

Africana Political Theory as Decolonial Critique

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ABSTRACT

This article illuminates a fundamental problem at the core of canonical political theory: the racialization of knowledge. It contends that the history of canonical thought as being necessarily Western and, therefore, European American, means the emergence of epistemic racism produces enormous consequences for the practice of philosophical thought—namely, Africana political theory (APT). Thus, this article raises important questions such as the colonization of reason, as well as the ongoing relationship between political theory and race, such that the specter of anti-black racism manifests and becomes intertwined with the foundations of the canon. Ultimately, the article proffers APT as decolonial critique to complicate and expand the parameters of philosophical practice. The overall consequences for the discipline, its students, and its practitioners actualize an ongoing movement for black liberation.

This article redefines the conceptual borders of political theory as one of the core subfields within the discipline of political science. Political theory within the Western tradition has been canonized as the central—if not exclusive—province of European understanding of the political world. Therefore, Western political thought collapses into Eurocentric rationality. As such, political theory's teleological imperative draws unevenly from experiences in Europe to make sense of political life *writ large*. Ultimately, I offer Africana political theory (APT) as decolonial critique to disrupt, displace, and delink the logics and philosophical tenets of canonical political theory. Beyond its disruptive pluralism, APT principally defines a radical, Afromodern political ontology and epistemology of blackness by reimagining conditions of the black outside of the continental and conceptual limits of Euromodernity. As such, APT is a decolonial re-situation of canonical political theory's formulation of the human being as white to an Afromodern resuscitation of the black as human being. In so doing, I proffer APT—which centers the experiences of African, Afro-descendants, and Afro-diasporic peoples¹—as an alternate index for thematizing political life in both the Global South and the Global North. Ultimately, the teleological imperative is not to eliminate European/Euro-American political thought but rather to decolonize political theory through the critical application and interrogation of APT.

CANONICAL POLITICAL THEORY AS COLONIAL PRACTICE

The canonizing of Eurocentric political theory as political theory *itself* enacts a colonial practice. Cavarero provided a linguistic as well as thematic genealogy of political theory. For Cavarero (2002, 506), “political theory,” as etymologically constructed, is derived from ancient Greek. ‘Political’ is an adjective that comes from *polis*...[whereas] ‘Theory’ is derived from the noun *theoria*, which signifies contemplation and pertains to the human experience of seeing, to the field of vision.” Cavarero (2002, 506) concluded: “[t]he history of political theory and the mortification of the genuine sense of politics begin with the myth of the cave, which is at the center of Plato’s *Republic*.” The Greco-Roman historicizing of “political theory,” as it is known today within the academe, traces back to its Platonic advent, co-extensive with the subsequent emergence of Greek civilization, whose rearticulation in the epochs to follow culminates in what contemporarily is understood as *European* and, adaptively, *Western* political thought. Moreover, Arendt (1989, 12) argued that politics emanates from a distinct, biographically Western, historical tradition: “[t]he term *vita activa* is loaded and overloaded with tradition. It is as old as (but not older than) our tradition of political thought. And this tradition, far from comprehending and conceptualizing all the political experiences of Western mankind, grew out of a specific historical constellation: the trial of Socrates and the conflict between the philosopher and the *polis*.” Ultimately, our contemporary and historical conceptualization—and, later, canonization—of “political theory” became a derivative enterprise, cementing as a necessarily Western, Euromodern tradition. Therefore, from antiquity to modernity, a distinct tradition stood—or was understood—as

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the foundational fixture in the racial *long durée* of human thought known as “the political,” from which canonical disciplinary knowledge conforms to and informs “best practices” within our contemporary epoch, concretely formalized and discursively sedimented as “our present order of knowledge” (Wynter 1994, 4).

