

ACUSAfrica Colloquium: Reflexive Solidarities in Techno-Rational Times

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Sabelo Mpsi's Reflective Evaluation

Capacity within HSRC-IED/EEE: Young African Research Fellow (YARF)

The Colloquium expanded my already held knowledges and ideas around what Techno-Rationality is, in its abstract form, modality, and manifestation, and as it relates to studying and engaging with the University (and higher education at large), and vice versa – that is, how the University relates to Techno-Rationality, and the implications it holds for ‘it’. It further equipped me with room, entry points, ideas, necessary contradictions, and theoretical frameworks that are important heuristic backdrops towards studying and critically questioning the University – as located in both ‘The Global South’ and the ‘Global North’, and their predicating contextual exigencies – as not only a space in which the legacy of colonialism wields its ugly head through various modalities, be it managerialism, or pedagogy – but also as a highly contested space in which knowledge production and consumption are inextricably spun and caught up in neoliberally capitalistic relationships of power, racism, decolonization, decoloniality, statehood, policy, and policy making. Given that the speakers or, ‘provocateurs’, and ‘disputers’ (thinkers hereinafter), to use some of the in-Colloquium terminologies, were from otherwise contradictory world fronts, it was really thought-provoking, insightful, and I might add, interesting, to learn that they are asking and engaging with the same discourses to provoke the role and purpose of the University, and, as it relates to itself, its history, present, and future. I must, however, reproach some of the thinkers, from the ‘Global South’ for their blatant utility of theorists and thinkers from the ‘Global North’, to speak to and provide nuances to their thoughts – an epistemically violent stride, by which, at least in my view, they rendered impractical and incompetent those from the ‘Global South’, including from themselves!

Lastly, on a more positive note, I must add how I enjoyed networking and rubbing shoulders with thinkers, with whom I have only interacted on paper and virtually over my formative years as a student and an aspiring academic. As I envisage that my PhD., which I will assume in the distant future, will be on grappling with higher education, specifically through the prisms of pedagogy and innovation, they, together with Colloquium at large, and of course, the ACUSA Network, will become particularly handy.