



AFTERWORD

Afterword: Nationalism, Decolonization, and the Emergence of Knowledge Communities

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Abstract

Within the dynamic realm of historiography and the generation of knowledge, the process of “Becoming Independent” serves as a profound testament to the tenacity and resolve exhibited by a wide array of intellectual communities in their efforts to confront and transform established narratives. This afterword explores the themes in this special issue, which not only offers a critical analysis of historiographical practices from both past and present but also emphasises the imperative for ongoing dedication in the endeavour to cultivate diverse and independent historical narratives. By discussing the different articles of this collection, the afterword explores shared themes, such as the decoloniality of historical scholarship through ethnographic inquiry, prospects of de-emphasising the Eurocentric gaze, fragmentation of history as evidence of varied epistemological sovereignties, and the decolonial agenda through “white expatriates.” By doing so, this Afterword serves as a resounding appeal for the continuous pursuit of intellectual liberation.

Keywords: Historiography; Intellectual Autonomy; Decolonisation; Eurocentric Bias; Indigenous Knowledge; Methodological Innovation; Inclusivity; Geographical Diversity; Academic Contexts

In this age of decolonisation, there is a multitude of transformational concepts emerging in the unfolding narrative of historiography that questions and redefines our understanding of history and its creation. Some of them have been included in this special issue. Rather than providing a summary, the purpose of this afterword is to go further into the philosophical underpinnings and historiographical innovations that have distinguished the current academic endeavour of decolonizing historical narratives. This special issue’s articles collectively represent a lively debate on the re-evaluation and reconstruction of history through the lens of decolonisation. These papers cover a wide range of topics and places, from the islands of the Pacific to the landscapes of Africa and Asia.

Entitled “Becoming Independent: Institutions and Epistemologies of Knowledge Production in the Age of Decolonisation,” we are invited to reflect deeply on the profound issues of epistemological sovereignty and the ongoing process of decolonisation that extends far beyond the mere attainment of political independence. This discussion is crucial as it underscores the significant, yet often overlooked fact, that independence does not automatically equate to liberation from colonial influences, especially in the realms of knowledge production and historical narratives.¹

¹ Frederick Cooper, “Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History,” *The American Historical Review* 99, no. 5 (1994): 1516–1545.

The introduction to the special issue sets the stage by highlighting how the formal conferral of independence in many African and Asian countries sparked a critical reassessment of their historical narratives. This re-evaluation is not just about correcting historical inaccuracies but is fundamentally about reclaiming the narrative agency. It challenges the very epistemological foundations that have long governed historiography in these regions, questioning the validity and universality of Eurocentric historical models that have dominated academic discourse.² This act of questioning is itself a form of protest – a declaration that the histories and epistemologies developed and imposed during the colonial period are inadequate and inappropriate for newly independent nations striving to forge their identities and futures.

This special issue compellingly argues that true decolonisation involves a rigorous deconstruction of these Eurocentric knowledge systems. It is about dismantling the academic and educational structures that perpetuate colonial ideologies and replacing them with frameworks that prioritise and legitimise local knowledge, perspectives, and methodologies.³ This shift is pivotal, for the systems of knowledge generation and distribution significantly influence how people understand themselves, their past, and their potential futures. If these systems remain unchallenged and unchanged, they continue to propagate the colonial condition, hindering genuine liberation and progress.⁴

Moreover, the issue emphasises the distinction between achieving independence and obtaining liberation, the former often being a change in political control without a corresponding shift in cultural and intellectual autonomy.⁵ The discussions within reveal that independence marks, often thanks to newly established schools, journals, or departments, the beginning of a decolonization endeavour rather than its culmination. This distinction is critical in understanding why many postcolonial societies continue to struggle with the legacies of colonialism despite having political autonomy. The inherited colonial institutions and values subtly, yet powerfully, influence contemporary societal structures and thought processes, perpetuating a colonized mindset.⁶

By exploring global history and positing future trajectories, the contributions in the special issue advocate for a radical rethink of historical research and historiography. They call for a historiography that is not only inclusive but one that actively resists and redefines the dominant historical paradigms imposed by colonial powers. This involves embracing anti-universalist positions that reject the imposition of a singular historical narrative and advocate for multiple histories that reflect the diverse experiences and realities of people around the world.