Decolonial thinkers argue that “[s]cholars of Euro-American political thought speak easily of the Western tradition....[h]owever, as soon as we turn our focus to Islamic political thought, as well as most other non-Western thought, chameleon-like, the term ‘tradition’ changes meaning” (Iqtidar 2016, 426). It is precisely the historical contingency of “tradition” outside of the Western canonical horizon that remaps the conceptual tectonics of political theory beyond Euromodernity. Such a view does not seek a new “tradition” if it is to be a reformulated, reformist canon, because non-Western thought is a rupture from static traditionalism and hermetic canonization. Wynter (1994, 9) inveighed against the Euromodern trappings and pitfalls of canonizing human truths: “That our present disciplines of the Humanities and Social Sciences must therefore guard and elaborate the truths of power structuring our present order as the condition of its stable replication as such an order; that as a result, the fact that Black Americans were not included in the canon...mark the White American as the *real* American, and the *normal* human, and the Black as the Lack, or symbolic *death*, of the *real* American, of the *normal* human.” For Wynter, canonicity presents a real problem of colonial binarism because it generates epistemic hierarchies and ontological caste systems “between the bearers of the canon, in all its forms, and the non-canonized” (Wynter 1994, 8). Perilously, then, “to define our liberation in terms of a canon or the multiculturalization of knowledge therefore simply serves to continue our ongoing destruction as a [black] population group” (Wynter 1994, 9). Therefore, APT does not provide a tokenistic addendum

2006, 21). For instance, the over-proliferation of Rawlsian studies and other classical models of Euro-American thought (e.g., Straussianism), ensconced in the discipline’s prestigious journals symptomize its disciplinary custodianship, sublimated in the “present order of knowledge,” as the height of epistemic rigor. The result is black ontological evisceration because “[w]hen a Negro has finished his education in our schools, then, he has been equipped to begin life of an Americanized or Europeanized white man” (Woodson 2006, 5). This is what Wynter (1994) pathologized as canonical black destruction.

Furthermore, Weiss (2009, xv) similarly warned of canonical violence: “[t]he ‘Western canon’ is a body of literature and art said to define either Western civilization or the educated person within it. The same widespread consensus that supposedly determines who shall live forever, in the books enshrined on the selves....” Euromodernity is concerned with situating those who belong inside the modern world—the future of civilization itself—against those who supposedly belong to an irretrievable past. Canonicity, as such, enshrines the white as the future of the discipline, the black as a mere historical punctuation—at best, a literary footnote but never its human thesis. For these reasons, Weiss (2009, xv), when turning to the women question, contended that “*Cannon fodder* is a political expression. It reveals and criticizes how some groups are being treated”—namely, “my referring to historical women philosophers as ‘canon fodder.’” Canon fodder is always a question of discursive fatalities, “the works of these thinkers have been deemed by the gatekeepers of the canon as dispensable, relatively worthless” (Weiss 2009, xv–xvi). This gatekeeping historicizes a formative era in American political science (Blatt 2018), in which anti-black epistemic practices functioned as colonial control over its canonical thinkers, initiating the evisceration of a radical black intellectual genealogy. On this score, Du Bois (1935/

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to canonical political theory; it is not a diversifying of the canon through black quotas. Stated bluntly, it is not a multicultural ebony-infused coloring of the syllabus.

Instead, APT represents a new grammar of the human being and, therefore, a new order of knowledge that contests canonization while radically birthing new genealogies of thought as a refutation of the colonization of political theory. This confrontation of ideas functions as a radical rupture of the colonial practices of Euromodern canonicity because mainstream political theory

1998, 727) argued: “[i]n propaganda against the Negro since emancipation in this land, we face one of the most stupendous efforts the world ever saw to discredit human beings, an effort involving universities, history, science, social life and religion.” The present order of knowledge’s discreditation of blackness necessitates the accreditations of canons. The result is an avowed anti-blackness—which Du Bois (1935/1998, 718) named “anti-Negro thought”—that serves as a precondition for mainstream academicism; that is, “[a]n American youth attending college

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generates ontological discursive fatalities: the death of the black in the horizon of reason. For example, Woodson (2006, 18) concluded, “From the teaching of science the Negro was likewise eliminated.” This political elimination was canonical: “in history, of course, the Negro had no place in this curriculum” (Woodson

today would learn from current textbooks of history that the Constitution recognized slavery...he would in all probability complete his education without any idea of the part which the black race has played in America” (Du Bois 1935/1998, 713). Colonization pursues logics of compartmentalization, conscription, and

canonization. Through its instruments of erasure and evisceration, political theory's canon fodder witnesses the ontological elimination of blacks as subhuman. In this view, disciplinary knowledge becomes embodied as whiteness, mapped on a Euro-modern body of thought.

