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How to Decolonize Philosophy: Methodological Pathways in Latin America and Africa

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Abstract. The question of how to decolonize philosophy has moved from rhetorical consensus to methodological urgency. This study addresses the lack of operational procedures in decolonial thought by examining philosophical methods developed in Latin America and Africa. In the Latin American context, we argue that anthropophagic thought, formulated by Oswald de Andrade in the Cannibalist Manifesto (1928), offers a promising methodological response. We reconstruct this method through four procedural axes — critical appropriation, the dialectic of assimilation and rupture, the valorization of subaltern knowledges, and epistemic irony — and apply them in five steps to Romulo Gallegos's novel *Dona Barbara*. In the African context, we examine two leading candidates: Jonathan Chimakonam's conversational method (CM), grounded in Ezumezu logic, and Kwasi Wiredu's conceptual decolonisation (CD). Through critical assessment, we argue that CD, understood as a philosophical sensibility attuned to the colonial conditioning of conceptual frameworks, best satisfies the demands of a decolonial method. Our theoretical framework draws on Quijano's coloniality of power, Mignolo's coloniality of knowledge, Lugones's coloniality of gender, Wiredu's conceptual decolonisation, and Chimakonam's Ezumezu logic. We conclude that decolonial method must be plural, context-sensitive, and responsive to distinct intellectual histories. Whereas Latin American thought locates methodological experimentation in the novel, African philosophy develops its decolonial impulse primarily through internal disciplinary reflection. Despite these differences, both traditions converge on a shared insight: to decolonize philosophy is to engage critically with colonial legacies — devouring, repairing, and transforming them from within.

Keywords: decolonial method, anthropophagy, conceptual decolonisation, conversational method, Latin American philosophy, African philosophy, coloniality

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Как деколонизировать философию: методологические пути в Латинской Америке и Африке

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Аннотация. Вопрос о том, как деколонизировать философию, перешел от риторического консенсуса к методологической актуальности. В этом исследовании рассматривается проблема отсутствия оперативных процедур в деколонизационной мысли путем изучения философских методов, разработанных в Латинской Америке и Африке. В латиноамериканском контексте мы утверждаем, что антропофагская идея, сформулированная Освальдом де Андраде в «Манифесте каннибалистов» (1928), предлагает многообещающий методологический ответ. Мы реконструируем этот метод с помощью четырех процедурных аспектов — критического присвоения, диалектики ассимиляции и разрыва, придания ценности знаниям подчиненных и эпистемологической иронии — и применяем их в пять этапов к роману Ромуло Гальегоса «Донья Барбара». В африканском контексте мы рассматриваем двух ведущих кандидатов: диалоговый метод Джонатана Чимаконама, основанный на логике Эзумеу, и концептуальную деколонизацию Квази Виреду. Проводя критическую оценку, мы утверждаем, что концептуальная деколонизация, понимаемая как философское восприятие, созвучное колониальной обусловленности концептуальных рамок, наилучшим образом удовлетворяет требованиям деколониального метода. Наша теоретическая основа опирается на колониализм власти Кихано, колониализм знаний Миньоло, колониализм гендера Лугонеса, концептуальную деколонизацию Виреду и логику Эзумеу Чимаконама. Мы приходим к выводу, что деколониальный метод должен быть множественным, учитывать контекст и учитывать различные интеллектуальные истории. В то время как латиноамериканская мысль находит в романе место методологическим экспериментам, африканская философия развивает свой деколониальный импульс главным образом через внутреннюю дисциплинарную рефлексию. Несмотря на эти различия, обе традиции сходятся в общем понимании: философия деколонизации — это критическое отношение к колониальному наследию, поглощение, восстановление и трансформация его изнутри.

Ключевые слова: деколониальный метод, антропофагия, концептуальная деколонизация, диалоговый метод, латиноамериканская философия, африканская философия, колониальность

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Introduction

The question of how to decolonize philosophy has moved from rhetorical consensus to methodological urgency in contemporary debates across the Global South. While there is broad agreement on the need to challenge the enduring epistemic hierarchies inherited from colonialism, a more fundamental problem remains insufficiently addressed: that of method. How, concretely, should philosophical inquiry proceed once it takes the critique of coloniality as its point of departure? This paper addresses that methodological lacuna by examining philosophical methods developed in Latin America and Africa, each in light of its own historical and conceptual conditions.

The central problem we address is twofold. In Latin America, the major currents of decolonial thought — the Modernity / Coloniality Group, Philosophy of Liberation, Epistemologies of the South, and Decolonial Feminism — provide powerful diagnostic tools, yet they do not articulate explicit procedural methods for philosophical inquiry. In Africa, by contrast, methodological reflection has been more explicit, especially in debates on conceptual decolonisation and the conversational method. The difficulty, however, is not the absence of proposals but the need to determine which of them can most adequately function as a genuinely decolonial philosophical method.