This discourse goes beyond simply reinterpreting past events; it also fundamentally challenges the epistemological frameworks that have guided historiography and methodologies for a significant period. Historians like Maude and Tregonning illustrate the dual character of this transition, as discussed in the articles that analyse the body of their work.⁷ These historians are both products of their colonial pasts and agents of reconceptualisation within their respective fields. Their works, which are set against the backdrop of the

² Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2018), 7–21.

³ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization*, 7–21.

⁴ Amina Mama, “Is It Ethical to Study Africa? Preliminary Thoughts on Scholarship and Freedom,” *African Studies Review* 50, no. 1 (2007): 1–26.

⁵ Goran Hyden, *African Politics in Comparative Perspective*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 17–32.

⁶ Hyden, *African Politics in Comparative Perspective*, 17–32.

⁷ Doug Munro, and Brij V. Lal, (eds.), *Texts and Contexts: Reflections in Pacific Islands Historiography*, (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 13–27; & Santhiram R. Raman, *From Decolonization to Ethno-Nationalism: A Study of Malaysia's School History Syllabuses and Textbooks 1905–2020* (Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2022), 1–19.

decline of empires and the development of new nation-states,⁸ highlight the many layers of historical narrative that frequently link the coloniser and the colonised in a historical space that is shared yet contested. As we progress with this essay, it is critical to draw attention to the significant historiographical contributions that these academics have made to the larger academic conversation. They criticise Eurocentric narratives and work towards achieving epistemological sovereignty that respects and values indigenous approaches and views. This preliminary debate lays the groundwork for a more in-depth investigation into the ways in which these interventions not only play a significant part in comprehending the future of historiography in a postcolonial world but also in influencing the future of historiography itself. Maude and Tregonning's academic efforts, despite their roots in their own colonial settings, have paved the way for a better understanding of history that considers the nuances of local experiences and points of view.

The transition from colonial to postcolonial historiography is shown by the work that Henry Evans Maude has done on Pacific history,⁹ which is emphasised in this special issue. Maude's transformation from a colonial administrator to a historian actively engaged in the decolonisation of the Pacific islands demonstrates a significant shift in viewpoint.¹⁰ Although his methodological invention, participation history, has its origins in his personal experiences as a colonial subject, it is an attempt to bridge the gap between the observer and the observed, providing a more immersive and empathic approach to the documenting of historical events. In a similar vein, Parkinson and Tregonning's work at the University of Malaya represents a partial decolonisation of Malaya's history.¹¹ Even though their dependence on British sources still constrains them, their endeavour to rethink Malayan historiography through the prism of global history represents a significant step towards achieving epistemic autonomy. The challenging transformation mirrors the broader struggle for decolonisation, a process of redefining identity and liberating historical narratives from colonial control.

The persistent tension between the enduring impacts of colonial epistemologies and the emerging postcolonial viewpoints that attempt to recast historical narratives on their terms is a central subject in decolonised historiography, and these instances provide light on this vital aspect of the field. The political and social upheavals that precede the decolonisation process are the basis for this conflict, which is not only academic but has deep roots in the phenomenon.

Another institution that has become a crucible for decolonising ideas is University of Dar es Salaam,¹² which serves as a good example of such an institution. As a result of its involvement with dependency theory and the "Dar School" of historiography, it was able to cultivate a one-of-a-kind academic climate that was notably anti-Eurocentric.¹³ A fertile foundation was created for the development of a historiography that was anchored in African viewpoints and experiences because of the university's emphasis on African initiative and its critique of Eurocentric epistemologies.

⁸ Munro, and Lal, (eds.), *Texts and Contexts: Reflections in Pacific Islands Historiography*, 13-27; & Raman, *From Decolonization to Ethno-Nationalism: A Study of Malaysia's School History Syllabuses and Textbooks 1905-2020*, 1-19.

⁹ Susan Cochrane, Doug Munro, and Max Quanchi, *The Ivory Tower and Beyond: Participant Historians of the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 17-37.

¹⁰ Cochrane, Munro, and Quanchi, *The Ivory Tower and Beyond: Participant Historians of the Pacific*, 17-37.

¹¹ Raman, *From Decolonization to Ethno-Nationalism: a Study of Malaysia's School History Syllabuses and Textbooks 1905-2020*, 1-19; &

¹² Ruth Craggs, and Hannah Neate, *Decolonising Geography? Disciplinary Histories and the End of the British Empire in Africa, 1948-1998* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2023), 21-45.

