forms of exploitation..." (Fanon, 1967: 88)

Coloniality



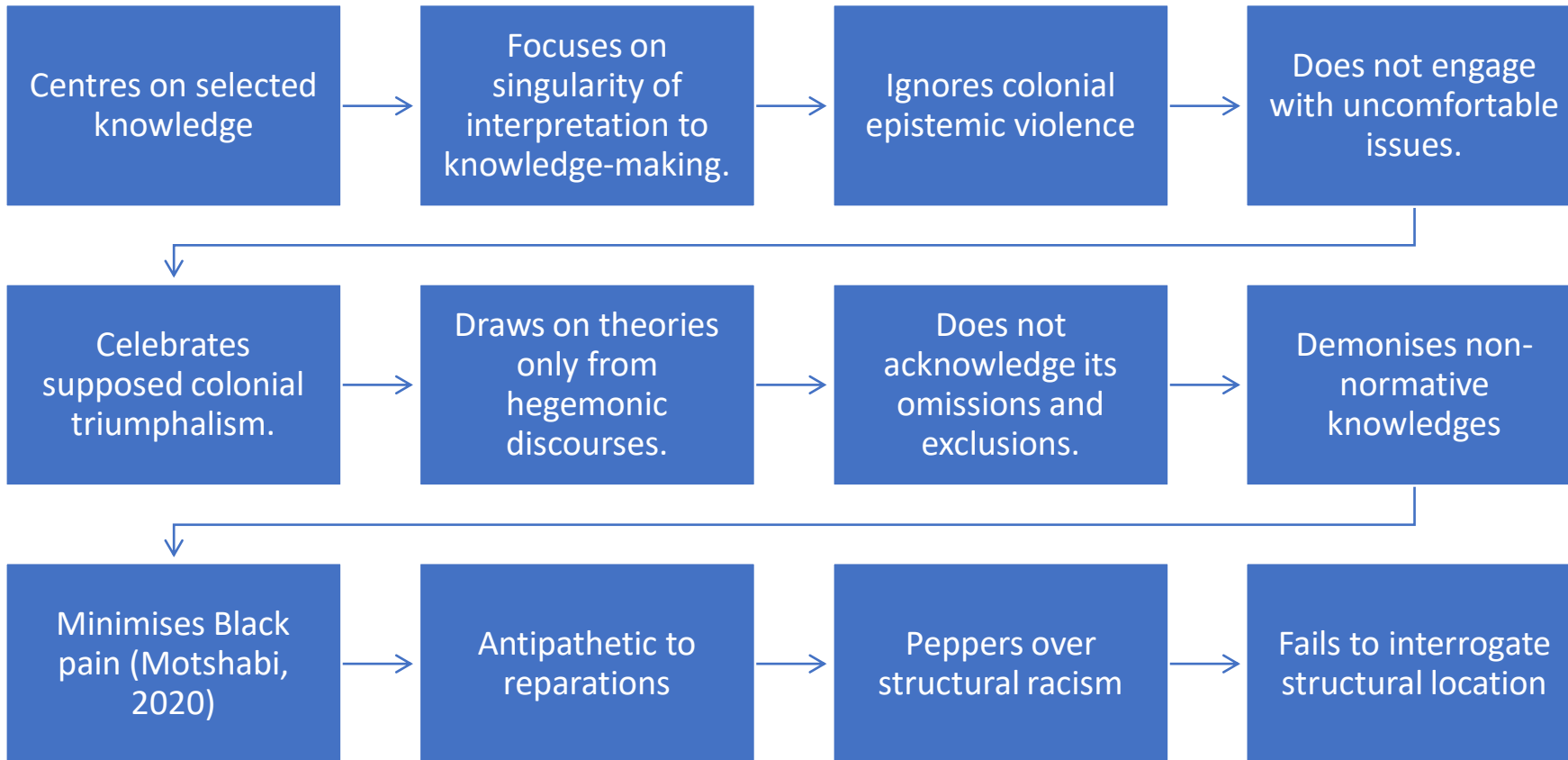
Neocoloniality



Colonised Curriculum

“The colonised curriculum serves the interest of the rich people as it prepares some people to be dominated” (Mashiyyi, Meda, and Swart, 2020)