The singularization—and its corresponding localization—of history as the triumph of European thought gave way to the Westernization of reason. This epistemic singularity, what Wynter (2006, 108, 110) labeled a faux “liberal universalism” that attends the “Euro-American literary canon,” settled as normative philosophical practice. On one view, to engage the Western tradition is itself an act of not merely philosophical practice but also methodological practice: “method, i.e. a particular way of doing things, making arguments, using resources, organizing thought, interpreting texts, as well as performing rituals or practices” (Iqtidar 2016, 425). Practice as “rituals” of interpretation and interpellation within the Western tradition means that departures from the canon become unintelligible and, subsequently, undisciplined. This “practice” becomes both customary—as the consolidation of norms, values, and customs—and instructive—as a new racialized pedagogy for Western discourse, what is commonly understood as “best practices.” The ossification of canonical methods is colonial because the nexus between the canonized and the non-canonized is but a disciplinary reabsorption of the old imperial order of colonizer and colonized through which systems of domination are founded.

These colonial practices manifest as ontological/social, political/institutional, and epistemic/discursive domains, each with its own mandates and regimes of control. If Euro-American rationality congeals as the territorialization of reason, affecting the horizon of ontological, political, and epistemic productions, then problems within canonical political theory also materialize as forms of anti-black racism in the reproduction of knowledge. By colonial design, our current order of knowledge necessarily gives way to the canonization of Western political thought enacted through the marginalization of Africana thought: “Quite often, teachers and students of the history of modern science and the history of modern philosophy pay little or no attention to the enormous amount of research and writings on race and cross-cultural anthropology that was undertaken...in the Age of Reason” (Eze 1997, 2). These reductionist and revisionist readings of philosophical histories, from Africa to the remainder of the Global South, delimit what is considered legitimate disciplinary forms of *doing* political theory because such Afromodern ideas orbit outside of the constellations of the Western, Euromodern tradition. The result is the colonizing of ways and modes of politics itself, subsuming non-European “exotic” political actors deemed unengaged in reason, because such actors revel only in aesthetic and/or sensory experiences: “[r]eductionistic experience undergirds the study of black people with the credo of black people offering experience whereas white people offer theory” (Gordon 2006, 591). Therefore, analyses of APT sometimes are deemed as *not really doing* political theory. Such thematic works may be thought of as interdisciplinary but not properly disciplinary: “Western political thinkers have often claimed to understand the true character of political life, and to offer clear guidance that all people, European or not, should eventually come to emulate. Those who disagreed were often framed as hopelessly parochial, mired within their own cultural limitations” (Hendrix and Baumgold 2017, 4). Viewed through the colonial–canonical prism, APT collapses into racial particularism, cordoned off as area studies. As

such, political science risks reading APT as a failure of disciplinary rigor. Consequently, black reason reads as discursive excess, localized as being outside of the canon. The canonizers of reason are the undertakers of black intellectual production: “It’s the Black ones that are dying’...Their death is the ‘price of our ticket,’ our canon, of our treason as intellectuals....To move beyond the Western episteme—canon, ‘bell curves’ and all—that is our war now” (Wynter 1994, 11). APT substitutes black treason for black reason because it moves beyond disciplinary inducements of canonical necessity and instead excavates once-buried sites of inquiry for the study of black life and futures. Consider, for instance, the fecund theorizing of black social movements, such as Black Lives Matter, in our contemporary milieu (Chevannes 2023).