¹³ Craggs, and Neate, *Decolonising Geography? Disciplinary Histories and the End of the British Empire in Africa, 1948-1998*, 21-45.

During this period of transformation, the role that Walter Rodney played is illustrative of the agency that individual historians possess. Not only did his work offer a criticism of the capitalist foundations of colonialism, but it also took an active role in the larger political movements that were attempting to decolonise knowledge.¹⁴ Rodney's incorporation of Marxist theory into the reality of African communities provided a fresh perspective through which to examine both the historical significance of the topic and its ramifications for today.¹⁵ The dynamic space for the development of decolonised historiographical practices is created because of the interaction between institutional support and individual scholarly activity.¹⁶ Nevertheless, this procedure is not without difficulties along the way. It is common for institutions to struggle with the legacy of colonial educational frameworks, while individual historians may encounter hostility from both inside and outside of academic circles.

The continuation of colonial epistemologies within academic institutions is one of the most critical difficulties that we face today. Despite efforts to incorporate new viewpoints and techniques, educational institutions frequently retain the institutional and intellectual relics of colonialism. As a result, the extent of historiographical reform may be restricted since new methods face the challenge of competing with established conventions and curricula that may be resistant to change. In addition, the problem of epistemological sovereignty is an essential component of the decolonisation process.¹⁷ A fundamental reassessment of what constitutes historical knowledge is required, in addition to the incorporation of a wide range of voices, to accomplish the goal of achieving a historiography that genuinely represents the viewpoints of non-European peoples.¹⁸ As part of this process, the criteria for historical relevance, the authentic sources, and the narratives that are emphasised are all called into question.

The constraints imposed by the available material resources are another important factor. It is possible that institutions in nations that were historically colonised might not have the financial and academic resources necessary to fully support creative research and teaching in the field of history.¹⁹ As a result of this difference, the formation of a robust and independent historical discourse can be hampered, and these institutions are left dependent on assistance from outside sources, which may come with their own set of biases and agendas. UNESCO's General History of Africa project is a particularly significant case in point.²⁰ The purpose of this endeavour was to present an African viewpoint on the history of the continent, which would contrast with the Eurocentric narratives that were then prevalent.²¹ There were a lot of obstacles to overcome, including political pressures, different academic standards, and logistical problems, even though the project had an ambitious set of goals.²² Despite these challenges, the initiative was successful in producing a comprehensive history that included contributions from across the continent. This exemplifies the possibilities for collaborative, decolonised historiography on a far larger scale. A further illustration of this may be found in the efforts that postcolonial colleges are making to

¹⁴ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (New York: Verso Books, 2018); 9-43.

¹⁵ Walter Rodney, *Decolonial Marxism: Essays from the Pan-African Revolution* (New York: Verso Books, 2022), 15-26.

¹⁶ Shose Kessi, Zoe Marks, and Elelwani Ramugondo, "Decolonizing African Studies," *Critical African Studies* 12, no. 3 (2020): 271-282.

¹⁷ Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Decolonization, Development and Knowledge in Africa: Turning over a New Leaf*, (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2020), 11-36.

¹⁸ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Decolonization, Development and Knowledge in Africa: Turning over a New Leaf*, 11-36.

¹⁹ Rita Abrahamsen, "African Studies and the Postcolonial Challenge," *African Affairs* 102, no. 407 (2003): 189-210.

²⁰ Cassandra Mark-Thiesen, "Neglected Historiography from Africa: the Case for Postindependence Journals," *The Journal of African History* 64, no. 1 (2023): 5-12.

²¹ Mark-Thiesen, "Neglected Historiography from Africa," 5-12.

²² Abrahamsen, "African Studies and the Postcolonial Challenge," 189-210.

update their course offerings to incorporate local histories and points of view. An example of this would be the adoption of African-centric ideas into the academic programs offered by the University of Dar es Salaam.²³ While these initiatives were effective in some areas, they also brought to light the challenges of striking a balance between the need to challenge traditionally accepted academic standards in the West and the need to maintain academic rigor.