To this end, the paper is structured in two main parts, each developed by one of the authors. The first section, by Bavaresco, argues that anthropophagic thought, formulated by Oswald de Andrade in his *Cannibalist Manifesto* (1928), offers a promising methodological response rooted in the Brazilian modernist experience. It proceeds to operationalize this method through four procedural axes — critical appropriation, dialectic of assimilation and rupture, valorization of subaltern

knowledges, and epistemic irony — and applies them in five steps to Rómulo Gallegos's novel *Doña Bárbara*, demonstrating the method's analytical yield. The second section, by Harris, turns to the African context, examining two leading candidates: the conversational method (CM) articulated by Jonathan Chimakonam on the basis of Ezumezu logic, and Kwasi Wiredu's project of conceptual decolonisation (CD). Through critical assessment, it argues that CD, understood as a philosophical sensibility attuned to the colonial conditioning of conceptual frameworks, best meets the demands of a genuinely decolonial philosophical method.

The theoretical framework that sustains the whole is drawn from the very traditions under examination: Quijano's coloniality of power, Mignolo's coloniality of knowledge, Lugones's coloniality of gender, Wiredu's conceptual decolonisation, and Chimakonam's Ezumezu logic. These authors provide not only the diagnostic vocabulary but also the conceptual resources for the constructive task we undertake.

The relevance and timeliness of this inquiry are evident. As debates on decolonization intensify across the humanities and social sciences, philosophy risks being left behind if it fails to examine its own methodological assumptions. The question is no longer *whether* to decolonize philosophy, but *how* to do so in a manner that is both philosophically rigorous and epistemically accountable to the histories of colonial violence that continue to shape the conditions of thought.

Our comparative approach yields three main conclusions. First, decolonial method cannot be reduced to a single procedure; it must be plural, responsive to the specific textures of each intellectual tradition. Second, while Latin American decolonial thought has found in the novel a privileged site of methodological experimentation, African philosophy has developed its decolonial impulse primarily through internal reflection on the discipline's conceptual tools. Third, despite these differences, both traditions converge on a shared insight: to decolonize philosophy is not to recover an untouched origin, but to engage critically and creatively with the conceptual legacies of colonialism — devouring, repairing, and transforming them from within.

By bringing these two traditions into dialogue, this paper aims to contribute not only to the comparative study of decolonial thought but also to the practical task of equipping philosophers with methods adequate to the challenges of our time. The question of how to decolonize philosophy admits no single answer — but it is precisely in the plurality of responses that its richest possibilities emerge.

1. From currents to method: is a decolonial philosophical method possible?

This chapter addresses the central question emerging from the current Latin American decolonial debate: if there is a rhetorical consensus around the need to decolonize thought, the methodological problem of *how to do it* remains open. To address this, we begin with an analysis of the main decolonial currents — Modernity / Coloniality Group, Philosophy of Liberation, Epistemologies of the

South, and Decolonial Feminism — identifying their conceptual contributions and their lacunae concerning the explication of concrete philosophical procedures. Next, it is argued that the common diagnosis of coloniality as a persistent structure implies an interrogation of the methods inherited from the Western tradition. Against this backdrop, anthropophagic thought, formulated by Oswald de Andrade, is presented as a promising candidate for a decolonial philosophical method, insofar as it offers operational procedures — critical appropriation, resignification, valorization of subaltern knowledges, epistemic irony. Finally, the operability of the method is made explicit through five methodological steps, applied to the novel *Doña Bárbara*, reaffirming the need for a methodological pluralism rooted in different Latin American contexts.

1.1. What the currents offer

Latin American decolonial currents, although they share the critical diagnosis of coloniality, present different emphases and limitations concerning the explication of a philosophical method proper.

The Modernity / Coloniality Group [1; 2] offers a powerful conceptual arsenal for the critique of Western modernity. The concepts of coloniality of power, knowledge, and being are indispensable tools for understanding how colonial structures persist beyond political colonialism. As Quijano states, “coloniality is one of the constitutive and specific elements of the global pattern of capitalist power” [1. P. 246]. However, the group does not develop explicit procedures for philosophical investigation. Their concepts are operative at the diagnostic level but do not translate into methodological steps for concrete philosophical practice.

The Philosophy of Liberation (Dussel) contributes with an ethics of radical alterity and the critique of the “ego conquiro”. The notion of “exteriority” is central for thinking from the excluded. Dussel proposes that “exteriority is the realm from which the other emerges as free, as non-system, as the source of an ethics of liberation” [3. P. 87]. However, the Dusselian proposal does not formalize a method in the strict sense. Analectics functions more as an ethical-philosophical stance than as an operationalizable procedure.

The Epistemologies of the South [4; 5] advance the valorization of epistemic plurality. The notion of “ecology of knowledges” proposes a dialogue between different forms of knowledge. Santos argues that “the ecology of knowledges consists in promoting dialogues between scientific and humanistic knowledge and lay, popular, traditional, urban, peasant knowledges originating from non-Western cultures” [4. P. 102]. However, there are clear normative principles but no concrete steps for philosophical investigation.

