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On Decolonising Feminist Studies: Makerere University in Perspective

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Abstract

How should African feminists respond to the challenge of decolonisation? This article seeks to deepen the debate on feminist studies and how it is and/or should respond to the whole impetus around decolonisation beyond buzzword politics. Without a doubt, quite several African feminists have related to this critical debate (for example, Mama, Tamale, Oyeronke, Amadiume, Yaliwe, and many others). In this case, we relate directly to the classroom experience in our context, and that is, at Makerere University. Feminist pedagogies seek to stress the productive capacity of curiosity, discomfort, critical engagement, and the refusal and resistance to imperial knowledge as necessary and an aspect of bringing about transformative learning and social justice. Using a decolonial feminist pedagogy, the classroom becomes a site not simply for sharing ideas and topics but for remarkably examining the power dynamics of the coloniality of knowledge. It becomes a spark that can light us up for critical engagement. Teaching becomes a tool for transformation, as summarised by bell hooks in "teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom" (Hooks, 1994: 6).

Keywords: Decolonisation, Coloniality, Pedagogy, Gender, Feminist Studies

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Introduction

This article seeks to contribute towards pathways for a concrete debate on the decolonisation agenda in African feminist studies. How has the decolonisation agenda influenced the teaching and research in gender studies at Makerere University? The need to decolonise stems from the realisation that Africa and other formerly colonised nations continue to live under the same 'colonial power matrix' of coloniality or neo-colonialism (Grosfoguel 2007). Decolonising knowledge entails the need to take a bold step and critically re-examine strategies that would disrupt and unsettle the norms in terms of how knowledge is produced. To unsettle the paradigm, we must 'rethink thinking' (Ndlovu Gatsheni, 2018: 23), which Lewis Gordon (2006) declared as 'shifting the geography of reason'. It is a time of 'learning to un-learn in order to re-learn' (Tlostanova and Mignolo 2012), which includes questioning what was once unquestioned and unquestionable (Msimang 2015) and 'forgetting what we have been taught, to break free from the western imperial ideas imposed on us through education, religion, culture, and social environment (Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2012).

Decolonised feminist teaching, therefore, involves making the classroom a space that curiously analyses the power dynamics of coloniality and not simply a site for knowledge transfer. The aim is to liberate the colonised from the colonial mind as well as the patriarchal mind. The article aims at establishing how far the decolonisation agenda influenced the teaching and research at Makerere University. Two key points will be noted; one is the content and theoretical engagement that feminist studies in the Global South (Makerere University in particular) engage with; are two is the ability to connect coloniality with the current vulnerabilities, challenges, and gender inequalities in Africa and the Global South. How do we engage with how colonial structures shape the world order by creating hierarchical power relations and how such power hierarchies affect a range of issues, including how our bodies move, live, breathe, exist, feel, and die (Mehta, 2019)? This also calls for very bold steps to decolonise feminist pedagogies as a spark that can light African feminists as well as the classroom for critical engagement (Mehta, 2019). In this case, teaching becomes a tool, as summarised by Bell Hooks, "to transgress and the road to transformation" (1994: 6).

Decolonised feminist teaching and research also highlight how students participate,–creating engaged classrooms (Mehta, 2019) and strongly relate theory to their everyday experiences. Decolonial indigenisation becomes important for paying deeper attention to what constitutes knowledge, moving away from the Eurocentric curriculum, and putting our focus on the creation of spaces of collective indigenous feminist

theorising and historicising, including how the indigenous women of Africa historically were part of political, economic, social, and spiritual power and how this power was dismantled at the advent of colonialism and the introduction of capitalism in Africa (Anderson, 2019; Tamale, 2020).

The teaching of women's studies, as it was called then at Makerere University, started in the Department of Women Studies (now the school of Women and Gender Studies) in 1991 as a direct output of different levels of women's activism at the time. As it were, the department was popularly referred to, as the academic arm of the Women's movement[1]. Recalling the proposal for the establishment of the Women's Studies Department, Victoria Mwaka, the founder and head of the department, noted that;

> the proposal envisioned the creation of women's studies that would educate personnel who might then support the activities of nongovernmental organisations working on behalf of women and the Ministry of Gender and Community Development. The importance of an academic women's studies program was emphasised. It would provide a systematic analysis of gender issues, sensitise society about these issues, and, through coordinated research, generate valuable data to support policy and other developmental activities (cited in Tripp, 2015: 457).