A common element is brought to light by all these cases, and that is the conflict that exists between the goal of decolonised history and the difficulties that are involved in accomplishing it. A variety of factors, including finance, academic freedom, and the global hierarchy of knowledge creation, significantly influence the outcomes of these initiatives.²⁴ When one considers the many different efforts that have been made to decolonise historiography, one discovers a landscape that is abundant with prosperous achievements as well as instructional problems, each of which offers essential insights into the future of historical studies. In the realm of collaborative historiographical effort, projects such as the General History of Africa stand out as milestones.²⁵ These projects not only cross geographical and cultural gaps but also strengthen indigenous viewpoints. This gigantic undertaking has proved the great worth and feasibility of creating histories that are both comprehensive and representative of many epistemologies. It has also provided a large counter-narrative to Eurocentric academic traditions. Like this, curriculum modifications at institutions like the University of Dar es Salaam demonstrate the significant influence of incorporating regionally specific historical viewpoints into academic curricula.²⁶ The enhancement of educational experiences and the development of a sense of relevance and ownership among students and academics in postcolonial environments demonstrate the concrete benefits of such educational innovations.

A few of the most important lessons have been learned because of these initiatives. Indeed, we cannot overstate the fundamental elements of institutional backing and sufficient resources, which form the foundation of successful decolonisation operations.²⁷ Failure to receive substantial scholarly and financial support could severely restrict the breadth and effect of these projects. Furthermore, the collaboration and participation of researchers from a variety of backgrounds have been shown to be crucial for testing and broadening the underlying epistemologies of historical study. These efforts have initiated conversations that span several disciplines and cultures, providing significant blueprints for future scholarly work. Looking ahead, when it comes to decolonising historiography, the way forward entails a continuous evolution of both strategies and approaches. The development of strategies that not only critique the legacies of colonialism but also make constructive use of the knowledge systems that are indigenous to a particular region is a necessity.²⁸ This involves accepting non-traditional sources and viewpoints that are stigmatised, both of which contribute to the enrichment of the historical discourse with their contributions. Increasing access to digital resources in poor countries might considerably democratise the production and transmission of historical information, therefore establishing a global historiographical community that is more inclusive.

²³ Craggs, and Neate, *Decolonising Geography? Disciplinary Histories and the End of the British Empire in Africa, 1948-1998*, 21-45.

²⁴ Abrahamsen, "African Studies and the Postcolonial Challenge," 189-210.

²⁵ Tore Linné Eriksen, "Modern African History: some Historiographical Observations," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 4, no. 1-4 (1979): 75-97.

²⁶ Murray Saunders, and Graham Vulliamy, "The Implementation of Curricular Reform: Tanzania and Papua New Guinea," *Comparative Education Review* 27, no. 3 (1983): 351-373.

²⁷ Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa*, (Oxford, UK: African Books Collective, 2013), 10-25.

²⁸ Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa*, 10-25.

The tactics for putting these ideas into practice extend beyond academic circles and into the wider realm of global debate, which raises serious ethical problems and possible repercussions. A fundamental re-evaluation of the ethical frameworks that govern this research is required to accomplish the goal of reshaping historical study.²⁹ This is in addition to the academic improvements that are required. When it comes to the implementation of decolonised historiography, the strategy must begin at the basic level of academic institutions.³⁰ This involves rewriting curricula to accommodate a wider variety of views and making certain that these curricula not only educate students about a variety of historical periods but also engage them in critical thinking about the processes of knowledge creation itself.³¹ For the implementation of such educational changes, universities must commit to investing in resources that promote various scholarly perspectives and research initiatives that question standard historical narratives. Expanding access to digital resources in traditionally excluded areas is crucial. Scholars in these locations can make a more comprehensive contribution to the global discourse by increasing their connectedness and access to technology resources. This not only ensures that their views and perspectives are included but also that they have an impact on the historical discussions that are taking place. The discipline of history is further democratised via the implementation of this strategy, which also includes the creation of open-access journals and digital platforms that make it easier for people from other countries to share their thoughts and ideas.

In this setting, ethical issues include the careful management of source material as well as the accurate portrayal of historical themes. It is of the utmost importance to approach historical narratives with respect for the people that they reflect. Furthermore, it is also essential to make certain that these tales do not perpetuate the prejudices or preconceptions that are inherent in colonial viewpoints. Because of this ethical attitude, it is necessary to have an ongoing conversation with the communities that are engaged, giving them the opportunity to have a voice in the way their history is preserved and understood. The actual execution of these tactics necessitates considering the economic and political realities that impact academic research. There are frequently conditions linked to the provision of funding for studies that might have an impact on the goals and objectives of the study. To navigate these complications ethically, honesty and integrity are required. This is to ensure that the quest for knowledge does not compromise the subjects' autonomy and dignity.

