Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist as a Site of Collaboration in the Postcoloniality/Decoloniality Debate

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Abstract: While novels like Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* are being analyzed with frameworks driven by Postcolonialism, my paper advocates a 'Decolonial' reading of the book to grasp its complexity fully. Discussing the novel with ideas from the domain of 'Decolonial Option', I argue that such postcolonial canonical texts as that of Hamid can become a site of collaboration between the apparently warring ideas of postcolonial versus decolonial. While scholars from both factions continue to differ and divulge (and sometimes accuse) each other of 'serving the master', my paper demonstrates that both postcolonial and decolonial lenses have similar thrusts of resisting the master's narrative, and both reach similar conclusions, albeit through different routes. Utilizing major critical ideas from the 'Decolonial Thought' and close reading of the plot, narrativization, and aesthetics of the novel, this paper concludes that we need to engage in studies that analyze literature canonized in postcolonial literature and putting it in conversation with decolonial thought, aiming to bring the two together as both share the 'political' and 'intellectual resistance' against colonialism and coloniality.

Keywords: Decoloniality, Coloniality, Postcolonial, Resistance, Collaboration.

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1. Introduction

The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007) by Mohsin Hamid is the narrative of an immigrant's initial seduction but later disillusionment with the 'American Dream'. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* narrates the story of a young Pakistani male, Changez, who is educated at Princeton and employed by a prestigious valuing firm, Underwood Samson, where he is 'trained' for the job. He meets Erica there, and with gradual experience of life and work in the United States, and triggered by the events of 9/11 and his encounter with Chilean Juan Batista, president of a publishing company, ultimately realizes the 'coloniality' of his situation. Changez returns to his homeland, Pakistan, starts lecturing at a university, and supports anti-American demonstrations, although insisting on non-violence. [1] are of the view that the title, the finale, and the storyline of Mohsin Hamid's novel express the duality and fragmentation, the in-betweenness or hybridity, and the borderland identity of its main character, whereas Nishat Haider's 'Globalization, US Imperialism and Fundamentalism: A Study of Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*' claims that "Hamid narrativizes postcolonial resistance and delinking through social, economic and power relations" [2]. These two and various other research

studies explore Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (TRF) as a postcolonial text with concepts, frameworks, critical ideas, and vocabulary associated with postcolonial theory and postcolonialism, including discussions of identity, trauma, Islamophobia, marginalization, mimicry, 9/11, and its aftermath for Muslims and the Muslim world, etc. The novel has been hailed as a postcolonial text, and almost all extant studies, including the few mentioned above, take a postcolonial lens to uncover various postcolonial situations in the novel. I will, however, argue that a 'decolonial' journey needs to be taken into the novel apart from its 'postcolonial' readings, and discuss meanings that a decolonial lens could evoke. My arguments will vividly present that a 'decolonial' reading is as convincing and feasible as a 'postcolonial' one.

2. Theoretical Framework

The endeavor to pursue a 'decolonial' reading of this famously 'postcolonial' text is based on several considerations. First, the apparent antagonism or opposition between postcolonialism and decoloniality, and some reconciliatory attempts that some scholars are attempting, tempted me to put the postcolonial and the decolonial 'options' together with the help of a 'postcolonial' text. Second, the consideration of the imperial foundations of English departments and the situation of alleged complicity postcolonial theory faces (as some scholars interpret that decolonial scholarships claim postcolonialism to be so) [3], it is vital to have another entry point into the stories and discussions of colonization, decolonization, and most importantly coloniality that literature presents. Third, given the critique of Latin American decolonial thought, it seems prudent to revise and review canonical texts of postcolonial literature and observe if they yield meanings different from those already deciphered by scholars and students using the postcolonial lens of inquiry. Fourth, decoloniality has been geographically limited mostly to the Americas and the Caribbean, whereas South Asia with other areas, has been considered as one of the places where postcolonialism holds sway. Mohsin Hamid has been in a similar diasporic situation, moving between the UK and Pakistan, and Changez in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (TRF) is a similar diasporic youth from Pakistan in the US, the heart of Western imperialism/coloniality. Analyzing this text with a decolonial lens, therefore, disrupts the geographical limitation of decolonial thought. Keeping in view the considerations and aims, my paper is organized thematically into three sections, apart from the introduction, which serves as the springboard for the discussions that follow. I will begin with a brief discussion of decoloniality and decolonial thought and the major 'contradistinctions' between decolonial and postcolonial thought. In the second section, I will first list the major concepts from decolonial thought useful for my study of