[1] See Bantebya and Kindi (2022) for details on the evolution of the Department of Women's Studies into a school of Women and Gender Studies.

Away from the early beginnings well elaborated by a recent analysis by Bantebya and Kindi (2022), the teaching of gender studies at Makerere University has grown by leaps and bounds, growing beyond the locus of the school to other units under the gender mainstreaming effort. Several units within the university teach gender either as a stand-alone course unit or as part of other course units. There is also a Uni-wide course on gender and development that is supposed to be offered to every undergraduate student. Moreover, gender-sensitive research has increasingly become a requirement for most research projects within the university. By implication, almost all university units may need to integrate gender studies into their teaching and research. This is what Ahikire (2014) has termed as the capillary effect in the arena of knowledge legitimation, where the teaching of gender studies and its activism have imbued and shaped society's visions, allowing for possibilities of multiple stories as opposed to single-story trajectories.

Now, we enter yet another phase of engagement: how far and to what extent the decolonisation encounter has permeated the teaching and research of gender studies at Makerere University today? This is not to suggest that debates on decolonisation are new. Decolonisation discourse has been part of postcolonial studies for years (Crawford, Mai-Bornu, & Landström, 2021). Latin America has been instrumental in the theoretical development of decolonial

intellectualism and its uptake in mainstream philosophy (Velez & Tuana, 2020). Decolonisation discourse has also been complimented by indigenous feminist approaches (Anderson, 2019; Cherniak and Ashli, 2020). However, we can argue that the decolonisation of knowledge is yet to gain substantive traction enough to cause a substantive transformation in feminist knowledge production and sufficiently critical engagement with neo-colonialism.

A pointer into the Gender Studies Curriculum at Makerere

This was a rapid overview intended to make a contribution to the decolonisation debate in feminist studies. This article reviews the curriculum at SWGS: Master of Arts in Gender Studies, Postgraduate Diploma in Gender and Local Economic Development, Bachelor of Arts (with Gender and Development as a subject). In this case, we deal with the curriculum and reading materials. One of the issues being analysed is how many of the reading materials are written by Africans (Africanising) or scholars from the Global South generally. The second and most important issue is whether the readers enhance a decolonial agenda by challenging the euro-centric knowledge and coloniality that we still encounter today (even if the authors were not Africans). It is important to note that the decolonial agenda is not only driven by scholars from the Global South (there are scholars like Sylvia Chant, Anne McClintock, Thomas Pogge, Walter Rodney, Frantz Fanon, and David Harvey, among others) who have driven a decolonial agenda. Conversely, coloniality can also be enhanced by people from the Global South, consciously or unconsciously.

Hence, this paper focuses on the curriculum by looking at the reading materials as well as processes and of learning the whole knowledge production arena. To what extent does the course utilise literature with decolonial content? And how do these translate into research by students. Table 1 summarises the reading materials for the course units offered under MA Gender Studies (the numbers indicate readings that have decolonial content).

Table 1: Overview of Core Readings in the Revised Curriculum for MA Gender Studies (MGS)

Course Units	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11
African Literature	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	3	5	4	1
Critical Decolonial Literature (Non-African)	0	3	0	0	4	6	1	4	1	0	0

Source: *Modified from SWGS: Master in Gender Studies curriculum (2023).*

Key: C stands for a course unit

We focused on the core reading materials provided in the course outline because, essentially, using African literature should be the starting point in the decolonisation process. As indicated in Table 1, courses numbers 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 demonstrate efforts and deliberate action to decolonise the curriculum. Five or more reading materials were either written by African scholars or introduced learners to critical literature about neo-colonialism and decoloniality. The other course units do not engage with African and global South writers, nor do they introduce critical decolonial literature. In the eleven course units analysed, although with some improvement, the bar is still low in terms of utilisation of African–centred literature.

In 2022, the school of Women and Gender Studies reviewed the postgraduate curriculum and focused on three major yardsticks. One was the purpose of the curriculum review; two was the content within the curriculum; and three was the analysis of the references. A review of the eleven (11) Master of Arts course units indicates that only three course units were clear, both with an intention to decolonise the curriculum (within its purpose for the review) and reflected in their content and references. Additional two courses did not indicate decolonisation in the purpose of the review but strongly demonstrate that they were deliberate in introducing critical decolonial literature and content challenging the dominance of Eurocentric or Western-centric knowledge systems. In the other remaining courses, decolonisation content was either silent or not readily traced at all.