The investigation of real-world applications offers a thorough perspective on the way decolonised historiography is being applied on a worldwide scale. The numerous initiatives that demonstrate both the complexity and the promise of these efforts reveal the potential of these endeavours. In relation to this, the establishment of digital archives in several African nations is a significant step towards the reclamation and preservation of indigenous histories for future generations.³² There have been thousands of historical documents that have been digitised and made available online thanks to projects such as the East African Digital Library,³³ which has received backing from both foreign and local colleges. This has increased the resources that are available to African researchers. This project's implementation not only enhances the public's accessibility to historical documents but also ensures the inclusion of African perspectives in the global historical narrative.³⁴

²⁹ Kwesi Kwaa Prah, *The Challenge of Decolonizing Education*, (Cape Town: Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society, 2018), 31–46.

³⁰ Kwaa Prah, *The Challenge of Decolonizing Education*, 31–46.

³¹ Kwaa Prah, *The Challenge of Decolonizing Education*, 31–46.

³² Margaret Bruchac, Siobhan Hart, and H. Martin Wobst, (eds.), *Indigenous Archaeologies: a Reader on Decolonization*, (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2016), 18–42.

³³ Adam Branch, "Decolonizing the African Studies Centre," *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* 36, no. 2 (2018): 73–91.

³⁴ Branch, "Decolonizing the African Studies Centre," 73–91.

Colleges in Latin America have started offering Indigenous Studies degrees,³⁵ indicating a growing commitment to include indigenous histories and cultures in their curricula. The incorporation of oral histories and traditional knowledge into these initiatives, which frequently include direct collaboration with indigenous groups, poses a challenge to the narratives that were previously dominant and ignored from these points of view.³⁶ These academic programs provide a more all-encompassing perspective on the history of the continent because of their actions. Community-based historiography projects in Southeast Asia emphasise local communities' participation in the process of researching and documenting their history.³⁷ The participatory methodologies that are used in these projects provide members of the community with the ability to participate not just as subjects but also as active participants in the process of historiography. Such techniques generate histories that truly represent the richness and complexity of local realities by effectively refuting the simple and Eurocentric narratives that are prominent in traditional educational materials.

Decolonised historiography comprises a broad spectrum of crucial instances, each endowed with lessons that could significantly shape the trajectory of future scholarly projects in this area. These insights, invaluable in their breadth, serve to illuminate both the effective strategies previously implemented and the ongoing challenges that call for sustained scholarly attention and creative resolution. As we progress from a general discussion of these foundational insights to a more detailed examination of specific examples from early postcolonial history, the relevance of these lessons becomes increasingly apparent. This transition not only deepens our comprehension of the theoretical frameworks underpinning decolonisation efforts but also enriches our understanding of their tangible impacts across varied historical landscapes. It underscores the necessity of applying these lessons to the exploration of complex issues such as the formation of national identities, economic transitions, and initial diplomatic efforts on the global stage, thereby weaving a more intricate narrative of post-independence evolution.

The insights gleaned from our examination of decolonised historiography underscore the necessity for innovative solutions to persistent issues, which are vividly illustrated in the active engagement of local communities. These real-world applications demonstrate the practical challenges and transformative potentials of integrating indigenous methodologies and perspectives, as local communities not only contribute to but also reshape historical narratives, facing significant obstacles such as financial instability and political interventions that challenge the autonomy of their historiographical endeavours.³⁸

The active engagement of local communities in the historiographical process has resulted in significant empowerment of these communities. This empowerment is particularly visible in programs that have stressed indigenous narratives and approaches, such as the community-based historiography projects that have been carried out in Southeast Asian countries.³⁹ Moreover, these initiatives have not only offered a forum for these groups to articulate their history but have also created more opportunities for them to do so. On the other hand, these notable achievements frequently come with significant obstacles. As a result of the fact that many decolonisation programs are dependent on external subsidies, which may not guarantee long-term stability, securing sustainable finance continues to be a

³⁵ Wade Cole, *Uncommon Schools: the Global Rise of Postsecondary Institutions for Indigenous Peoples*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2011), 7-28.