the novel and then present my analysis of the novel using decolonial theory. I will conclude my essay by advocating for reconciliation between the two with the platform afforded by analyses and studies akin to the one I have undertaken here.

2.1 Regional Approaches to De- and Postcoloniality

Decolonial studies "emerged as a university field a decade later" than postcolonial studies, "largely under the impulse of …scholars from Latin and South America" [4]. The major factor contributing to the proliferation and expansion of decolonial thought and decolonial studies in academia is the Modernity/Coloniality (MC) or Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality (MCD) project, which emerged out of the meetings of Subaltern Studies groups from Latin America and South Asia and their later disagreements and disintegration. Ramon Grosfoguel, one of the leading thinkers of the MC or MCD group, candidly states the reasons for the "split", as he calls it, in the Latin American Subaltern Studies group, that "they produced studies about the subaltern rather than studies with and from a subaltern perspective. Like the imperial epistemology of Area Studies, theory was still located in the North while the subjects to be studied were located in the South. This colonial epistemology was crucial to my dissatisfaction with the project" [5]. Elaborating further on the foundations of this 'colonial epistemology' and his dissatisfaction, Grosfoguel states that "they gave epistemic privilege to Foucault, Derrida, Gramsci and Guha" who are "Eurocentric thinkers" and "form part of the poststructuralist/postmodern Western canon" except "Guha who is a thinker thinking from the South" (Grosfoguel, 2010). Thus, he blames the Subaltern groups, or more broadly Postcolonial groups, as being complicit with what Quijano calls as the 'colonial matrix of power', or the colonial 'model of power' as Walsh puts it, "by privileging the Western thinkers as their central theoretical apparatus, …betray[ing] their goal to produce subaltern studies" (Grosfoguel, 2010). Hence, Grosfoguel calls for "the need to decolonize not only Subaltern studies but also postcolonial studies" (Grosfoguel, 2010). Based upon such and similar ideas, decolonial studies aim at exposing the 'coloniality' and 'colonial situations', which are "the cultural, political, sexual and economic oppression/exploitation of subordinate racialized/ethnic groups by dominant racial/ethnic groups with or without the existence of colonial administrations" (Grosfoguel, 2010). The idea that 'global coloniality' is not the same as 'global colonialism' has been reiterated by almost all decolonial thinkers. The 'global coloniality' or 'coloniality' is "living under the same 'colonial power matrix'" (Grosfoguel, 2010) which controls economy, authority, gender and sexuality, as well as knowledge and subjectivity. Apart from these scholars, the earlier thinkers of Decolonial thought, like Quijano and Mignolo, have written scores of

essays and books exposing the coloniality in the modernity of the Global North, and the grip of its matrix of power over the whole world, especially the Global South. I shall present their ideas briefly while analyzing the novel under scrutiny.