A look at the Postgraduate Diploma in Gender and Local Economic Development (GLED) indicates that the Western-centric nature of knowledge production still dominates the curriculum. By its design, the GLED philosophical foundation is Euro-centric, anchored in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) philosophies of neoliberalism. Local economic development (LED) planning initially emerged in Europe in the 1970s and later spread to other developing countries. The World Bank asserts that the purpose of LED is to build up the economic capacity of a local area with a vibrant private sector to improve its economic future. While domesticating LED, the Uganda LED Policy (2014) states that the main objective of LED is to create "*a vibrant and competitive private sector-led local economy for poverty reduction, wealth creation, and prosperity*". This assumes that prosperity for a locality is possible within the straight jacket of marketisation and privatisation. The neo-liberal tendencies have demonstrated their inability to create a favourable environment for vulnerable populations, including women (Mai-Bornu and Landström 2021). A lot of effort must be invested to contextualise and introduce a critical lens to this concept of LED and how it plays out within the world power structures (Chant and Sweetman 2012; Crawford, Mai-Bornu, and Landström,

2021), which is a direct descendant of the efficiency approach to women in development (WID). Within the LED curriculum, out of the eight courses taught, only one indicated decolonisation of the curriculum as a purpose for the review. Of the eight course units, only four reading materials are authored by African scholars, and only three (non-African) were found to possess critical decolonial content. Most of the reading materials were World Bank reports.

Within the Gender and Development subject at undergraduate level, out of twenty-three course units, two course units are deliberate in content and reference materials. One course unit had eight readers (critical African authors), and another course had six readers (by African authors with decolonial connotations). The other five courses had topics that suggested critical pedagogy and a decolonial stance from the reading materials presented. In one of the five courses, feminist pedagogies are emphasised, where case studies are used, and sometimes students move to the field to 'test the theory'. Indeed, most reading materials in this course are Eurocentric (only one by an African author), and engaging with indigenous knowledge and epistemologies seems weak. Out of the twenty three course units, six-course units have more than five reading materials written by African writers. Six out of twenty three course units had one reading material authored by an African, while five had none of the reading materials written by an African author.

The above analysis brings in categories of the different course units including courses that seem silent about the need for historicisation and crucial pedagogy with a decolonial angle, lacking both in content and reading materials provided. Another category is the course units that have deliberately introduced reading materials that encourage critical consciousness among learners, raising a understanding of power structures, socio-economic injustices, and how they appear within the neo-liberal agenda. This literature enables students to question or challenge dominant narratives/ receive wisdom, and work toward social change.

Students' Research Imperatives

Our interest in this analysis also covered the research conducted by post-graduate students and specifically, focused on the level of normalisation of archival and historical research. Archival research is considered to play a central role in decolonising knowledge by uncovering historical narratives, challenging dominant narratives, and recovering marginalised histories, forming the basis for the revalidation of indigenous knowledge. We are aware of the politics of archiving and archives. A lot of questions have been raised regarding whose archive matters and who decides on the material to be considered archival

(Bailkin 2015; Agostinho, 2019; Money; 2021). Moreover, feminists have also raised questions regarding women's absence in the archive and historical analyses (Allen 1986, 177 cf. Hunter 2017). The argument is that few women have ventured into African historiography, leaving the field of history to be dominateded by male historians (Sargent, 1991). Aiming at creating a decolonial archive will influence re-writing the archive, deal with coloniality and the silences within it, or seek to address them. The more African researchers get swamped in historical material, the more impetus there is to search for truth and correct any misrepresentations about their past.

Looking at the dissertations of MA and PhD students, it was clear that students are more focused on 'developmental' research, and archival and historical research seems to be far and in between. Table 2 summarises the categories of research at the postgraduate level.