In contrast, the Westernization of reason engenders a “Euro-American imperial epistemic order that was an integral part of the larger hegemonic cultural system that legitimated colonization” (Henry 2006, 224). The longitudinal consequence of such an “imperial epistemic order” sustains the architecture of a Euromodern political theory, wherein European or Euro-American thought—articulable to some degree as white discourse—not only holds predominance in mainstream theorizing but also becomes a prerequisite for philosophical practice. In other words, the problem is not that European thought should not be theorized because such an *a priori* move forecloses reason to the political possibilities of European rationality and essentializes political theory as necessarily non-white. Rather, my argument is that canonicity, often sublimated in the works of European thinkers, colonizes political practice as exclusionary, beyond disciplinary necessity. By treating the thoughts and practices of non-Western thinkers and fields as nontraditional and therefore unnecessary, political theory becomes parochial.

Moreover, political theory calcifies as discriminatory practice when it institutionalizes anti-black racism as acceptable within and beyond the academy. Consider the question asked by Gordon (2006, 591): “Could racism and colonialism lurk at the level of method and the logic of that method (‘methodology’)? Is not such also a level at which we could also find colonizing epistemological practices?” In other words, canonization becomes “colonizing of epistemological practices” because, in the present order of knowledge, it embodies a sacred ritual for epistemic maturity that is warranted because its traditions are singular and exclusionary. This makes sense in the grand scheme of things because canonical political theory fails to be sufficiently self-critical or, as Wolin (1969, 1073) once described it, “[t]hroughout the history of political theory, a student will find a preoccupation within the phenomenon of ‘corruption.’ Today, however, we scarcely know how to talk about it, except when it flourishes in non-Western societies.” Inescapably, colonial practices institutionalize corruption. Therefore, it is unsurprising that canonical political theory masks, if not legitimatizes, its own epistemic corruptions. Nevertheless, this Euromodern grammar can be confronted or, as Wynter (2006, 111) framed it, “Western thought (and therefore the cultural framework of this thought) needs to be exoticized.” Epistemic disruptions must emerge at the core of the canon itself, as an act of decolonial rupture, to begin the possibility of dialectical transformation.

AFRICANA POLITICAL THEORY AS DECOLONIAL CRITIQUE

APT coheres along three thematic prongs: (1) referring to political sites of knowledge-production rooted in the lived experience of black peoples; (2) inaugurating a new grammar and epistemology

of political thought anchored in the particularity of black existence; and (3) constructing an Afromodern political ontology of blackness through a decolonial praxis. APT disavows black essentialism because of its critical reflexivity as understanding the nature of the political world as phenomenological, pluralistic, and contingent. Understood as complements, APT as decolonial critique extends beyond merely decentering and progressively rupturing the canon. It also proffers untapped reservoirs of black epistemic practices to interrogate political life as we know it so that an Afromodern ontology reconstructs blackness through a decolonial humanism anchored in an absolute democratic egalitarianism. This is what Du Bois (1935/1998, 703) meant when he argued, “This the American black man knows: his fight here is a fight to the finish. Either he dies or wins....He will enter modern civilization here in America as a black man on terms of perfect and unlimited equality with any white man, or he will enter not at all. Either extermination root and branch, or absolute equality.” Canonical political theory privileges Eurocentric intellectual genealogies and, therefore, collapses into a colonial relationship with the black subject. APT rescues black ontology from civilizational extermination by inaugurating a new Afromodern civilization anchored in absolute democratic equality and its broader ongoing struggle for human freedom.

