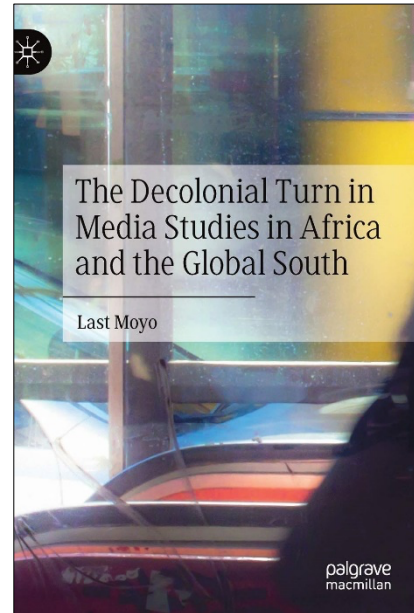


Last Moyo, **The Decolonial Turn in Media Studies in Africa and the Global South**, Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, 324 pp., \$125.97 (hardcover), \$38.57 (ebook), \$143.18 (paperback).

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Last Moyo, the author of ***The Decolonial Turn in Media Studies in Africa and the Global South***, is an associate professor at Xian Jiaotong-Liverpool University in China. He is a Black male scholar of media and cultural studies, and his cultural identity informs his powerful critique of coloniality in media, communication, and cultural studies as a locus of enunciation. While acknowledging previous attempts to de-Westernize the discipline, he questions how far the field of media and communication studies has come in surpassing West-centric universalism and coloniality in theory, methodology, and pedagogy. He promotes a decolonial turn in media studies that does not simply attack Northern-Western epistemologies and their false claims of universality but calls for a trans-epistemic intercultural dialogue that takes intercultural communication as a central part of the project of theory building. Such a project does not mimic colonial knowledge production where the locality of knowledge is hidden behind universalist claims, but rather is mindful of the politics of positionality and thereby strives for a new cartography of epistemic and cultural resistance that makes use of the multiple loci of enunciation and cultural translation while prioritizing social justice as an inherent part of media theory.



Moyo's critique is informed by the scholarship of coloniality-decoloniality thinkers, in which coloniality describes the colonization of knowledge as an epistemic project. As such, coloniality does not only denote a physical, political, economic, and materialist exploitation of the colonized, but also an epistemological violence and colonial capture of the thinking mind. Importantly, this scholarship emphasizes that coloniality is produced and perpetuated in the South as well as in the North. To distinguish the topography of colonial minds across the world, the author uses the concept of imperial (i.e., imperial South and imperial North). In contrast, however, he suggests concepts such as border thinking or the Global South not as a mere geography or location, but also as a critical consciousness of resistance, transformative agency, and epistemic freedom.

In articulating the decolonial critique, Moyo takes us on a tour of these attempts found in the historiography of communication and media studies. While avoiding "dethroning" former attempts to de-Westernize media studies, Moyo focuses on creating a multicultural disciplinary environment in which dialogue between the old and the new could be achieved. This critical dialogue, he says, constitutes the spirit of his book.

While challenging the positivist research tradition in the field for its blindness to cultural differences, Moyo positions his decolonial critique in critical dialogue with political economy scholarship and globalization scholarship as two main schools of thought that have engaged with the question of de-Westernization and decolonization of the media studies and global media sphere. His main critique of these schools of thought concerns their deficiencies in overcoming the deep coloniality problem in the discipline.

In critical political economy fashion, he traces coloniality in the tendency of economization of cultural processes and in the articulation of concepts such as commodification, corporatization, and mass culture, all of which took the locality of the Northern political economy of media to the center of thought. In this respect, Moyo also questions the validity of conceptions such as cultural and media imperialism that were commonly used by critical Southern scholars in the 1970s and 1980s for the centrality of economic logic in these conceptions. Moreover, Moyo suggests these concepts are hardly relevant for the contemporary globalized mediascape where transnational flows are more common than the one-way influence from the core to the periphery, as was argued by cultural imperialism scholars. However, he argues, the (partial) economic shift from the North to the South, or participation of the South in the production of media, does not necessarily open up possibilities for decolonial cultural creativity that would challenge West-centric hegemony to flourish. While exposing the residues of coloniality in this scholarship, Moyo also references historical moments in media (studies) history such as UNESCO's McBride Commission's report *One World Many Voices*, which was drafted and developed by the critical minds from the North and the South, including those who elaborated and deepened cultural imperialism discussions. Likewise, the Bandung Conference (unfortunately misspelled throughout the book) where many Third World nation-states collectively challenged the imperialist politics of First and Second World hegemony was also referenced as one of the key historical moments that could inspire contemporary decolonial stances.

