

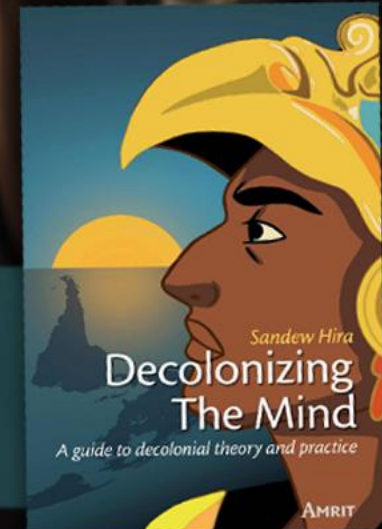
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What is decolonial theory?

The background, nature, strength and weaknesses of decolonial theory and practice

Different concepts in decolonizing theory

Decolonizing The Mind,
the final frontier of colonialism
with Sandew Hira



#048

24-06-2024

Concepts related to DTM

1. Decoloniality
2. Orientalism
3. Postcolonialism
4. Postmodernism
5. Subaltern studies
6. Indigenous knowledge systems

The concept of decoloniality

- ❑ The acknowledgement that there is another side of modernity
- ❑ The acknowledgement that colonialism has a cultural dimension besides the economic and political dimension
- ❑ An important part of the cultural dimension is knowledge production
- ❑ The acknowledgement of the importance of race and racism in social relations and the impact of colonialism on these relations including in the field of identity formation.
- ❑ A critique of the nation-state as the center for social analysis and the need to look at colonialism from a global perspective.

The contribution of coloniality

- ❑ Introduced the cultural dimension of colonialism
- ❑ Opened the door to link knowledge production to colonialism

The weakness of decoloniality

1. Decoloniality is not comprehensive
2. Decoloniality is not coherent
3. Decoloniality is not integral
4. Decoloniality is mostly a critique, but in order to survive it needs to move to the stage in which it provides practical answers to practical problems
5. Decoloniality does not provide organizational concepts for social struggle

See <https://www.sandewhira.com/index.php/2024/03/06/what-is-the-future-of-the-decolonial-movement/>

Orientalism

Edward Said: *“If the essence of Orientalism is the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority, then we must be prepared to note how in its development and subsequent history Orientalism deepened and even hardened the distinction. When it became common practice during the nineteenth century for Britain to retire its administrators from India and elsewhere once they had reached the age of fifty-five, then a further refinement in Orientalism had been achieved; no Oriental was ever allowed to see a Westerner as he aged and degenerated, just as no Westerner needed ever to see himself, mirrored in the eyes of the subject race, as anything but a vigorous, rational, ever-alert young Raj.”*

The contribution of orientalism

- ❑ Introduced the concept of racism (superiority/inferiority) to the orient
- ❑ Opened the door to extensive description and analysis of the process of orientalism.

The weakness of orientalism

- ❑ It can not position itself in the three forms of racism: theological, biological and cultural.
- ❑ Orientalism is a form of cultural racism.

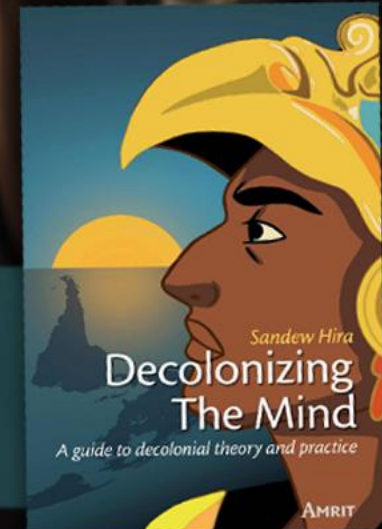
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The DTM theory of racism

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#032

04-03-2024

Neocolonialism

Kwame Nkruma of Ghana *“The essence of neocolonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent, and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from the outside.”*

The contribution of neocolonialism

- Introduced the concept of economic dimension of colonialism besides the administrative-political aspect.

The weakness of neocolonialism

- It is limited to discussion the political and economic dimensions of colonialism and does not extend it to other dimensions (social, cultural).

Postcolonialism

- ❑ Colonialism is articulated in terms of direct administrative control.
- ❑ Postcolonialism: the period after the liberation of direct administrative control, but then with the legacy of race, ethnicity, culture, and human identity.