A colonial situation that political theorists must confront is the ongoing reality that because APT, on the whole, is not considered foundational to the canon, it is reduced to be an elective programmatic excess. This disciplinary displacement is reabsorbed into Africana studies as an interdisciplinary pursuit. Stated differently, the concern is not that APT is not “canonical” but rather that it is treated as lacking disciplinary legitimacy and, therefore, not situated as a symmetrical alternative to European thought. At present, there is an asymmetrical relation between black thinkers and white thinkers in which the former is “excluded within” and wherein “a system of thought or a political body defines itself by excluding some difference which is intolerable to it...this excluded difference nevertheless remains within the system or body that has excluded it” (Kramer 2017, 5). The result is an unintelligibility ascribed to the excluded *object-of-inquiry*. The black subject becomes the studied object rather than taking on the agential capacity as a subject capable of knowledge-generation and world-creation. With its extensive intellectual genealogy, coloniality consecrated European ideas as indispensable to the expression of modernity. It produced a rigid parochialism that universalized as both totality and authenticity such that the canon was necessarily Western. This also meant that non-Western thought, as it was understood, became unempirical and/or too particularistic. Colonial practice is not merely an effect of canonical political theory but also its formative cause. As decolonial critique, APT enables archival recovery through the black radical tradition by pluralizing new sites of philosophical inquiry, thereby severing the Western colonial capture of the human being as European/Euro-American Man. In so doing, APT reorients philosophical practice to the histories of black peoples in their ongoing struggle for liberation through the reconstruction of their political futures.

To be sure, coloniality is defined through its prescriptions of purities and binaries, what Fanon (2004, 3) once called the problem of Manichaeism, whereby “the colonial world is a compartmentalized world.” The Western canon, as a distinct Euro-American tradition, sustains those purities as colonial practices by turning departments into disciplinary compartments. Yet, in

recent times, emerging from a critical response to Eurocentric canonical practices within political theory, comparative political theory (CPT) has functioned, in many ways, as a discursive breakage from Global North epistemologies. Admittedly, whereas that breakage has been neither seamless nor complete—particularly in light of its own Anglo-American tendencies—its core aims sought to center criticism as a teleological imperative: “[c]omparative political theorists draw attention to the parochially Euro-American categories that have historically shaped inquiry in political theory...opening those categories to interrogation” (Jenco, Idris, and Thomas 2020, 1). Interrogation, to some degree, may demand comparison and, conversely, “comparison can capture the possibility of questioning” (Jenco, Idris, and Thomas 2020, 8). This notwithstanding, APT juxtaposed against CPT offers a more localized epistemic and ontological turn to the black subject such that blackness opens itself to radical political possibilities for the project of human freedom. Namely, APT enacts as a dialectical device necessitating a decolonial move. That is, APT—borne out of canonical displacement—critiques canonical formations as the consecration and consolidation of hegemonic power relations that generate colonial conditions. In this sense, APT enables the decolonizing of knowledge through an Afromodern reinvention of it.

If we understand decoloniality as “denot[ing] ways of thinking, knowing, being, and doing that began with, but also precede, the colonial enterprise,” then “it implies the recognition and undoing of the hierarchical structures of race...” (Mignolo and Walsh 2018, 17). In light of this view, decolonial critique refers to the dialectical process of decentering and transcending colonial modes of thought and practices, as well as the hierarchical power sublimated in the canon, to generate a new order of human existence grounded in epistemic pluralism. APT as decolonial critique offers a radical rupture to Euromodern epistemic practices. It does so by interrogating and disrupting the provincial universalism of the West. In the Euromodern world, canons are formations of colonial power. Perhaps “an intellectual tradition conceived as a canon was the result of power” or, at the very least, a distinct type of power: colonial hegemony (Bogues 2003, 148). At the core of the dialectical method is a contrast of contradictions between thesis (European thought) and antithesis (Africana thought) to generate a third, synthetic phenomenon: human philosophical thought. This means APT moves beyond “the reformist call for an alternative ‘African-American’ literary canon ostensibly able to complement the Euro-American literary one” (Wynter 2006, 110) to instead generating an Afromodern humanism anchored in democratic egalitarianism through which there is a reinvention of humanhood to meet the demands of modern political life for blacks and their human others. In varying national contexts, this Afromodern humanism will be articulable through their own culturally inflected grammar. For instance, in South Africa, this may be “Ubuntu” (Ramose 2002); in Jamaica, it may be “smaddification” (Mills 1994, 127); in America, it may be “somebodyness” (King 1967/2010, 130); in Haiti, it may be “*tout moun se moun*” (Casimir 2020, 389), among other native-*cum*-diasporic formulations. Yet, crucially, it is neither a reification nor a replication of canonical political theory’s provincial “Liberal humanism” codified as “Rights of Man” because “the Rights of Man’ cannot include the ‘Rights of the Negro’ who had been institutionalized discursively and empirically, as a different kind of creature to ‘Man’” (Wynter 2006, 113, 114). Instead, what binds