Decolonial Feminism [6; 7] offers an incisive critique of the coloniality of gender, showing how the colonial/modern system imposed a binary and patriarchal organization. Lugones denounces that “the coloniality of gender enables us to understand gender oppression in its intersection with race, class, and

sexuality” [6. P. 15]. The notion of the “colonial / modern gender system” is fundamental, but an articulated philosophical method is lacking.

We observe, therefore, a paradox: these currents are rich in diagnostic concepts, but they do not develop clear methodological procedures. They say *what* to criticize, but they do not explain *how* to carry out philosophical critique in an operational manner.

This does not mean that we cannot derive methodological indications from them. The concepts they mobilize point to requirements that any decolonial method must satisfy: the critique of epistemic hierarchies inherited from colonialism, the valorization of subaltern knowledges, critical dialogue with the Western tradition, and contextual rootedness.

It is at this point that anthropophagic thought, formulated by Oswald de Andrade in the *Cannibalist Manifesto* (1928), emerges as a promising candidate. It is not presented as the method par excellence, but as a possible response to the question of “how to do it”. Oswald proclaims: “Only cannibalism unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically” [8. P. 43]. Anthropophagy offers procedures: critical appropriation of European elements, devouring and resignification from local experience, dialectics between assimilation and rupture, irony as a strategy of epistemic subversion. As Haroldo de Campos observes, “Oswaldian anthropophagy is a critical thought of cultural dependency, a metaphor for decolonization” [9. P. 23].

1.2. The common diagnosis: coloniality as a methodological problem

Despite the differences, there is a common diagnosis: coloniality is not a phenomenon of the past, but a persistent structure that operates in the spheres of power, knowledge, and being. This diagnosis carries profound methodological implications.

If coloniality affects the conditions under which we think, philosophy cannot continue to practice its traditional methods as if nothing had happened. The methods inherited from the Western tradition — phenomenological, analytical, hermeneutical — carry assumptions that may reproduce the epistemic hierarchies that decolonial critique denounces.

The methodological problem emerges as a necessary consequence of the diagnosis of coloniality. The decolonial currents offer elements for this interrogation: from the Modernity / Coloniality Group, the critique of the disqualification of non-European epistemologies; from the Philosophy of Liberation, the ethical demand to think from exteriority; from the Epistemologies of the South, the ecology of knowledges; from Decolonial Feminism, the critique of the coloniality of gender.

However, these elements, although necessary, are not sufficient. They provide normative criteria, but not operational procedures. Decolonial philosophy faces a double challenge: to keep alive the critique of colonial structures and to develop methods that concretely guide investigation.

It is this double challenge that makes the search for decolonial philosophical methods urgent. The question is not only what to think, but how to think from a place marked by coloniality and against it. As Mignolo suggests, “decolonial thought requires an epistemic disobedience, a disengagement from the rules of the game established by Western modernity” [2. P. 65].

1.3. The anthropophagic method: procedures and operability

Anthropophagic thought proposes a critical relationship with the European cultural heritage that is translatable into concrete philosophical procedures. Inspired by the Tupinambá ritual of devouring enemies — to absorb their forces — Oswald metaphorizes anthropophagy as a cultural strategy: neither to reject European thought nor to accept it passively, but to critically devour it in order to produce something new, rooted in local experience. As a philosophical method, anthropophagy comprises four procedural axes:

a) **Critical appropriation (devouring and resignification)** — Movement of selective appropriation of elements from the Western tradition, incorporating European concepts to subject them to radical transformation from the Latin American context. The example is the Oswaldian maxim: “Tupi or not tupi, that is the question”. Shakespeare is devoured and resignified: Hamlet gives way to the question of Brazilian cultural identity. As Oswald writes, “We were never catechized. What we did was Carnival. The Indian dressed as Senator of the Empire” [8. P. 47].

b) **Dialectic of assimilation and rupture** — Productive tension between assimilation and rupture, without a harmonious Hegelian synthesis. The result is a hybrid multiplicity, where different layers — indigenous, African, European — coexist in creative tension.

c) **Valorization of subaltern knowledges** — Inversion of the colonial epistemic hierarchy. Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and popular knowledges are rehabilitated as legitimate sources of philosophical reflection, without essentializing them. Oswald ironizes: “Our independence has not yet been proclaimed. Typical phrase of D. João VI: — My son, place this crown on your head, before some adventurer does it!” [8. P. 51].

d) **Irony and humor as epistemological strategies** — Systematic employment of irony, humor, and parody as instruments of subversion, destabilizing the authority of the Western canon.

1.4. Methodological steps for philosophical analysis

We propose five methodological steps, applicable to different philosophical objects:

1st step: Contextualization — Situate the object of analysis in its historical, socioeconomic, and cultural context, identifying relations with coloniality.