³⁶ Nepia Mahuika, *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition: an Indigenous Perspective*, (USA: Oxford University Press, USA, 2019), 35-57.

³⁷ Dorothy Fujita-Rony, "Illuminating Militarized Rupture: Four Asian American Community-based Archives," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 23, no. 1 (2020): 1-27.

³⁸ Ifi Amadiume, *Re-inventing Africa: Matriarchy, Religion and Culture*, (London: Zed Books, 1997), 12-31.

³⁹ Stephanie Decker, "Postcolonial Transitions in Africa: Decolonization in West Africa and Present Day South Africa," *Journal of Management Studies* 47, no. 5 (2010): 791-813.

serious obstacle. Furthermore, political intervention poses a significant concern, especially in regions where government actions could potentially impact academic freedom and the conduct of historical research.⁴⁰ The integrity of the historiographical work might be jeopardised because of this meddling, which can cause historical narratives to be distorted in order to conform to contemporary political goals.

The development of solid financial models that can maintain these projects over the long term should be the primary focus of future endeavours in order to triumph over these hurdles. The financial stability that is required for the success of these efforts might be achieved through the establishment of endowments or the pursuit of the diversification of funding sources. Furthermore, the establishment of more robust institutional structures capable of protecting academic research from political pressures is of utmost importance.⁴¹ This may include the formation of international collaborations that help as well as some degree of protection to academics who are working in politically charged areas. Additionally, the incorporation of technical breakthroughs has the potential to play a significant role in the process of democratising history. Increasing access to digital resources and developing open-source platforms may make participation more accessible to a larger audience, ensuring that a variety of historical narratives are maintained and shared throughout the internet.⁴² The adoption of this strategy not only contributes to closing the digital gap but also fosters the development of a historical community that is more integrated and welcoming to all.

Now that we are looking to the future, these techniques need to be improved and altered so that they can cater to the requirements and circumstances of various historical initiatives. To ensure that the discipline of decolonised historiography continues to develop in a manner that is both inclusive and dynamic, the objective should not only be to solve the issues that are now being faced but also to foresee potential future hurdles.

I am approaching the end of my muse on decolonised history, and it is becoming increasingly clear that the discipline is currently at a crucial crossroads. Although it is abundant with opportunities, it is also loaded with difficulties that require careful attention and creative answers. To guarantee that it not only remedies historical injustices but also leads the way for a more inclusive and truthful portrayal of history, the future of decolonised historiography requires a dedicated and multidimensional approach. This requirement is necessary to ensure that it is successful.

A continual re-evaluation of the methodologies, sources, and narratives that form our knowledge of the past is required to make progress toward a completely realised decolonised historiography.⁴³ This re-evaluation gains depth and efficacy when it is informed by a comprehensive understanding of preceding decolonisation endeavours within the academic study of history, as explored across the articles in this special issue. Engaging with the historical narratives and methodological reforms put forth in previous works, scholars are equipped to discern both the merits and limitations inherent in these approaches.⁴⁴ Such critical engagement facilitates a more nuanced understanding and implementation of innovative practices that genuinely embrace and foreground diverse epistemological perspectives that were once relegated to the peripheries of scholarly discourse.

⁴⁰ Decker, "Postcolonial Transitions in Africa," 791-813.

⁴¹ Tade Akin Aina, "Beyond Reforms: the Politics of Higher Education Transformation in Africa," *African Studies Review* 53, no. 1 (2010): 21-40.

⁴² Siobhan Senier, "Digitizing Indigenous History: Trends and Challenges," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 19, no. 3 (2014): 396-402.

⁴³ Pierre-Philippe Fraiture, *Past Imperfect: Time and African Decolonization, 1945-1960*, (USA: Oxford University Press, 2021), 74.

⁴⁴ Fraiture, *Past Imperfect: Time and African Decolonization, 1945-1960*, 74.

Moreover, this reflection on historical attempts at decolonisation underscores the perpetual nature of this endeavour; it is not a finite task but an ongoing commitment to challenging and refining the intellectual frameworks that shape our understanding of the past. In embracing this iterative process, the field of historiography does not merely evolve – it actively participates in the broader movement towards intellectual emancipation and inclusivity, thereby ensuring that our collective historical consciousness is both comprehensive and just. During this process, it is necessary to demonstrate a dedication to inclusiveness, making certain that a wide range of voices and points of view are not only heard but also considered an essential part of the historiographical discourse. Additionally, it necessitates an in-depth analysis of the power structures that have historically dictated the creation of historical knowledge. The goal is to eliminate any vestiges of colonial prejudice that are still present in academic settings.

