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### Special Edition Dossier:

## Production of Knowledge in Contemporary Africa and the Diaspora

Black intellectuals have been waging a struggle against epistemic racism and Western rationalism. This struggle has been provided with feedback by the thinking of intellectuals from the Movement of Negritude and Pan-Africanists who, from the perspective of decolonizing the field of social and human sciences, have strengthened and inspired Africans and their descendants to create fighting and re-existence tactics to safeguard the ancestry of the Black population. Historically, we know that racism against the Black population operates in different ways, especially with regard to intellectual productions. The coloniality of knowledge, of power and of being, a triad of the modern-colonial world-system, devalues the Black production of knowledge, cosmoperceptions and intellectual experience both on the African continent and in the diaspora.

Thus, this Special Dossier, entitled *Production of Knowledge in Contemporary Africa and the Diaspora*, managed to bring together voices and history(ies) through national and international Black researchers' studies and investigations. These researchers shared their texts and experiences both on the African continent and in its diaspora. An Afro-decolonial dialogue that not only allows us to leave colonialist amnesia, but also expand the possibility to access a set of researches with necessary discussions for contemporaneity. These researches were produced in different areas of knowledge, challenging us to think about how the coloniality of knowledge, of power and of being, continues to maintain the historical invisibility of existence or an inadequate and excluding conception of what these Black intellectual productions would be, both in Africa and in the Americas and the Caribbean.

The first text of his dossier is *The afrocentric and emancipatory view of the Black woman: Yemayá, Oyá-Yansán and Ochún as ancestral references of our liberation practices*, by Aída Esther Bueno Sarduy. The author presents an interesting development in relation to Yoruba deities, establishing a link with the components of spirituality that frame the way in which the meaning of this cultural trajectory is established – which is understood from a different mode of existence, distant from Western modes of religious belonging and understanding of the world. Sarduy analyzes the myths of Yemayá, Oyá-Yansán and Ochún, preserved in Yoruba religions in Cuba and Brazil, emphasizing the impact of these sacred narratives in the sociopolitical sphere and in the context of emancipation, autonomy and freedom of Afro-descendant women.

Then, the article by Edizón León Castro, entitled *Educational knowledge and knowledge of the bodies: unlearning to re-exist*, raises the problem of hegemonic educational systems from a Western perspective, that is, schools where the only knowledge taught is that of European and/or North American colonial inheritance. The author questions the need to change these parameters through a process of unlearning and deconstruction, in order to implement a different type of education in which all faces of Ecuador could be represented at their true value. This process has to happen, that was the point of view of the Afro-Ecuadorian pioneers of the Afro-Ecuadorian Cultural Center in the 1970s. The idea was to arrive at an education of their own and above all from Afro-Ecuadorian parameters, based on ancestral memories, in order to be able to return to Being. Edizón León explains that the new Ecuadorian constitution of 2008, which recognized interculturality and plurinationality, helped a lot in this regard, but it did not solve all educational problems, so the struggle for a true Afro-Ecuadorian education needs to continue.

Paul Mvengou Cruzmerino's contribution in his paper, entitled *Productions of oral and Afro-Atlantic knowledge. The decoloniality of the Afro transatlantic* lies in its attempt to establish a dialogue between Africa and its diaspora through different corpuscles, such as stories or religion and beliefs. In his contribution, the author shows how there are many transversalities between the different corpuscles on both shores. On the other hand, the interesting thing about this analysis is that it considers orality as a source of knowledge as true as writing. Here we enter the debate of Western modernity, which has always privileged written knowledge to the detriment of oral knowledge. In his writing, we can see that the different oralities transmit knowledge in terms of ethics, history, philosophy and other worldviews.

In the article *Like father, like son: From Afro-Colombian Ethno-education to other Positionings in the community*, by authors Ernell Villa and Wilmer Villa, the importance of Ethno-education in the Colombian context from an Afro-centered perspective is discussed, giving primacy to orality, community participation, diasporic culture and the social and transforming function of education itself. The authors highlight Afro-Colombian ethnic education as a way of fighting epistemic racism in Colombia, where monocultural education denotes the weight of coloniality that still survives and is still very much present.

*Philo-Praxis centered on Utu: Engaging with our common futures beyond the Anthropocene*, by Cheikh Thiam, addresses that while the history of pan-African involvement – from the first slave rebellions to the recent calls for decolonization, Cheikh Anta Diop's representation of Africa as the Cradle of Civilization, Molefi Ashante's call for an Afrocentric revolution, Rastafarian and Zionist Pan-Africanist dreams, etc. – have always been aware of the need for an epistemic stance that emphasizes the need to “disconnect” from the omnipresence of coloniality. Cheikh Thiam argues that some scholars of African studies have too often created an imaginary idea of Africa framed by its difference (or similarities) with the idea of Europe, while conceiving the African subject as a Black form of being-white. Cheikh Thiam proposes nothing less than a paradigm shift based on the need to think beyond the limits of the centralization of the Western subject and the West as the subject of history. Although Thiam's plea is rooted in the decolonial tradition, he proposes a tangible and innovative option based on a careful exegesis of African ontologies, epistemologies and sociopolitical organizations based on utu-centered worldviews. The author convincingly shows that this paradigm offers an epistemic option that creates the possibility of thinking outside the limits of the modernity/coloniality dialectic, providing us with a radically non-colonial and decent epistemic structure. The endogenous and decolonial framework that Cheikh Thiam proposes not only allows us to rethink in a different way the concept of Africa and the African presence in the world, but also offers the possibility to engage, in a different way, with some of the most critical issues our world faces today, namely, as he points out, “white supremacy and environmental inequality evidenced by the recent protests following the murder of George Floyd and the current COVID-19 pandemic”. It is important to note that Cheikh Thiam's article is not a naive substitution of Western ontologies and epistemologies for African ontologies and epistemologies to challenge the ubiquity of coloniality, but rather an exploration of the potential that can emanate from the possibilities of engaging with the world beyond the limits of the universalization of the provincial western subject.