2nd step: Diagnosis of coloniality — Analyze how the dimensions of coloniality of power, knowledge, and being manifest themselves.

3rd step: Application of anthropophagic thought — Verify whether the object operates critical appropriation of Eurocentric elements and how devouring and resignification occur.

4th step: Analysis of linguistic and narrative strategies — Examine the use of language, irony, parody, or multiple registers as instruments of subversion.

5th step: Philosophical impacts and consequences — Relate the analysis to contemporary debates in decolonial philosophy.

1.5. Limits and openness to other methods

The anthropophagic method does not pretend to be the only path. Its rooting in the Brazilian modernist experience may not apply directly to other contexts — Andean, Caribbean, Central American. This openness to pluralism finds resonance in contemporary African debate. As Harris (2026) demonstrates in his analysis below, African philosophies have developed their own methodological responses to the colonial question — from ethnophilosophy to Wiredu's conceptual decolonisation, from Chimakonam's conversational method to professional philosophy. What emerges, in both contexts, is the refusal of a single method in favor of situated strategies of epistemic decolonisation.

We therefore defend a methodological pluralism: anthropophagic thought is one possible response, among others. Other methods — Andean philosophies, quilombola epistemologies, indigenous oral traditions — can and should be proposed.

2. Application of the anthropophagic method: *Doña Bárbara* by Rómulo Gallegos

We will apply the five steps to the novel *Doña Bárbara* (1929), by Rómulo Gallegos [10], a central work in the Latin American literary canon that thematizes the conflict between “civilization” and “barbarism”.

2.1. First step: Contextualization

Published in 1929, a period of transition in post-Gómez dictatorship Venezuela, *Doña Bárbara* belongs to the tradition of the “novela de la tierra” (regional novel). Gallegos, an intellectual formed by Enlightenment ideals, reproduces Eurocentric assumptions about progress but, against his will, registers the complexity of local forms of life.

2.2. Second step: Diagnosis of coloniality

a) **Coloniality of power:** The dispute between *Doña Bárbara* and Santos Luzardo over land reflects the structure of coloniality of power. The llanos are a territory marked by hierarchies inherited from the colonial period. Quijano reminds us that “coloniality of power is founded on the imposition of a racial / ethnic classification of the world population” [1. P. 223].

b) **Coloniality of knowledge:** Conflict between Luzardo's literate knowledge and the llaneros' empirical knowledge. The narrative privileges Luzardo but registers the effectiveness of local knowledge. Mignolo observes that "coloniality of knowledge operates through the disqualification of epistemologies other than European ones" [2. P. 102].

c) **Coloniality of gender:** Doña Bárbara challenges patriarchy by assuming masculine roles but is demonized by the narrative. Her final disappearance restores the patriarchal order. Lugones argues that "the colonial/modern gender system imposed a binary and hierarchical organization that destroyed indigenous forms of understanding gender" [6. P. 34].

2.3. Third step: Application of anthropophagic thought

a) **Appropriation of the realist novel:** Gallegos uses the form of the European novel but subverts it: the landscape becomes a character, destabilizing the civilization / nature opposition.

b) **Resignification of the civilization / barbarism myth:** The opposition is destabilized — Luzardo's "civilization" reveals itself as fragile; Doña Bárbara's "barbarism" shows complexity and its own rationality.

c) **Irony:** The figure of Doña Bárbara as a "man-eater" (*devoradora de hombres*) can be read as an inverted mirror image of anthropophagy. As Oswald proposes, "I'm only interested in what is not mine" [8. P. 43].

2.4. Fourth step: Linguistic and narrative strategies

a) **Orality and regionalisms:** Terms such as *llano*, *hato* organize a specific experience of the world.

b) **Discursive heterogeneity:** The novel alternates between legal discourse, superstitions, and legends, registering multiple epistemologies.

c) **Landscape as character:** The *llano* acts, reacts, conditions the characters, challenging the nature / culture dichotomy.

2.5. Fifth step: Philosophical impacts

a) **Dialogue with Quijano:** The land dispute confirms coloniality of power operating through racial and economic organization of territory.

b) **Dialogue with Mignolo:** The conflict of knowledges documents coloniality of knowledge — legal knowledge claims universality but depends on local knowledge.

c) **Dialogue with Lugones:** Doña Bárbara embodies resistance to the colonial / modern gender system. Her disappearance can be read as an affirmation of agency that escapes discourse.

2.6. Limits and rereading

Gallegos reproduces aspects of coloniality, but the work contains fissures — the voice of the subaltern, the resistance of the landscape — that allow for a

decolonial reading. An anthropophagic rereading can “devour” the novel: appropriate its tensions, resignify characters, produce new understandings.