Considering the above and several other ideas and voices, decolonial thought seeks "a new understanding of modernity" which "distinguishes it from established theories of modernity" [6] Escobar sums up his ideas in his conclusion that first "the proper analytical unit for the analysis of modernity is modernity/coloniality in sum, there is no modernity without coloniality, with the latter being constitutive of the former" (Escobar, 2010), thus coloniality being the darker side of modernity as Mignolo envisions it. The second conclusion Escobar draws is that "a privileged epistemological and political space" is actually "the colonial difference", and that "the great majority of European theorists have been blind to the colonial difference and the subalternization of knowledge and cultures it entailed" (Escobar, 2010). These are the same European thinkers that Grosfoguel criticizes as 'Eurocentric thinkers' who are the theoretical apparatus of the postcolonial studies. Thus, with this realization and understanding of the symbiosis of coloniality and modernity, rather with the view that both of them are 'two sides of the same coin' decolonial thought views itself as "a consciousness whose roots derive from the lived experience of colonial histories and millenary struggles to confront the social, political, epistemic, racialized, and existential effects of these histories" and aims at "building of a collective sense of belonging, an unlearning of what the dominant society has inculcated and a relearning of past and present ancestral knowledge, a focus on the social, political, and epistemic work that needs to be done within" [7]. With a broader aim of decolonization in all spheres of life, decolonial thinkers believe that they "have yet to develop a new decolonial language to account for the complex processes of the modern/colonial world-system without relying on the old liberal language" (Grosfoguel, 2010).

Hence, we see that both de- and postcolonial thought have many things in common, although they have several differences as well. We can recognize the "shared political and intellectual horizon of postcolonial and decolonial perspectives" (Colpani et. al., 2022), which are "made necessary as a consequence of the depredations of colonialism" with "the possibility of a new geopolitics of knowledge" [8] Grosfoguel is also of the view that postcolonialism and decolonial thought share "a critique to developmentalism, to Eurocentric forms of knowledge, to gender inequalities, to racial hierarchies, and to the cultural/ideological processes that foster the subordination of the periphery in the capitalist world-system" (Grosfoguel, 2010). Mignolo and others also do not see a necessary

opposition or contradiction between the two thoughts, presenting the decolonial thought as an 'option' rather than a substitute or 'alternative' to postcolonial or any other thought. They even consider such elimination of options itself as a practice of coloniality, as I shall present in the discussion of the novel. To sum up, the majority of the decolonial thinkers consider the two fields as political and intellectual allies with the same or similar goals, albeit with different trajectories to reach that goal. Although they have several differences in their origin, genealogy of the thought that they follow, and their conception and critique of modernity, they are 'options within the same set' as Mignolo observes.

3. Discussion and Analysis: A Decolonial Reading of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

To facilitate a decolonial reading of the novel, I will borrow mostly from the founders of the decolonial theory, like Anibal Quijano, Walter Mignolo, along with other scholars like Dominguez and Saussy, and Catherine Walsh. Apart from the basic discussions of coloniality and decoloniality by these and other scholars, I shall bring into discussion ideas from other researchers who have added to the antagonism and reconciliation debate between the two theories. I shall be looking at specific concepts of coloniality and decoloniality, interculturality and multiculturalism, 'writing back' or 'talking back' in a decolonial view, the idea of being 'biographically' and 'geo-historically' located in the colonial matrix of power, the concept of 'consolidating', as well as the general ideas scattered within the ideas of the scholars. Utilizing such concepts, I will argue that TRF is a novel that exposes the coloniality operating in the strategy of fishing and 'sourcing' talented youth from the 'Third World' and brainwashing them in colonial modes of thinking; and training them in colonial ways of behavior. In exposing the coloniality and the colonial matrix of power, TRF aims at something akin to what the decolonial scholars have expressed as 'decoloniality'. The novel endeavors, like decolonial thought aims at, to expose the coloniality still prevalent in what the West, especially the United States, its academia, and job market might boast as interculturality, multiculturalism, inclusion, and diversity. This claim of inclusion and diversity is diffused by Walter Mignolo and Walsh, who explain it as 'functional interculturality', which functions for 'consolidating' the universalizing views and values of the colonial/imperial power (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018). Changez, the protagonist of the novel, becomes a prey to the coloniality of the United States, but later realizes his situation and returns to his home country, tries to initiate actions that pursue 'decolonization' and 'decoloniality'. We shall see that a 'decolonial' reading of the text is as valid as a 'postcolonial'

reading, arguing that both postcolonial and decolonial are not and need not be oppositional; they are complementary, and that they are 'options' rather than 'alternatives'.