these tailored, culturally inflected ontological grammars of the human being is their Afromodern turn toward a humanistic black particularism that meets the political demands of its people—the expression of which allows for what Césaire (2000, 26) labeled “a universal rich with all that is particular, rich with all the particulars there are, the deepening of each particular, the coexistence of them all.” Or, as Wynter (2006, 114) later reframed it, “a black particularism, which called into question...[the Euro-American] ‘monopoly of humanity.’” This new grammar of the human being necessarily reconstructs the black subject outside of the constricts of Euromodern rationality and becomes resituated inside an open-ended Afromodern imaginary.

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To be sure, APT is situated within a critical enterprise and therefore is open to dialectical and decolonial possibilities. For instance, as Bogues (2003, 146) wrote:

...reason continues to remain the preserve of the West. Even the most trenchant contemporary critiques of political thought pay no attention to the intellectual contributions of black writers and thinkers. At the same time, a crop of thinkers and scholars in the field of philosophy currently exist who critique mainstream philosophy for its Eurocentric assumptions....In addition, they ask what happens to Western political and philosophical thought when racism and colonialism are put in the mix.

The relationship between the history of black political life and colonialism cannot be understated; a large swath of the black world has been defined by a history of colonialism. However, each instance of colonial practice demands a dialectical response, occasioning a decolonial turn. The concomitant blacklisting and whitewashing of black thought from the genealogy of political thought—as witnessed in its striking absence from “the canon”—has enormous implications on the study of political science more broadly and political theory more specifically. If it is that “Africana political thought in the academy continues to be a marginalized subfield in the history of political thought,” then decolonial critique allows for a retrieval of a history of radical black thinkers and the fecund intellectual genealogy that springs from it (Bogues 2003, 146).

Prakash (1994, 1475) made the argument that criticism functions as a form of epistemic rupture in its explosion of Western sites of knowledge-making, such that “[postcolonial] criticism has compelled a radical rethinking of knowledge and social identities authored and authorized by colonialism and Western domination.” Yet, decolonial critique goes beyond mere “criticism.” In critique, there is an added dimension of philosophical exegesis. That is, there is not only “rethinking” concepts but also thinking entirely anew by reinventing a new grammar of thought altogether. Yet, it is not sufficient that only the conceptual borders of Western political thought undergo criticism but also that criticism itself, as a heuristic device, should be decolonized (Maldonado-Torres 2020). This latter move begins at the level of metacritique: that is, a critique of *criticism*. When this is performed,

APT not only “rethinks” epistemic categories of the West but also formulates new political praxis/practice. For example, APT offers not merely an alternative to “liberty” discourses witnessed in the works of John Locke and John Stuart Mill but also implodes the universality of the category itself.

Notably, in the genre of APT, there is a deducible shift in conceptual registers, in which there lies a historicized appeal to “freedom” in the corpus of the black radical tradition—from Rodney’s *Decolonial Marxism* (2022) to Fanon’s *Alienation and Freedom* (2018). This new grammar of a radical black intellectual genealogy necessarily means a breakage from the canonical Western tradition and its conceptual parameters. Hesse (2014, 289)

called this breakage a fugitive retreat from Western hegemony: “[D]rawing upon the juxtapositions between white liberal/republican thinkers and black fugitivity thinkers” means that “a particular lineage of black political thought is compelled to conceive of itself as an escape from the colonial and racial hegemony of Western liberty.” Such a fugitive intellectual genealogy discursively challenges canonical political theory. Ultimately, Euromodern canonicity is a bedrock for anti-black racism awash in appeals to the known disciplinary traditions of the West.