The analysis of Latin American currents and the proposition of the anthropophagic method reveal that the question of “how to do it” admits no single answers. It is precisely this diagnosis that Harris (2026) develops in depth by examining the methodological trajectory of post-colonial African philosophy. In Africa, philosophy faced a similar question, but with distinct contours: ethnophilosophy, professional philosophy, Wiredu’s conceptual decolonisation, and Chimakonam’s conversational method. As we observed in previous work, “methodological debates in African philosophy have their own trajectory, marked by the question of the validity of ethnophilosophy and the search for a professional philosophy” [11. P. 435]. The following section, developed by Harris, examines this trajectory, identifying approximations and differences with the Latin American case.

3. Philosophical Decolonial Method In Africa

In the African context, any exploration of philosophical decolonial method cannot get off the ground without an initial deconstruction and disambiguation of the meaning of the phrase ‘philosophical decolonial method’. This approach is necessary because the question of decolonial method is intermingled with related, but not identical, areas of debate within African philosophy. For example, issues of methodology have in the past been subsumed under the meta-philosophical concern about what African philosophy is, and how it differs from Western philosophy. Given this framing narrative, African philosophy in its formative stages centred around the justification of the existence of a uniquely African philosophy, or whether philosophy could meaningfully be spoken of in the African context. Debates on the nature of African philosophy have thus long revolved around questions of origin and pedigree. In one sense, philosophy in Africa can be understood as a universal human activity — the reflective effort to make sense of experience and existence. On this view, Africans, like all human communities, have always engaged in philosophical reflection, even if not in written form. In another, more proscribed sense, ‘African philosophy’ refers to the modern, post-colonial project that emerged as an explicit intellectual field during the mid-twentieth century, prompted by works such as Placide Tempels’s *Bantu Philosophy* [12]. However problematic Tempels’s conclusions were, his book provoked a reaction that defined an entire era of debate about what it would mean for philosophy to be both genuinely African and philosophically rigorous.

The field soon developed multiple methodological orientations. Ethnophilosophy treated communal worldviews, expressed in myths, proverbs, and collective beliefs, as constituting quintessentially African philosophical systems. In contrast, Henry Odera Oruka’s sage philosophy (or philosophic sagacity) sought to document the critical reasoning of individual sages within African societies, showing that argument and reflection were not alien to oral cultures [13]. A third

trend, nationalist-ideological philosophy, linked intellectual work to political emancipation, with thinkers such as Kwame Nkrumah [14], Julius Nyerere [15], and Léopold Senghor [16] articulating philosophies of liberation and identity. Finally, professional philosophy, represented by figures like Peter Bodunrin and Paulin Hountondji [17], insisted that African philosophy must operate with the same analytic rigour, logical precision, and argumentative standards that define philosophy globally [18].

This plurality of approaches reveals an enduring methodological tension: how to affirm African distinctiveness without lapsing into cultural isolation, and how to uphold philosophical universality without re-centering colonial standards of rationality. This same tension will play a role in the subsequent discussion about a philosophical decolonial method in the African context. The question of whether African philosophy must conform to Western epistemic models-or whether it can generate its own-remains at the heart of the field.

That phase, however, has given way to a more urgent and methodologically mature question: how African philosophy ought to be practised in a postcolonial intellectual landscape still shaped by the conceptual legacies of colonialism. The central issue is thus no longer the existence of African philosophies and epistemologies but rather epistemic sovereignty, or the capacity of African philosophy to determine its own conceptual and methodological terms.

This shift mirrors developments elsewhere in the Global South. As the foregoing section has shown for the Latin American context, the project of epistemic decolonisation often proceeds by rethinking the medium and form of philosophical expression itself. In African philosophy, this evolution has now taken a more methodologically focused turn in which the guiding insight is that decolonisation is not achieved merely by changing subject matter, but by critically interrogating the methods through which philosophical knowledge is produced. However, in evaluating these methods we should be careful not to interpret the phrase ‘philosophical decolonial method’ too narrowly. To do this would be to over-compensate against our earlier warning that our topic is not purely meta-philosophical. It should be concerned not just with what philosophy is, but also with the way we do philosophy. In the context of Western philosophy, we have narrowly-defined methods for philosophical practice such as phenomenology, conceptual analysis, etc. If we interpret our phrase too narrowly, the question then becomes: what are the analogous methods we have in our repertoire in the African context? The short answer is that African philosophy is still developing these micro-methods for itself. So, when we explore philosophical decolonial method in the African context, we should be aware that we navigating in between these two extremes.

In what follows, we identify the two most likely candidates that could potentially function as a philosophical decolonial method in Africa. These are, firstly, the method of conceptual decolonisation (CD), developed and popularized by Kwasi Wiredu [19; 20] and the conversational method (CM) put forward by Jonathan Chimakonam [21; 22]. We describe CD as the incumbent given its long-

established pedigree and its longevity in various debates and discourses in African philosophy. We describe CM as the challenger given its relatively recent emergence on the scene. In what follows we outline both approaches and critically evaluate their potential as philosophical decolonial methods before ending by extracting some lessons from our discussion of philosophical decolonial method in Latin America and Africa.