Table 2: Short version titles for postgraduate dissertations/thesis from 2017 to date

Years	Titles
2023	(i) Gender norms and SRH, (ii) Access to and utilisation of maternal health services; (iii) Community perceptions of GBV; (iv) Re-integration of youth drug ex-offenders; (v) The informal justice system and domestic violence; (vi) Impact of violence against children; (vii) Access to maternal health services (PhD); (viii) Women's roles in the management of community forest resources; (ix) Women's participation in artisanal stone mining and (x) Gender relations on agricultural productivity
2022	(i) Women's participation in business; (ii) Women's access to and utilisation of microcredit; (iii) The role of village savings and loan associations, (iv) Vocational training in enhancing women's economic empowerment; (v) Gender division of labour in crop production; (vi) Addressing sexual harassment at Makerere University and (vii) Combating violence against women.
2021	(i) Understanding child abuse and neglect in Uganda; (ii) Child trafficking for labour exploitation; (iii) Effectiveness of the Domestic Violence Act; (iv) Social implications of married women adopting their husband's name; (v) Impact of microfinance; (vi) Operation Wealth Creation Program and the Care Economy; (vii) Gender and decision making in the print media; and (viii) Human rights experiences of women's rights defenders.
2020	(i) Women's livelihood strategies in urban Internally Displaced Persons' settlements.

2019	(i) Access to private health facilities (PhD); (ii) Microfinance services and economic empowerment in Rwanda; (PhD), (iii) Gender responsiveness in teaching and learning; (iv) Changing household gender division of labour, (v) NGOs and girls' education; (vi) Human trafficking and sexual exploitation; (vii) A household division of roles in farming, (viii) Prevention of physical violence; (ix) Religion and household decision making; (x) Gendered decisions for pork consumption; and (xi) Gender and property inheritance.
2018	(i) Gender, conflict and displacement (PhD), (ii) Water and sanitation facilities (PhD), (iii) Income generating activities, (iv) Access to agricultural technology, (v) Gender and retention of students in Universal Secondary Education, (vi) Child abuse, (vii) Beautiful woman's body and sexual pleasure, (viii) Adoption of climate-smart agriculture and (xix) Gender provisions in the Employment Act.
2017	(i) Access to and use of family planning; (ii) Assessing the socio-economic status of child mothers; and (iii) Women's participation in decentralised governance.

Source: *Compiled from Makerere University Main Library (July 2023).*

The search within the postgraduate dissertation (Master, PhD, and Post graduate Diploma) since 2017 indicates overly conventional problem-focused scholarship rather than historicisation, decolonisation or Africanisation. Several members of staff at the school of Women and Gender Studies make deliberate attempts to this effect, yet, many questions and searches for answers regarding decolonising feminism and gender studies still linger in the corridors, symposiums, and meetings where members of staff gather, and very little, if any, trickles into the research by graduate students.

Engagement with a few staff members exposed to archival research reveals a huge impact that such research has had on their intellectual curiosity. The unknown literature about African/ Ugandan women heroes; the mis representation of African cultures;the role of colonialism, neo-liberalism, capitalism and its impact on unequal relations that we battle with today; the role of donors; the liberalisation of the education sector and how these impact knowledge production and indigenisation of knowledge, among others. These have become part of the intellectual debate. Some of these teachers have realised the importance of creating a classroom where learners are contributors of knowledge and where class becomes a space of 'political activism', where there is a critical analysis of the genesis of the day-to-today experience of gender inequalities and where historicisation is emphasised.

Likewise, students are encouraged to go to the field to test theories and relate them to their daily experiences. One of the lecturers we talked to narrated how students were sent to the field to relate theory to the day-to-day lives of people. To the lecturer, this was being practical, and students began to understand that theory can explain lived experiences. It is important to note that decolonisation can be termed an unhurried process. The lecturers that send students to the field refer them to align with liberal, radical, and other feminist theories. It is, therefore, about fitting in theory rather than theorising from the ground or deriving concepts from the local context. While students testing western theories and trying to apply them to the local context may probably give hope to students that what is on the ground can be written in books and theorised, Mamdani (1998) argues that we risk producing copycat men and women who import theory from outside, yet we could aim higher and theorise our own reality. It is important to note, however that such scenarios can be explained by the power relations of knowledge production and marginalisation of 'other' knowledge, particularly from the Global South (Hlatshwayo, 2023). Indeed, coloniality is still firmly rooted and consolidated in the African academy, quite often with academic knowledge out of African context (Hlatshwayo, 2023).