For these reasons, the re-inscription of APT functions as decolonial critique of the Western canon. Du Bois (1935/1998, 30) posited precisely such a critique about the nature of democracy by arguing for both the collapse of Euro-American democracy, given its commitments to systems of oppression, and its decolonial recovery in light of the praxis of the oppressed: “Democracy died save in the hearts of black folk.” The introduction of Africana thinkers, including Anna Julia Cooper, James Boggs, Amílcar Cabral, Sylvia Wynter, Angela Davis, Aimé Césaire, and many others, functions as decolonial critique of the Western canon. Indeed, decolonial critique requires moving beyond seminal figures such as Frederick Douglass and W. E. B. Du Bois, as a rejection of tokenism, by including lesser-known ones: Walter Rodney, Claudia Jones, David Walker, Ida B. Wells, Steve Biko, and George Padmore, as well as new epistemic excavation of still-buried figures—a movement that has already begun. APT cannot be a totalized substitute for all analyses of black political thought but rather critically offer a vital methodological site for the reclamation of black peoples in the annals of political thought, particularly as a transdisciplinary device. Offering a novel hermeneutical and heuristic template to bridge (not collapse) African studies, Afro-Caribbean studies, and African-American studies radically prizes open new onto-epistemic terrains for twenty-first-century analyses of black oppression and freedom, for the enactment of Afromodernity. In doing so, APT acts as subaltern interrogation of what decolonial scholars call “the New World ordering of global coloniality” (Walsh and Mignolo 2018, 5). To be sure, such a project is always intersubjective and dialogic—being conversant with other subaltern ontologies and knowledges whether they are Asiatic, Indigenous, Latinx, or other people groups.

The reinauguration of black thinkers exposes the decadent whiteness of political theory and, critically, posits new opportunities for both epistemic and ontological reinvention of blackness for an Afromodern world order. The APT project does not supplant or pathologize Euro-American thought; rather, with the introduction of Africana thinkers, dialectical possibilities emerge such that political science broadens the field of horizon by de-parochializing political theory. APT as decolonial critique weds theory and practice to other sites of knowledge-generation, thereby enabling the study of politics to open beyond the narrow cartography of the West and leading to the retrieval of a genealogy of non-Western, Afromodern thought. The impact of such an ongoing process complements and precipitates the legitimacy and indispensability of other non-Western epistemic sites, from Islamic to Indigenous political theories, as well as unnamed others. The result of such a radical movement provides students, as well as the discipline, with ever-increasing portals for the new sense-making of political phenomena, particularly those that concern anti-black racism and neocolonial power regimes.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research. ■

NOTE

1. Blackness is no monolithic. There are historico-political and ethno-racial differences. The struggle against coloniality is culturally situated and differentiated. For example, in the postcolonial Afro-Caribbean, the struggle is against neocolonial regimes (Getachew 2019; Gilroy 1993); in the United States, the struggle is against an ethnocentric “New Jim Crow” (Alexander 2012; Coates 2017). Fanon (2004, 151) was so intimately aware of this problem that he disavowed Negritude, which sought to universalize “the ‘black world.’” The problem, of course, was that the embedded cultural specificities and historical particularities cleaved into each national and political milieu required localized remedies. Thus, Fanon (2004, 154) continued, “‘Negro’ or ‘Negro-African’ culture broke up because the men who set out to embody it realized that every culture is first and foremost national.” Therefore, struggles for a decolonial politics are possible to the extent that APT speaks to the historical particularities of being “black,” as culturally situated. APT thematizes cultural specificities to achieve national consciousness as national liberation. Yet, “[i]t is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness establishes itself and thrives” (Fanon 2004, 180). APT bridges the local and the global, the native and the diasporic, in the struggle against systems of domination and for a “new humanity, for itself and for others, [which] invariably defines a new humanism” (Fanon 2004, 178). It is the erasures of these truths that canonical political theory colonizes and attempts an elimination of black subjectivity. APT, then, functions as both epistemic and ontological reconstruction toward an Afromodern humanism.