3.1. Ezumezu Logic and Conversational Method: Exegesis and Decolonial Assessment

Jonathan Chimakonam's conversational method (CM), and its logical underpinning in his Ezumezu logic, represent one of the most ambitious recent attempts to articulate a distinctively African philosophical methodology. Earlier approaches to African philosophy, especially ethnophilosophy, sage philosophy and nationalist-ideological philosophy, were never explicitly methodological and were largely concerned with the question of the history and characteristics of African philosophy. CM, on the other hand, is a project that seeks to intervene at the level of philosophical method itself, as its ambition is to supply African philosophy with its own logical and methodological infrastructure, thereby challenging the epistemic dominance of Western logical systems and philosophical approaches.

At the heart of CM is Ezumezu logic [22], presented as a non-classical logical system that rejects strict bivalence and accommodates complementarity as a formal principle. Ezumezu distinguishes between contextual and complementary modes of reasoning and is presented as better suited to African metaphysical and epistemological intuitions than classical Western logic [23]. Ezumezu is motivated by the claim that classical logic inadequately captures legitimate African inferences, particularly those that tolerate apparent contradiction, contextual fluidity, and relational ontology. Rather than insisting that a proposition must be either true or false, Ezumezu permits a third value, allowing propositions to be both true and false in certain contexts. Ezumezu logic is thus explicitly context-sensitive. Chimakonam distinguishes between contexts in which classical reasoning remains appropriate and those in which complementary reasoning is required. The aim is not to abolish classical logic but to provincialise it, denying its claim to universal applicability. Ezumezu thus aspires to be pluralistic without collapsing into relativism.

Closely aligned to this African logical approach is Chimakonam's conversational method for philosophy (CM). CM reconceives philosophy as a dialogical practice structured by norms of engagement rather than by the pursuit of synthesis or final resolution. Drawing on the indigenous African notion of *nmeko*, CM treats philosophical disagreement as productive and ongoing. Meaning emerges through sustained interaction, not through the subsumption of difference under a higher unity. In this respect, CM explicitly rejects Hegelian dialectics and instead endorses what Chimakonam describes as creative struggle [21. P. 119].

There is much to admire in this project. Its systematic ambition distinguishes it from many earlier interventions in African philosophy, and its insistence on a formal grounding gives it a robustness lacking in some other approaches to African philosophy. Still, there are reasons to deny its appropriateness as a philosophical decolonial method. The main problem can be seen by considering the distinction between indigenous method and decolonial method. The crux of the distinction is that decoloniality logically presupposes colonial disruption while indigeneity does not. The question at hand is whether CM can be considered the best candidate for a philosophical decolonial method, and not an indigenous one. Ezumazu and CM may well capture how African philosophy might have developed in the absence of colonial disruption. If the claims advanced in support of Ezumazu and CM are accepted, then they may describe what African philosophical method would have been had colonialism not occurred. In this sense, they offer a plausible counterfactual reconstruction of an uncolonised philosophical trajectory. Yet decolonial philosophy must operate in the actual historical world-one in which colonialism did occur and in which African philosophy is already mediated by colonial languages, institutions, and conceptual frameworks.

A philosophical decolonial method must address the epistemic conditions produced by colonialism, not merely excavate philosophical practice in their absence. CM is primarily constructive but this limitation does not render it philosophically useless. On the contrary, CM may play an important role in the reconstructive phase of decolonial work, informing how concepts are reformulated once colonial distortions have been identified. As will become evident in the next section, conceptual decolonisation (CD) is explicitly designed for the postcolonial condition. It presupposes epistemic contamination and supplies criteria for identifying colonial conceptual residue. As a result, we argue that it trumps CM as a philosophical decolonial method.

There are, in addition, independent grounds for scepticism about CM and Ezumazu. Chimakonam responds to some of these concerns himself [24] and the limitations of this paper render it necessary for us to leave an evaluation of the criticisms and his response up to the reader. These critiques indicate that CM remains a developing project, and this development is ongoing. However, it is important to stress that these criticisms are not the primary reason for rejecting CM as the best contender for a philosophical decolonial method.

3.2. Conceptual Decolonisation: Exegesis and Assessment

Kwasi Wiredu's project of conceptual decolonisation (CD) offers a transformative methodological intervention in the context of African philosophy. Rather than treating the discipline as a collection of schools or approaches to Philosophy, Wiredu recast it as a type of critical practice aimed at freeing African thought from colonial influences. His analysis of the genesis of his ideas around CD demonstrates how his approach to philosophy is deeply rooted in the problem of coloniality:

Colonialism has caused a widespread involuntary intermixing of Western and African intellectual categories in the thinking of contemporary Africans. Common sense alone dictates that we Africans of the immediate post-independence era should try to unravel the conceptual entanglements. We should then be in a position to view our own philosophic inheritance in its true lineaments. But, of course philosophy takes, or should take, nothing, or nearly nothing, for granted; and the rational approach to that heritage must be that of critical reconstruction. Regarding the elements of foreign philosophic thought with which our colonial history and contemporary experience have brought us into contact the need for a critical spirit should be doubly obvious. It is only by this approach that a contemporary African can construct a philosophy suited to present-day existence [19. P. 54].