The contribution of postcolonialism

- Introduced the concept of the legacy of colonialism: economic, political, cultural

The weakness of postcolonialism

- ❑ It does not make the link to colonialism as a civilization and thus does not understand that we are stilling in a colonial world civilization
- ❑ It does not offer a perspective on how to move forward

Postmodernism

- ❑ Modernism: based on the concept of modernity.
- ❑ Modernity: the historical period in human history where reason and not superstition or religion determines how to develop society. It starts with the European Enlightenment, the age of rationalism
- ❑ Rationalism declares that modern society can be understood and managed on the basis of objective, scientific knowledge.
- ❑ With the destruction caused by World War I and World War II within the Eurocentric tradition skepticism arose about the ability of rationalist science to create a better society.

The contribution of postmodernism

- ❑ The critique of rationalism and the European Enlightenment.
- ❑ It points to the problems with the grand narratives of Liberalism and Marxism.

The weakness of postmodernism

It fails to make the link with colonialism. Only when European barbarism hits Europe in two devastating wars, there arose the realization that modern European society was based on the illusion of justice, fairness and rational behavior. Post modernists have never admitted that what barbarism has done to Europe is what Europe has done to its colonies for hundreds of years.

Subaltern studies

- ❑ Broaden the concept of class as a category of oppressed people. Marxist concept of class: a social group related to the ownership and use of the means of production.
- ❑ Gramsci: Subaltern (subordinate): commissioned officers below the rank of captain the solution of social struggle (lieutenants).
- ❑ Indian historian Ranajit Guha (Subaltern Studies Group): a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender or in others ways.

The contribution of subaltern studies

- The critique of the concept of class as a limited concept to understand oppression

The weakness of subaltern studies

- ❑ It can not move beyond the framework Marxism.
- ❑ It does not make a link between colonialism as a civilization and oppression in the economic, social, political and cultural dimensions

Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS)

- Knowledge produced outside the west but located in smaller communities

The contribution of IKS

- The claim that valid knowledge has been produced by communities that have been neglected.

The weakness of IKS

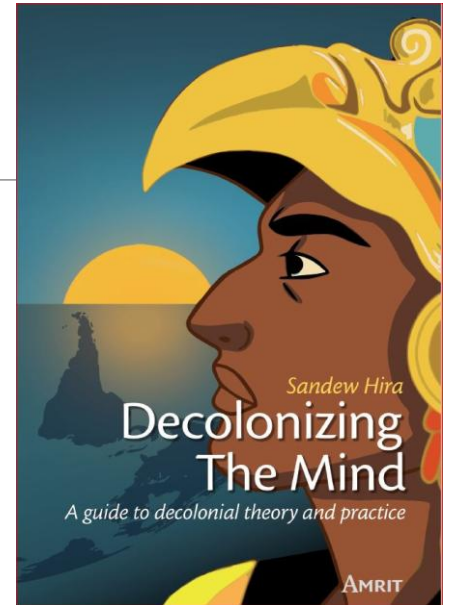
- ❑ This is a Eurocentric term to make the distinction between Western (non-indigenous) and non-Western knowledge systems (indigenous).
- ❑ All knowledge is indigenous: they are located geographically and culturally. Western knowledge system is indigenous to Europe. Colonialism has made it universal because of power, not because of the quality of its knowledge
- ❑ Why is some non-Western knowledge referred to by a particular name (Chinese philosophy), while others are called indigenous as a collective term? Because of a doubt about its validity.
- ❑ DTM: deconstruct and reconstruct knowledge

The role of DTM in decolonizing the disciplines

1. A critique of Eurocentric knowledge production.
2. The development of an alternative comprehensive, coherent and integral knowledge production. DTM goes deep into the knowledge that was produced in civilizations from the Global South (Chinese philosophy, Hinduism, Islam, Indigenous philosophies, etc) and looks for useful concepts that can be integrated in a trajectory to decolonize the disciplines and reconstruct new knowledge per discipline.
3. The translation of this new knowledge into viable policies to build a new pluriversal world civilization.

Source in the DTM book

- Look in the index
- Download the PDF of the PowerPoint on www.sandewhira.com



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