A Move to Decolonising Feminist Studies

How is a feminist class in Africa or at Makerere University picking interest in researching historical material about African gender relations? For example, most modern literature portrays the narrative that women had no history and that pre-colonial societies in Africa diminished women and submerged them in the patriarchal order (Lefatshe & Moagi, 2006). Yet, women played social, political, economic, and religious roles during ancient times in Africa, but men have always ignored such roles (Barnes, 1969; Tripp, 2012). Moving forward, we need to question why feminist studies at Makerere University only focus on Euro-American figures like Mary Wollestonecraft, Somon de Bevoir, etc., as heroes and pillars of the women's movement but never include African heroes. For example, Queen Koogere of Uganda, a great and prosperous leader, defended her state (in Bunyoro) and made her country prosperous. Muhumuza of Ndorwa led a revolt around 1928; led a large armed force and fought against the British at the time. Muhumuza stood against patriarchal, colonial, and chauvinist forces. She was a spiritual leader, a military leader, and a fighter for social justice (Rutanga, 2011; Nsamba, 2017). The great Makeda, the Queen of Sheba of Ethiopia, and many other important feminist figures in history are not considered gender activists and heroes (in medicine and other fields) to be celebrated

by gender and feminist studies or included in the curriculum. We need to reject the assumption that Euro-America is the central root of Africa's cognisance and the assumption that it has a monopoly over the production of universal knowledge and theory (Mbembe, 2016). Mamdani notes that the legacy of colonialism has demonstrated that theorising is done from the Western academy and a student in Africa is to be a technician, learning to apply a theory produced elsewhere (Mamdani 1998).

Decolonising feminist studies requires understanding that colonialism propelled gender constructs; enhanced patriarchal systems, and condemned the cultural values of Africans (Tamale, 2011; Durac, 2016; Jjuuko & Tindifa, 2018). In this sense, Oyewumi (2013) emphasises that Africa is a treasure trove not only of Benin bronzes, coltan from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and diamonds from Botswana; the real unmined gems are African concepts, ideas, values, ways of being, systems of knowledge, and episteme (2022:3). As Everjoice Win (2003) argued in relation to the situation of women in Zimbabwe, the picture of the African woman, as poor, powerless, and pregnant has served to mask the immense and differentiated experiences of African women severely minimising their social agency as well. Oyewumi has over time urged African Feminists to step out of the colonial–imposed straight–jacketed categories to be able to re-imagine Africa's lived reality. Indeed, she has made the argument that often African women have been generalised into one category – powerless and subordinates. Research has indeed demonstrated that in most parts of Africa, women occupied a special position within society and were traditionally placed at the center of the family (Lebeuf, 1963).

Without running the risk of essentialising Africa, there have been various voices to the effect that African cultures treated women with special respect, and it was a supreme offence if one disrespected the dignity of a woman in Uganda, for example (Southall, 1970). The misrepresentation of people's lived experiences of ancient African people is also discussed by Oyewumi (1998) and Amadiume (2002), among others. These African feminists contest the idea of women's perpetual low position and gender hierarchy inherent in African tradition but regard it as an imported concept. As Anderson (2019) puts it, decolonising feminist approaches helps us to appreciate the core of our societies in the past, and they hold the potential to define our indigenous futures. Quickly, then, we are alerted to Oyewumi's (2013:97) critique of generalist notions of gender relations, which are 'in need of serious repair'.

Colonialism remained the backdrop to anthropology by shaping the social dynamics of the knowledge production process and the legacies of the knowledge produced. In Uganda and most parts of Africa, the

collective memory of gender relations regularly dates to colonial times, in which the colonisers started recording and reporting on the traditional cultures of their subjects (Leach, 2012). The colonisers, however, did not know enough about the people they wrote about (Kiwanuka, 1968). This brought in a misrepresentation of African cultures, which strongly needs repair - necessitating rigorous archival research. We concur with Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 28) that there is a need to rewrite and re-right Africa's position in history and thus upset the model within which western imperialist ideas continue to thrive. Feminists from the Global South and Makerere University, in particular, should focus on the complex manifestations of neo-colonialism through international organisations, international policies and the harm it has caused in creating vulnerabilities, particularly for women in the Global South. The aim of the decolonising agenda is epistemological, leading to critical questions regarding the content being taught and the role of a student, paying attention to the shifts in the interests of research and funding, which consequently determine the content taught in the universities in the Global South.

A study by Ahikire and Ninsiima (2022) indicate how neo-liberalism affected intellectualism and drove the agenda of transactional marketisation at Makerere University, which minimised the traditional role of the university as a locus of critical thinking and knowledge creation. Gender–related research became a donor project–a field in which the government of Uganda is chronically constrained to find funding. In effect, the funder-researcher positions create power relations, which reduces the researchers' freedom while imposing stark limitations on knowledge production. Consequently, conceptual categories of African origin and experiences are silenced, putting researchers and teachers under pressure to produce research whose social benefit is largely directed to the needs of funding agencies (Wight, Ahikire, & Kwesiga, 2014; Nolte, 2019). As a result, scholars remain within the straitjacket of donor funding guidelines with no rigorous questioning (Mbilinyi, 1984). Such dynamics constrain gender studies and the humanities to aid society in challenging established positions and social norms, through critical thinking; and preserving heritage, cultural memory, and identity through embedded critical analysis (Hazelkorn, 2015).