What is noteworthy about this quote is how careful Wiredu is in preserving the philosophical credentials of his approach. In other words, even when diagnosing the problems brought about by colonialism for African scholars, he is careful to present that diagnosis from a philosophical perspective. This is important to note in the context of this discussion given what we have already explained about the pitfalls of outlining a method that is both decolonial and philosophical. This sentiment of paying dues to both the philosophical and decolonial imperative also comes out clearly in his definition of CD, which he touts as the solution to the issue outlined above:

To define conceptual decolonization is easy enough. It is the elimination from our thought of modes of conceptualization that came to us through colonization and remain in our thinking owing to inertia rather than to our own reflective choices. [19. P. 56]

Methodologically, therefore, CD is underpinned by two separate prerogatives. Its ‘negative’ element identifies conceptual elements or frameworks introduced through colonial languages and institutions. The ‘positive’ element is about reconstructing philosophical discourse, in response to the gaps caused by the previous steps, using indigenous conceptual resources. In this regard, it shows affinities with the Anthropophagic aspect of Latin American decolonial methods discussed in the first section of this article.

Wiredu traces the genesis of his approach to CD to his early encounter, as a philosopher working in Western institutions, with Descartes and Cartesian dualism [19. P. 60–61]. Something in that framework, he reports, failed to sit comfortably with the metaphysical intuitions embedded in his own home language, Akan. This experience alerted him to the incompatibility between certain Western metaphysical assumptions and the conceptual resources available in his linguistic and cultural background. His subsequent philosophical enquiries into other of his native Akan concepts such as *adwene* (mind) and *nokware* (truth) illustrate how vernacular categories can reshape philosophical debates when examined within their own linguistic and cultural logics [20]. The purpose of the exercise, however, is not simply to excavate buried or neglected cultural concepts and romanticise the indigenous. Neither is it just to cast aspersions on the foreign or the colonialism-

imposed conceptual frameworks, but rather to recover a reflective balance between local intelligibility and universal reason and in so doing exploit opportunities for deeper philosophical insight.

Dylan Futter [25] puts forward a critique of CD based on its inability to navigate this tightrope between philosophical and decolonial imperatives. In short, he thinks Wiredu is so careful in protecting the philosophical bona fides of conceptual decolonization that he renders it indistinct from other philosophical approaches. In other words he argues that once stripped of its political background and metaphorical framings (such as seeing conceptual systems as being ‘intertwined’, for example), CD amounts simply to doing good philosophy. For our purposes this would be devastating because it would mean that CD, while it is a philosophical method, cannot in good faith be considered a philosophical decolonial method.

We are content to accept Futter’s conclusion on its own terms. CD is an instance of good philosophical practice. However, the more important question is what follows from this observation. If CD is merely good philosophy, then why did mainstream philosophy permit the very conceptual entanglements, and resultant epistemic suppression of indigenous African conceptual schemes that Wiredu diagnoses, to arise and persist in the first place? Why did standard philosophical methods fail to register the epistemic distortions produced by colonial language, power, and institutional authority? This question exposes a limitation in Futter’s interpretation. It assumes that good philosophy, as historically practised within the discipline, was already adequately equipped to address the injustices engendered by colonisation. The historical record suggests otherwise. CD’s decolonial significance lies not narrowly in methodological novelty, but in re-orienting philosophical rigour toward a domain that mainstream philosophy had systematically neglected. In this sense, CD does not compete with good philosophy. Rather, it reveals where good philosophy failed to be sufficiently self-critical.

As all this shows, adopting CD involves a deliberate balancing act. On the one hand, it must demonstrate its decolonial credentials. Whatever else it may be, it must be recognisably different from the philosophical methods inherited from the colonial tradition. On the other hand, it cannot depart so radically from established philosophical practice that it ceases to function as a philosophical method at all. Decolonial methods are justifiably expected to foreground the local, whether in the form of indigenous knowledge systems, conceptual schemes, or linguistic frameworks. Yet, to count as philosophy, such methods also need to offer insights with relevance beyond the merely parochial, that is, they must retain some level of universality. A decolonial philosophical method must therefore walk a tightrope between local rootedness and universal applicability. We contend CD attempts to negotiate this tension by grounding itself not in a fixed set of procedures but in a particular sensibility or orientation.

Thus, CD is best understood as approaching philosophical inquiry with a heightened awareness of how much of our thinking is shaped-often invisibly-by the

cultural and linguistic contexts in which philosophical problems are framed. It is a sensibility that invites philosophers to scrutinise the extent to which philosophical analysis is conditioned by background cultural constructs, and to consider whether alternative conceptual resources might reconfigure or enrich that analysis. It is this interpretation of CD that we feel functions as the best philosophical decolonial method in the African context.