The academic community must embrace multidisciplinary techniques and technology that make it easier for people from different cultural backgrounds and geographical locations to work together to cultivate a history that is really decolonised.⁴⁵ This type of collaboration has the potential to broaden and deepen the scope of historical study, therefore offering novel perspectives and approaches that question traditional thinking regarding the subject. In addition, the incorporation of digital tools and platforms has the potential to democratise access to historical information, making it possible for a wider audience to interact with historical knowledge and contribute to it.⁴⁶ It is also necessary for educational systems all over the world to take the initiative to revise their curricula to incorporate decolonised points of view.⁴⁷ Not only does this include broadening the scope of subjects that are addressed, but it also necessitates a shift in the instructional methods that are used while teaching history. To empower students to challenge and reinterpret historical narratives considering modern understandings of justice and equality, educators should foster critical thinking and analysis among their students.

As we approach the culmination of this in-depth exploration of decolonized historiography, it is imperative to reflect upon and distil the pivotal lessons and inspirations derived from the myriad decolonisation efforts post-flag independence, as rigorously examined throughout this special issue. A salient lesson that emerges from these scholarly endeavours is the realisation that political autonomy does not inherently confer epistemological liberation. This insight underscores the intricate and persistent influence of colonial epistemologies within the historiographical practices of newly independent nations. The narratives and methodologies entrenched during colonial rule often continue to shape historical scholarship, subtly perpetuating a Eurocentric discourse that may not reflect the newly found political statuses of these nations.⁴⁸

Further, the discussions within this issue highlight the indispensable role of indigenous methodologies and perspectives in the pursuit of a decolonised historiography. By integrating these diverse voices, not only do we correct historical imbalances, but we also enrich the academic discourse, fostering a historiography that is truly reflective of the multiplicity of human experiences. This process of integration challenges the dominance of established Western paradigms and champions a more equitable representation of history that resonates deeply across different societies.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Achille Joseph Mbembe, "Decolonizing the University: New Directions," *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 15, no. 1 (2016): 29–45.

⁴⁶ Senior, "Digitizing Indigenous History," 396–402.

⁴⁷ Anthony Afful-Broni, et al., (eds.), *Africanizing the School Curriculum: Promoting an Inclusive, Decolonial Education in African Contexts*, (Gorham, ME: Myers Education Press, 2020), 10–27.

⁴⁸ Toyin Falola, *Decolonizing African Knowledge: Autoethnography and African Epistemologies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 4–28.

⁴⁹ Falola, *Decolonizing African Knowledge*, 4–28.

Additionally, historians of historiography should extend their inquiry to the underexplored realms of early postcolonial history, such as the impacts of transitional economies, the formation of new national identities, and the initial diplomatic engagements on the international stage.⁵⁰ These dimensions offer fertile ground for understanding the nuanced continuities and ruptures with the colonial past. Such studies can illuminate how postcolonial societies navigated the complexities of independence, contributing to a richer, more nuanced understanding of their historical trajectories. The transformative potential of interdisciplinary approaches in decolonising historiography has been vividly illustrated. Drawing upon the theoretical and methodological tools from disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies enhances our understanding of the past. This cross-disciplinary engagement facilitates a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to history, allowing for interpretations that account for the complexities of human societies and their interactions.⁵¹

Inspired by these profound insights, the path forward for decolonising historiography must persistently engage with and dismantle the residual colonial influences within academic narratives. It is through such enduring scholarly rigor and commitment to inclusivity that historiography can aspire to a genuinely decolonised form – one that not only rewrites but rethinks history in a way that is liberating and enlightening for all. As we continue to forge this path, we, as a global scholarly community, are tasked with advancing this critical discourse, ensuring that our engagements with history are not just academic exercises but are also acts of intellectual emancipation.

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⁵⁰ Toyin Falola, *Decolonizing African History*, (Oxford, UK: African Books Collective, 2024), 28–57.

⁵¹ Falola, *Decolonizing African History*, 28–57.

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