Curriculum in a 'Colonial' Formulation



Schools minister rejects lessons about colonialism and slave trade in case they 'lower standards'

Petition condemning curriculum for failing to teach 'Britain's role in colonisation' is rebuffed

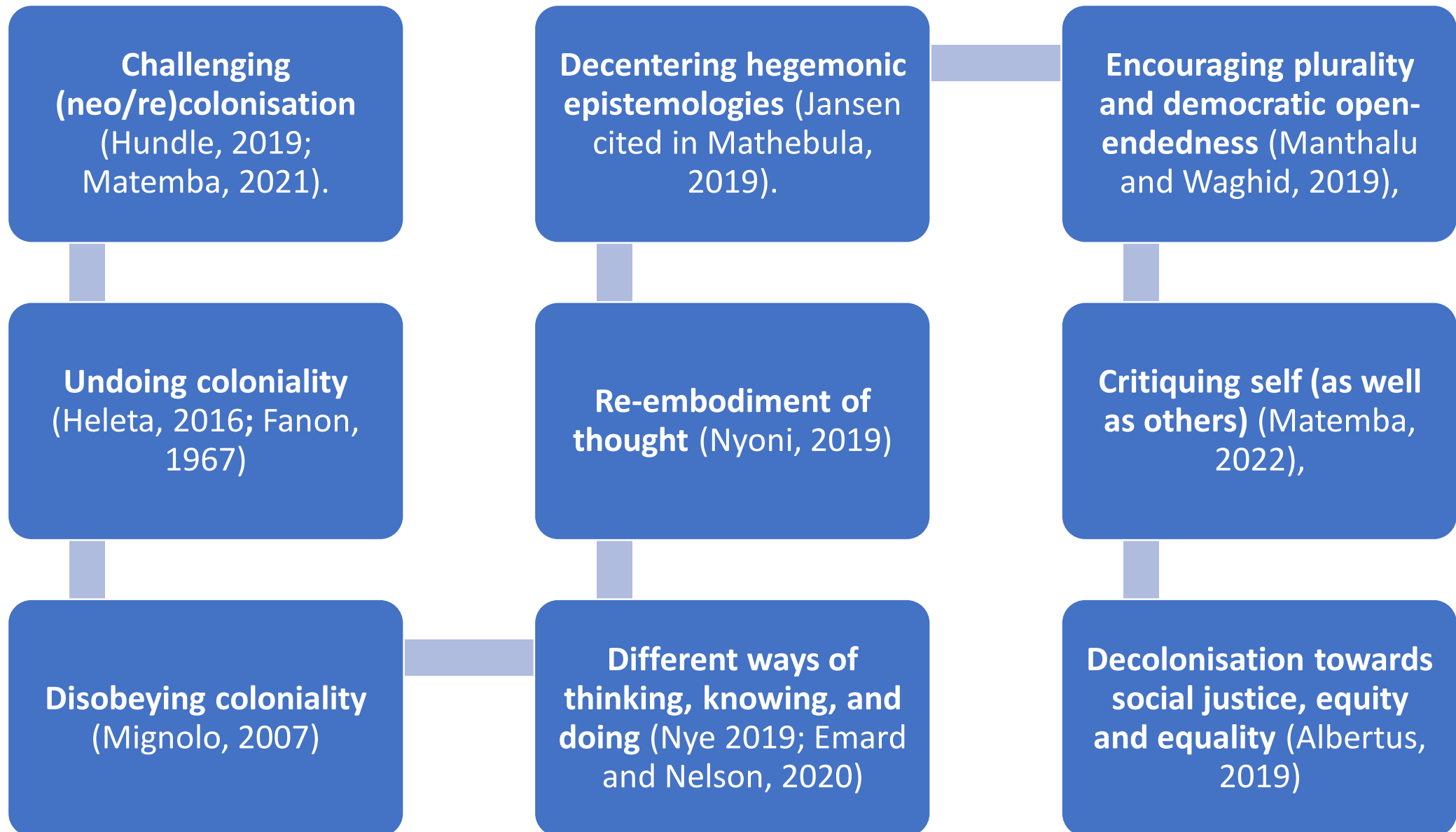
Decolonisation

“It is ... in relation to the place of the Other that colonial desire is articulated...”