Beginning with the formal features of the text, the first thing that jumps out at the reader is the unique second-person narration the novel is presented. The novel begins with "EXCUSE ME, SIR, but may I be of assistance? Ah, I see I have alarmed you" [9]. The stylistic choice of 'you' in narrating the novel, where Changez, the protagonist, talks to the 'stranger', has been considered "a long dramatic monologue" (Nishat Haider, 2012). Similarly, Ajeesh A. K. and S. Rukmini refer to the style as that of a monologue (Ajeesh A. K. and S. Rukmini, 2022). However, the choice of 'you' is very decolonial in its attempt to 'write back' or more aptly 'talk back' in this case, especially with the beginning three words in all capital letters, as if the 'colonized' was screaming back at the 'colonizer'. The fact that Changez is offering 'assistance' is also suggestive as well as ironic, possibly hinting towards the 'colonial situation' when the blood and sweat of the colonized were exploited by the colonizer with coercion, rather than with their permission. The use of second person narration by Changez addressing a 'stranger' who is an American, and "in fact… seem[s] to be on a mission" (Hamid, 2007) clearly presents the 'stranger' as an agent of empire, and the address as 'talking back' to that agent by someone who has seen and suffered the coloniality of the empire; and has actively tried to distance himself physically and mentally. Also powerful in dismantling racial hierarchies, another pillar of coloniality based on the color of the skin, Changez says to the 'stranger', "How did I know you were American? No, not by the color of your skin; we have a range of complexions in this country" (Hamid, 2007). Although postcolonial studies of the novel consider it a passive narration of the past by calling it a long monologue, it could easily be explained as an intentional act of 'talking back', an instance of active 'decolonization'.

The situation that Changez is rethinking his experience with the United States in talking to a possible agent of the States, it could also be interpreted in terms of revision of what happened in the past, like the impulse of revising and rewriting history from the point of view of the colonized; Changez in this case, as he says to the stranger "Looking back now, I see the power of that system, pragmatic and effective, like so much else in America" (Hamid, 2007). What is more powerful in this 'looking back', 'talking back' and 'rewriting' history or past is that here the agent of empire has no voice at all, and his reactions or responses are narrated and mediated through the protagonist Changez. We see that the stranger is denied any voice at all, even in the most mundane matters as choosing which tea to take and how much sugar to have: "Would you prefer regular tea, with milk and sugar, or green

tea, or perhaps their more fragrant specialty, Kashmiri tea? Excellent choice" (Hamid, 2007) and "How much sugar would you like? None? Very unusual, but I will not insist" (Hamid, 2007). To extend this analysis to postcoloniality and decoloniality, we could say that postcoloniality has become complacent and passive, or probably complicit, even in recognizing acts of active resistance, whereas decoloniality is active and 'looking back' and talking back at the same time.

Further, in the novel, when Changez goes with his colleagues from Underwood Samson to Chile for evaluation of a firm presided by a man, Juan Batista, he is shown his true face as a "modern-day janissary, a servant of American Empire" (Hamid, 2007) and thus a slave to the coloniality of American modernity. What Underwood Samson does with the youth of the world and how it uses them as slave warriors is the dark side of modernity; the bright side of modernity is the multiculturalism that is boasted for the inclusion of the whole world and the cosmopolitanism of the West [10]. The branding of hand-picked youth like Changez as janissaries is also very intriguing and purposeful, as it evokes the times of the foundations of Western Renaissance and modernity/coloniality as Quijano and Mignolo discuss: "Coloniality names the underlying logic of the foundation and unfolding of Western civilization from the Renaissance to today…" [11]. Hence, the scene not only refers to the coloniality of Changez's situation but also points towards the point of origin of it all, exposing at the same time the continuity and the folly of those who believe in a 'post' of coloniality.