*Afrodiasporic intellectuals and knowledge production in Latin America and the Caribbean: Conceição Evaristo, Mayra Santos-Febres and Yolanda Arroyo Pizarro*, written by Cristian Sales, consists in a reflection on the production of knowledge of Afrodiasporic intellectuals in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, the author emphasizes intellectuals such as Conceição Evaristo, Mayra Santos-Febres and Yolanda Arroyo Pizarro, who are novelists, short story writers, translators, theorists, literary critics and offer a broader vision of being a woman and being Black in the world. The text does not only highlights how these thinkers carry out a movement of epistemic resistance/insurgency to the ways of thinking/acting established by the literary and historiographical canons. It also highlights the epistemological creativity of Black Brazilian and Puerto Rican women and writers gathered, strategically, in all fields, and how they fight, resist and rise up in the face of epistemicide, operating in the constitution of new knowledge, motivating other ways to narrate the colonial past.

In the article entitled *Management and policies of science: a necessity for Africa*, Helena Cosma Da Graça Fonseca Veloso argues about how scientific illiteracy increases inequalities and marginalizes from the labor market the majorities who are already excluded. In addition, the author argues that science is a capable factor to contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of individuals, as it provides everyone, equally, with the acquisition of knowledge, the introjection of values, and the search for solutions to the problems faced by African societies. Her writing leads us to reflect on how scientific development, in most African countries – such as Angola –, has been neglected, and finally argues: for the emergence of an effectively free Africa, a management and policy design for science becomes an essential element in the agenda of the struggles of African nations.

In *Scientific research in higher education institutions in Cabinda: the dilemmas of production, financing and divulgation*, Joaquim Paka Massanga and Xavier Alfredo da Silva Futi deepen the discussion of the previous article presented by Helena Veloso, describing the relationship between scientific research and higher education institutions in Angola, however, bringing reflections on the province of Cabinda, particularly. The writing of Paka Massanga and Alfredo Futi leads us to think about the current situation in higher education institutions with regard to scientific research and the dilemmas of production, funding and dissemination of the results of the scientific work of professors and researchers. The authors point out that the State does not have properly defined public policies to support research and the publication of results, but also emphasize the difficulty that many African researchers have in disseminating, even with their own efforts, their academic and investigative productions.

In *Between the Anthropologies of Brazil and Angola: Notes on a Research Path*, Yérsia Souza de Assis presents to us an offshoot of her doctoral research carried out in Angola, at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Agostinho Neto University. Her investigative path as a Black Brazilian Anthropologist and her experiences in Angola lead us to think about the relationships between educational projections from Brazil towards Angola and vice-versa. Projections that provide or not bridges of interlocution and dialogue for the Anthropologies of these two countries. The author also points out a greater flow of Black Brazilian women carrying out a *sânkófico* movement by developing researches about the African continent and, in particular, about Angola.

As gifts for this Special Edition, we have an Interview with the Afro-Colombian intellectual activist *Betty Ruth Lozano Lerma*, carried out by Cláudia Miranda and a Review of Sheila Walker's book entitled *Knowledge from within: Afro-South Americans speak of their peoples and their histories*, written by Viviane Conceição Antunes.

The interview conducted by Claudia Miranda took place during a political-philosophical turning point in Colombia, when Francia Elena Márquez Mina was elected vice president of the country. In this way, touched by the repercussion of this political turn, the Afro-Colombian intellectual-activist Betty Ruth Lozano Lerma tells us about her academic work and trajectory as one of the most important Black feminists in Colombia, following Mara Viveros Vigoya's footsteps. Our interviewee also offers us reflections on Political Education, on the position of her country in the African Diaspora, the alternatives for a social emancipation of racialized strata, on the critical post-colonial perspective in her production and on the hardships of the anti-racist struggle.

In the review of *Knowledge from within: Afro-South Americans speak about their peoples and their histories*, Viviane Antunes begins by telling about the challenge of having participated in the collective project of translating the referred book into Portuguese and presents us with the articles that compose this beautiful work by Sheila Walker. *Knowledge from within* leads us to think about the "principle of Adinkra Sankofa: when reconstituting and linking the pieces of our diasporic puzzle, we seek our history to live the present aware of what we really are and our potential. Thus, we will have the opportunity to experience an equitable, anti-racist world that has really been able to review and transform itself".

In short, we, the coordinators of the *Production of Knowledge in Contemporary Africa and the Diaspora Dossier*, congratulate and thank the authors of the articles that constitute this dossier for their valuable Afro-scientific contributions and we wish the readers an

excellent journey in this rich and interesting proposal for the de-marginalization of knowledge.

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**Notes:**



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