In the sphere of cultural, ethnographic, and linguistic perspectives on media and communication studies, Moyo seems to find more fertile ground for decolonial explorations. While agreeing with the centrality of culture, consciousness, and identity for radical internationalist global media culture and knowledge, he also distinguishes his approach from the liberal, culturalist, internationalist stances that do not pose a radical critique of capitalism and capitalist exploitation of oppressed cultures. Rightly, he rejects any standpoint that associates Western liberal capitalism and capitalist multiculturalism with global integration by reiterating that capitalism and coloniality cannot be dissociated from one another, as coloniality is the "logic and driver of capitalism" (p. 75). In contrast to sharp critique of capitalism, Moyo adopts a rather ambivalent approach toward modernity. While considering Western modernity as a constitutive pillar of coloniality, he argues that decoloniality is not antimodern, without dwelling on how alternative modernities could be considered in decolonial media studies. As much as he critiques false and commodified internationalisms, Moyo also considers the danger of the ethnocentrism, nationalism, and nativism that tends to romanticize anything African, Asian, or Latin American without considering whether the native element institutes a new form of oppression or reproduces the structures of coloniality in mind and in practice.

The radical Southern theory is anchored in border thinking as an epistemic angle or cartography of resistance that emerges from the exteriority of Euro-American theoretical paradigms and strives for the humanization of dehumanized populations, by placing African (or Asian or Latin American) struggles, ideals,

identities, and cultures at the center of theory without falling into the trap of nationalisms, patriarchy, and consumerism. As such, the border intellectual and teacher, Moyo argues, must use the space of research, writing, and teaching to reveal the logics of epistemicide (the colonial destruction of Southern epistemologies) while also working toward transformative agency and epistemic freedom. In the realm of research, border thinking in media studies avoids prioritization of technocentric, institutionalized, and capitalized media that reinstitute the hegemony of Euro-American conceptions by focusing merely on the producers, the state, and the market. It rather focuses on the culture-centered and human-oriented understandings of communication wherein the knowledge of resistance and social transformation can be elicited. As such, border research involves the study of folklore, oral tradition, or storytelling in the social construction of meaning, cultural identities, and production of social relations and struggles.

If epistemological destruction of Southern knowledge, culture, identities, and practices is one crucial problem in West-centric media and communication studies, Moyo argues, the methodicide, the obliteration of African, Asian, and Latin American indigenous and endogenous ways of knowing, is another concern for border research in the field. While it is difficult to define decolonial methodology as decolonial epistemology, as it is still under construction, Moyo suggests that collaborative processes of research, where the hierarchy between the expert/knower and the known is interrupted, can contribute to decolonial explorations. When this hierarchy is disrupted through participatory modes of knowing, he argues, the discipline can orient toward social transformation by making sense of storytelling, dialogue, listening, voice, and personal performance narratives.

When discussing decolonial or border pedagogy, Moyo draws on the same ideal of collaborative process of learning where the hierarchy between the learner and the teacher is interrupted. This hierarchy is not overcome through mere cultural empathy between the two, but through a deep interaction of difference for the generation of knowledge that is "informed by the radical transformative values of interculturalism and transculturalism" (p. 242). In such a learning environment, that is not limited to classrooms but extended into a broader public realm, the process of learning could help the learner to have a journey of self-discovery, their cultural values and history of struggles and worldviews as "the epicentre of being" (p. 257). This self-discovery should also involve a reckoning of local forms of oppression, domination, and exploitation in the periphery. Oriented toward creating the environment for such a transformative journey is integral to the rehumanization of the colonized as well as to the development of a decolonial moral philosophy that is anchored in the struggles of social justice of decolonization, deimperialization, and depatriarchization of knowledge and society wherein cultural production takes place.

The radical project of decolonial/border media studies can take place through the production of epistemic freedom and liberation from colonially structured knowledge in academic disciplines and media education programs in the North as well as in the South.