The growing realization of the coloniality of his situation and role, Changez moves back to his homeland. The decision to 'delink', 'disengage', and disassociate himself physically is very important and 'decolonial' to decolonize the imaginary or the mind. This move by Changez that culminates in him lecturing at a university, "advocat[ing] disengagement of [his] country from [America]" (Hamid, 2007) and aiding anti-American protests is an attempt to achieve the epistemological decolonization Quijano speaks of in his "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality": "epistemological decolonization, as decoloniality, is needed to clear the way for new intercultural communication, for an interchange of experiences and meanings, as the basis of another rationality which may legitimately pretend to some universality" (Quijano, 2007).

Linked to decolonization and 'delinking' from the colonial matrix of power, Mignolo in *The Darker Side of Western Modernity Global Features Decolonial Options* discusses how the physical body's 'biographical' and 'geohistorical' location could cause the inability of the mind to question the coloniality of the matrix of power. Mignolo is of the view that the body, biographically and geo-

historically located in the colonial matrix of power, cannot have a mind that could question the coloniality and the colonial matrix of power [12]. This is very analogous to what happens in TRF, as Changez also moves out of that colonial matrix of power to decolonize himself and his country. In extension it could be said that decolonial thought also originated from outside the colonial matrix of power i.e., Latin America and the Caribbean, however postcolonial thought is perpetuated by those that sit with and sit in the center of the colonial matrix of power body-wise, biographically and geo-historically, and that is a great marker of their complacence and/or complicity in the coloniality/modernity discourse. One could argue that most of the decolonial scholars, including Mignolo himself, were and are physically located in the West. That would be true indeed; however, Mignolo is highly conscious of the fact, and he does point to that himself, that 'this is a professor at Duke University, writing in a book published by Duke University Press' and talking of the biographic and geohistorical location of the body and its effect on mind (Mignolo, 2011). Even though many may not agree with what Mignolo is hinting here, Changez in TRF does what Mignolo's discussion of biographical and geohistorical location evokes.

The novel also exposes the irony of the multiculturalism, inclusiveness, and diversity campaign and paradigm that the West and Western academia, especially American academia, and the job market boast of. Decolonial scholars call it 'functional interculturality', which is the pretension of 'interculturality', but it is nothing more than 'pacification' till 'consolidation'. Multiculturalism seeks to pacify all resistance and rebellious attitudes and movements till all such movements die down and till all 'other' or divergent modes of behavior and thinking are eliminated. This elimination of 'options' has been termed as 'consolidation' by Mignolo in his book *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Features Decolonial Options*. He is of the view that consolidating makes control easier. The way US 'sources' youth from all over the world into its academia and job market, via seduction as "students like [Changez who are] given visas and scholarship, and complete financial aid… and invited into [their] ranks…" (Hamid, 2007) and promise to the power [13] and how such youth is 'trained' at Underwood Samson that Changez and all other 'trainees' seem "virtually indistinguishable" (Hamid, 2007) is a clear referral to the 'consolidation' in the name of multiculturalism and interculturality. This consolidation is aptly described by Mignolo as, "Consolidating (that is, eliminating options to maintain control, which has been obvious in the neo-liberal doctrine …) would be a modern/colonial objective and desire, not a decolonial one" (Mignolo, 2011). This consolidating is the real face of all that hubbub of multiculturalism, with its apparent