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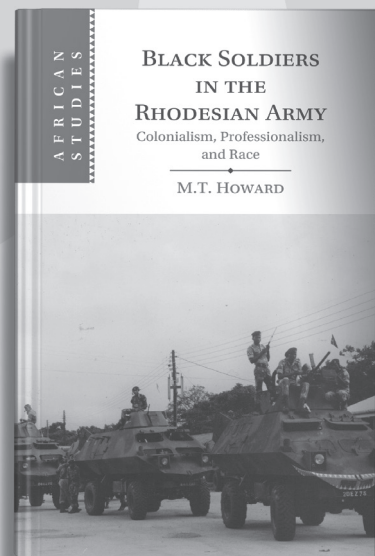
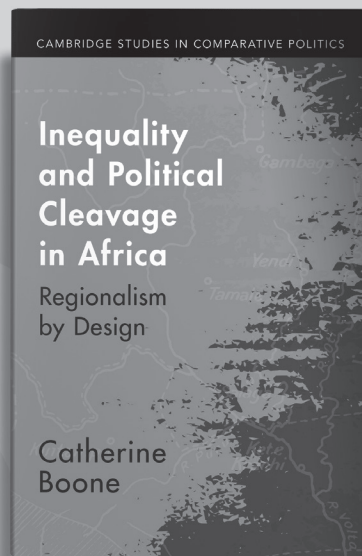
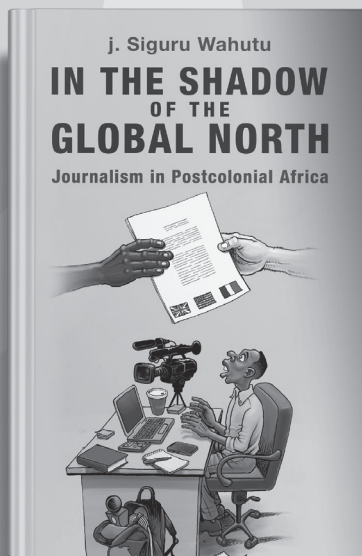
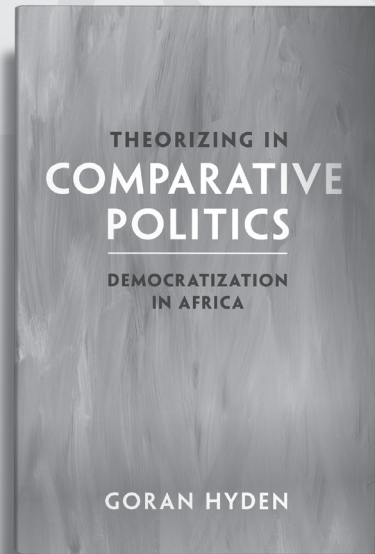
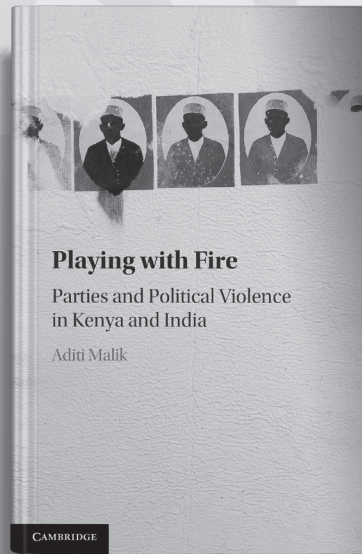
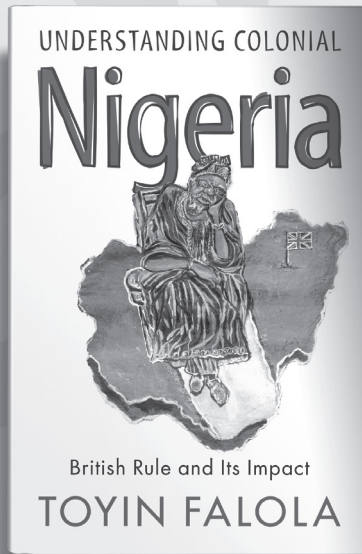
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