Conclusion

These methodological debates in African philosophy mirror, at a different register, the dynamics identified in the Latin American context. Just as the Latin American novel functions, in our analysis, as a medium through which decolonial thought negotiates inheritance, rupture, and creative reconstruction, so too does conceptual decolonisation operate in African philosophy as a response forged within the conditions of colonial aftermath. In both cases, decolonial work is not achieved by the recovery of an untouched origin, nor by epistemic severance alone, but by reflective engagement with, and an appropriate response to, inherited forms that have been rendered problematic by colonial history. This parallel underscores a shared insight across traditions: decolonisation in philosophy is less a matter of discovering a single authentic method than of cultivating practices capable of critically reworking the conceptual legacies of modernity from situated epistemic standpoints.

The comparative analysis developed across this chapter reveals that philosophical decolonisation in Latin America and Africa proceeds through distinct, though structurally analogous, methodological pathways. In both contexts, decolonial thought is shaped by the need to respond to colonial epistemic domination, yet the strategies through which this response is articulated diverge in form, emphasis, and philosophical temperament. These differences are not merely stylistic. They reflect deeper variations in how coloniality has structured intellectual life, disciplinary formation, and the relationship between philosophy and its surrounding cultural media.

In the Latin American context, as Bavaresco has shown [11] (Bavaresco in this volume), decolonial method frequently operates through cultural and literary media rather than through narrowly philosophical procedure. The novel, in particular, functions as a privileged site of decolonial intervention. It enables a reworking of history, subjectivity, and temporality that resists the linear narratives and epistemic hierarchies imposed by colonial modernity. Here, decoloniality is enacted not primarily through conceptual analysis but through narrative experimentation, aesthetic rupture, and the pluralisation of voices. The methodological force of the novel lies in its capacity to disclose worlds occluded by colonial epistemologies and to contest the epistemic authority of Eurocentric historiography.

By contrast, African philosophical decolonisation has tended to proceed through a slightly more explicit methodological reflection within philosophy itself. This concern is understandable given the historical trajectory of African

philosophy, which has had to defend its very status as philosophy in the face of colonial dismissal. As a result, questions of method: what counts as philosophical reasoning, what conceptual resources are legitimate, and how inherited categories should be evaluated, have assumed central importance. Within this African methodological landscape, conceptual decolonisation (CD) emerges as a paradigmatic response to colonial epistemic entanglement. CD does not seek epistemic rupture or exteriority in the strong sense advocated by some Latin American decolonial theorists. Nor does it appeal to literary or aesthetic media as primary vehicles of decolonial expression. Instead, it operates through philosophical repair: diagnosing the ways in which colonial languages, concepts, and assumptions have distorted African philosophical discourse, and reconstructing that discourse through critical engagement with indigenous conceptual resources. CD is thus reformist rather than revolutionary, analytic rather than narrative, and retrospective rather than speculative.

What emerges from this comparison is not a hierarchy of methods, but a plurality of decolonial strategies shaped by local intellectual histories. In Latin America, the novel becomes a methodological vehicle for decolonial imagination because philosophy alone is perceived as insufficiently responsive to colonial violence. In Africa, conceptual decolonisation becomes a methodological imperative because philosophy itself has been compromised by uncritical conceptual inheritance. Both strategies respond to coloniality, but they do so by exploiting different fault lines within modern knowledge production.

The juxtaposition of Latin American and African cases in this chapter points toward a more nuanced understanding of decolonial method. Decolonisation in philosophy is neither reducible to epistemic rupture nor exhausted by internal critique. It may take the form of narrative experimentation, conceptual repair, dialogical reconstruction, or some combination thereof. What unites these approaches is not a shared method, but a shared commitment to epistemic self-critique in the aftermath of colonial domination. Seen in this light, philosophical decolonial methods in Latin America and Africa reveal something about the conditions under which decolonial philosophy can be practised meaningfully. They suggest that the future of decolonial thought lies not in methodological purity, but in context-sensitive pluralism. In essence, this involves a willingness to deploy different epistemic tools where they are most responsive to the specific histories of colonial entanglement they are meant to address.

The trajectory traced here — from Latin American decolonial currents to the proposition of the anthropophagic method, with its application to the novel *Doña Bárbara* — finds, in Harris's (forthcoming) analysis of African philosophy, a fruitful counterpoint. If, in the Latin American context, the novel emerges as a privileged methodological vehicle for decolonial imagination, in Africa it is philosophical reflection on its own methods that assumes centrality. This difference, far from indicating incommensurability, reveals the richness of a methodologically conscious pluralism: philosophical decolonization does not

follow a single script but is woven into the specific fabrics of each history, each language, each colonial wound. Anthropophagic thought and Wiredu's conceptual decolonisation, each in their own way, teach us that to critically devour the colonial legacy is also, inevitably, to let oneself be devoured by it — and, in this difficult digestion, to produce a new thought, both rooted and universal [11; 8; 19].

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