appeal of acceptance of diversity; harboring deep inside the "neo-liberal agenda" of 'eliminating difference/options' to make everyone as one. In TRF, Changez and others seem to be 'consolidated' into one form where they all look the same, bathing in the splendor and charm of modernity and modern affluence, but are nothing more than 'consolidated' slaves, indistinguishable, with differences eliminated. One hidden agenda in this consolidation appears to be 'control': when everyone is the same, control is easier, or rather, control no longer remains necessary (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018). This is what the seduction and cooptation are aimed at, as Quijano, Mignolo, and Walsh elaborate, and as Changez realizes (Mignolo, 2011). TRF presents this inclusiveness and multiculturalism to be a mere mask worn by America during its peace times. As soon as the tragedy of 9/11 happened, Changez felt that a different America had awoken, with its racism and religious intolerance tearing apart the mask of multiculturalism into pieces. This is exemplified by the harassment he faces at his job and out in the public after 9/11. Changez's relationship with Erica also points to similar meanings: Erica echoes America, and Erica's obsession with her dead boyfriend Chris echoes America's obsession with Christianity, a very subtle hint at the religious origins of coloniality. We see that no matter what and however Changez tries to win Erica's heart, she never gives in completely, although she befriends him and even goes to the extent of having sexual intercourse with him. She, like America, never 'delinks' herself from her former associations. Despite all the 'consolidation' and 'multiculturality' aimed at 'assimilation' of Changez, Erica and America would never love him as she loved Chris and as America loved/loves one of its own.

The company Changez works at, Underwood Samson, turns out to be not only a part of but also a symbol of America and the whole imperial system, which, since the times of Industrial Revolution till now, considers human life and life in general dispensable or expendable in the favor of its own agendas, as Changez rethinks that "we were taught to recognize another person's style of thought, harness their agenda, and redirect it to achieve our desired outcome" (Hamid, 2007). The name of the company, 'Samson' itself, points towards 'Uncle Sam', which America is often personified as. The primary business of Underwood Samson of valuation of firms and deciding their fate on the expertise and statistical data of its agents clearly shows the dispensability of human life and of life in general for the empire (Mignolo, 2011) and sits well with the fact that Juan Batista (the president of the Chilean firm Changez and his colleagues go to valuate) calls Changez a slave/borrowed warrior (a janissary) who slays lives and people as a slave/agent of the empire. Even the 'sourcing' of such warriors, their training, and their use is a gruesome example of considering human lives as raw

objects and fashioning them into products of the empire's own choosing and use, as Changez voices that him and others were sourced so that they could "contribute [their] talents to [America's] society" (Hamid, 2007).

Moving on with the discussion, we could look at how Quijano's idea of 'colonial matrix of power' seems to be operative in the novel. Elaborating Quijano's concept of the colonial matrix of power, Mignolo says that "[i]n its original formulation by Quijano, the "patron colonial de poder" (colonial matrix of power) was described as four interrelated domains: control of the economy, of authority, of gender and sexuality, and of knowledge and subjectivity" (Mignolo, 2011). This is exactly what the novel presents: the Underwood Samson exercises authority and control over smaller firms in its valuation, and the decision of fate and future of such firms and the people involved in it, purely on statistical data and speculations carried out by its agents. Also, the gender and sexuality and knowledge and subjectivity of its agents, like Changez, are not only controlled but created by training them in Western ways of thinking, behaving, and feeling. They are trained to work, talk, eat, dress, and behave in American or Western ways to assimilate them, root out their uniqueness, and native ways of thinking, working, and doing, and imitate the imparted values as the universal ones. This could be seen where Changez and his colleagues are having an after-work party when it strikes him that:

We were marvelously diverse ... and yet we were not: all of us, Sherman included, hailed from the same elite universities—Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, Yale; we all exuded a sense of confident self-satisfaction; and not one of us was either short or overweight. It struck me then—no, I must be honest, it strikes me now—that shorn of hair and dressed in battle fatigues, we would have been virtually indistinguishable. (Hamid, 2007)

At this moment in the novel, another colleague of Changez, who seems to have read his mind, responds, "Beware the dark side…" (Hamid, 2007), which is again a very evocative gesture, pointing, at a literal level, to the 'darker side of modernity'.

Quijano voices similar views when he explains how 'cultural Europeanisation' was achieved:

The colonizers also imposed a mystified image of their own patterns of producing knowledge and meaning. At first, they placed these patterns far out of reach of the dominated. Later, they taught them partially and selectively, to co-opt some of the dominated into their own power institutions. Then, European culture was made seductive: it gave access to power. After all, beyond repression, the main

instrument of all power is its seduction. Cultural Europeanisation was transformed into an aspiration. It was a way of participating and later to reach the same material [14].