(Fanon, 1967: xv)

Decolonisation

“Taking the Bull [Colonialism/Coloniality] by the Horns”



HENRY DUNDAS

1st Viscount Melville (1742-1811)

At the top of this neoclassical column stands a statue of Henry Dundas, 1st Viscount Melville (1742-1811). He was the Scottish Lord Advocate, an MP for Edinburgh and Midlothian, and the First Lord of the Admiralty. Dundas was a contentious figure, provoking controversies that resonate to this day. While Home Secretary in 1792, and first Secretary of State for War in 1796 he was instrumental in deferring the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. Slave trading by British ships was not abolished until 1807. As a result of this delay more than half a million enslaved Africans crossed the Atlantic. Dundas also curbed democratic dissent in Scotland, and both defended and expanded the British empire, imposing colonial rule on indigenous peoples. He was impeached in the United Kingdom for misappropriation of public money, and, although acquitted, he never held public office again. Despite this, the monument before you was funded by voluntary contributions from British naval officers, petty officers, seamen, and marines and was erected in 1821, with the statue placed on top in 1827.

In 2020 this plaque was dedicated to the memory of the more than half a million Africans whose enslavement was a consequence of Henry Dundas's actions.

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Decolonisation, Not Erasure

- Decolonisation is not about deleting.
- Prof Rowena Arshad (2021) has said:
 - “To decolonise is not about deleting knowledge or histories that have been developed in the West or colonial nations, rather it is to situate the histories and knowledges that do not originate from the West against the context of imperialism, colonialism and power and to consider why these have been marginalised and de-centered” (2021).
- Do not tear down statues but decolonise them (Palmer, 2021)

Decolonising the Curriculum

“Statues fall, fees fall but curricula don’t “fall” (Shay, 2016: np)

“The university went to ‘decolonise’ and all they brought back was lousy diversity double-speak!” (Doharty, Madriaga and Joseph-Salisbury, 2021)

How To Decolonise the Curriculum

Pay attention to structural location (Matemba, 2022)

Teach 'difficult' colonial history (MacDonald, L. and Kidman, 2022)

Embed counter-hegemonic strategies (Sathorar and Geduld, 2018)

Create decolonial spaces (Matemba, 2021)

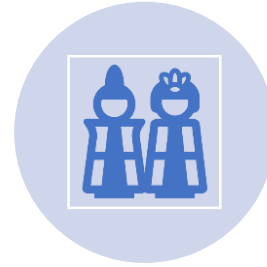
Involve different voices (Shay, 2016)

Teach white fragility (DiAngelo, 2011)

Recentre marginalised knowledges (Mignolo, 2007)



Use diverse sources in teaching (Winter, Webb, and Turner, 2022)



Challenge racial stereotypes (DiAngelo, 2011)



Alter assessment (Winter, Webb, and Turner, 2022)



Foster inclusive practices (Baumfield, 2003).



Decolonise first before diversifying it (Doharty, Madriaga and Joseph-Salisbury, 2021)



Include anti-racist programmes (Hall, Ansley and Connolly, 2023)

Plenary

“Silence ... a form of quiet, slow, psychological violence...” (Pillay, 2016: 157)



What is your structural location related to decolonisation?



How can you deconstruct yourself in order to decolonise praxis?



How does your structural location facilitate or hinder the decolonisation of the curriculum?

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a desk. In the center, there is a laptop. To the left of the laptop is a mug with a black top and a light-colored bottom. In the foreground, there are several sheets of paper, some with a yellow sticky note, and a pair of glasses resting on them. The overall lighting is soft and warm, suggesting an indoor office or study environment.

Thank You

Further inquiry, please email:
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