Decolonising feminist studies will require us to deliberately resist neo-liberal education policies, which seem to be an organised regime that aims to regulate who gets to know what (Anderson, 2019). In this sense, neo-liberalism maintains the coloniality of social, economic, and interpretive processes and persistently reproduces colonial harms from one generation to the next. There is a need to resist the education system based on

market-driven consumer values and focus on institutional practices that ideologically look out for and validate indigenous knowledge for greater posterity. According to Hlatshwayo (2023), resisting neo-liberal structural limitations in the academy requires solidarity and support from organised allies instead of individual efforts. In other words, neo-liberal structural constraints cannot be dealt with if the ecosystem continues to be intact (also see Ahikire & Ninsiima, 2022).

One example of intentionality in decolonisation was in graduate classes, where a decolonial feminist stance was used. Students became co-teachers, and the teacher delinked herself from the 'banking model'. Students were introduced to critical reading materials from a decolonial standpoint. The teacher allowed the class to be a space where students could express themselves. It became a space where students became agents of decolonisation, a class was a space for discussions, and students shared experiences with neo-colonialism and its impact on not only knowledge production but the day-to-day lives of Ugandans as well. This time, the sharing of lived experiences was being informed by critical pedagogy and the critical literature to which the students were introduced. Students were able to highlight some of the misrepresentations about their own cultures. They wondered why utensils like pots, calabash, herbal medicine etc were regarded as evil or witchcraft by colonialists; and the impact this had on the innovativeness (knowledge) of Africans. They began to question why we are still struggling to get women into leadership, medicine and religious institutions. Yet these spaces were occupied by women before colonialism.

Students were also able to question the role of macro-economic policies in creating an unfavourable environment for women and men, and consequently affecting their access to reasonable health, and education, and consequently affecting their dignity and rights. Such a situation created pain, a sense of anger, and much curiosity to know more and craft solutions. Dramatically, students could have identified with this statement: "I have diagnosed myself as suffering from intellectual and emotional toxicity induced by discrimination and white privilege within the academy (Campbell, 2007; cf. Hlatshwayo, 2023). Indeed, there was a realisation of suffering from intellectual emptiness.

Conclusion

Decolonisation could be seen as the refusal and resistance to imperial knowledge, critical and unapologetic engagement with the institutionalisation of neoliberal market relations and its unconcealed associated inequalities, including gender oppression. We have argued that African feminists and feminists from the Global South must rigorously and critically analyse neo-coloniality. A feminist classroom at

Makerere University and elsewhere must engage with critical reading materials. It is also important that a feminist classroom engages with literature written by scholar from the South with a liberatory capacity. This is not to suggest that we censure Western scholarship. As Mbembe (2016) asserts, decolonising knowledge is a process that does not necessarily abandon the notion of universal knowledge for humanity but embraces it via a horizontal strategy of openness to dialogue among different epistemic traditions.

We employ this notion of decolonisation to understand feminism from the perspective of the Global South, including indigenous knowledge, and reject the Eurocentric epistemic canon, where authentic knowledge is only attributed to the Global North. We argue that African women's experiences are critical for understanding African problems and that African indigenous knowledge is legitimate knowledge. The core of African intellectualism in the process of decolonisation is getting back what was taken away from them. We contend that feminist studies are context-specific, and feminist studies at Makerere University need to deepen the current efforts at contending with global structural powers that cause pathogenic vulnerabilities to both men and women. Decolonising the university will require a radical move of the institution, infusing it with decolonial thinking and agency, and analysing the power dynamics of coloniality. The classroom needs to be a space for critical thinking and activism, reclaiming ancestral memories, and reconnecting our grandmothers' powerful legacy to legitimise the feminist cause. This involves promoting a critical understanding of global power structures, social injustices, and how they are reproduced within educational systems. It requires recognising and engaging with indigenous knowledge and oral traditions that have historicaly been marginalised or excluded from the mainstream educational landscape.

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