We see the same course of action being taken by Underwood Samson, and America, in mystifying, seducing, co-opting, and Europeanizing or Americanizing Changez and youth like him. Quijano also refers to the 'partial' and 'selective way' the empire co-opts the colonized, exactly how Changez describes America, American academia, and the job market selectively co-opted him and others. Thus Changez, while in the lobby of the Underwood Samson thinks that "while I had previously flown in airplanes and visited the Himalayas, nothing had prepared me for the drama, the power of the view from their lobby" (Hamid, 2007), similar to what Grosfoguel terms as "Western man 'point zero' god-eye view" (Grosfoguel, 2010). He has been co-opted by the empire, and he knows the 'power' and the 'power of view' this co-optation offers.

4. Conclusion

Thus, we see that a 'decolonial' reading of the novel is very much possible and feasible, evoking several newer meanings; those previously glossed over by the 'postcolonial' readings of the novel due to reading it solely via a postcolonial lens. However, in presenting a decolonial reading of the novel, my purpose is not to contradict, oppose, or antagonize with either postcolonial readings of the text or postcolonial concepts, as several studies try to put the two thoughts in competition, Colpani, Gianmaria. I would rather attempt to reconcile the two as Bhambra and other scholars have been trying to. In fact, as several scholars and researchers have pointed out, decolonial thought and postcolonial thought share many things, although they differ in their geography of origin and genealogy of the ideas they draw on (Bhambra, Mignolo, Colpani, Gianmaria). Many scholars view such differences as signs of opposition between the two; however, the major proponents of decoloniality themselves say the opposite, for example, Mignolo says that "I do not see decoloniality and postcoloniality campaigning for election to win the voting competition that decides which is the best, but as complementary trajectories with similar goals of social transformation. Both projects strive to unveil colonial strategies promoting the reproduction of subjects whose aims, and goals are to control and possess" (Mignolo, 2011). Further in the same vein he says that "postcoloniality and decoloniality are two different options within the same set" (Mignolo, 2011). He further states that "it is an option claiming its legitimacy among existing academic projects, such as postcoloniality, ethnic studies, gender studies, the social sciences and the humanities, and the professional schools" (Mignolo, 2011) in the same way decolonial thought claims the legitimacy of 'other' epistemologies,

ontologies, world views, and knowledges. Thus, Mignolo, more than any other decolonial scholar, seems not to oppose or reject postcolonial thought at all, but rather presents it as an 'option within the same set'. The most interesting thing that Mignolo states, and which probably has been either not read or misread by many, is that "To argue for one or the other also would be a modern/colonial way of framing the issue. That is, the bend toward eliminating options…" (Mignolo, 2011). The implications of this statement do not only encompass those within postcoloniality who might ignore or reject decoloniality, but also those within decolonial thought who oppose postcolonial thought and champion decoloniality as the only viable answer to coloniality and the colonial situation. Mignolo here considers all such ideas and scholars as complicit in the 'colonial way' of looking at matters, suggesting that we should consider both 'decolonial' and 'postcolonial' as options, rather than 'alternatives' or 'opposites', and not try to validate or invalidate one in opposition to the other. Thus, we conclude, in communion with the conclusion drawn by Gurminder K Bhambra, "Postcolonialism and decoloniality are only made necessary as a consequence of the depredations of colonialism, but in their intellectual resistance to associated forms of epistemological dominance they offer more than simple opposition. They offer… the possibility of a new geopolitics of knowledge" (Bhambra, 2014). Thus, we need to engage in studies that analyze literature canonized in postcolonial literature and putting it in conversation with decolonial thought, aiming to bring the two together as both share the 'political' and 'intellectual resistance' against colonialism and coloniality, "the need to epistemologically transcend, decolonize the Western canon and epistemology" (Grosfoguel, 2010) and 'offer the possibility of a new geopolitics of knowledge', avoiding 'eliminating options'.

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