



INTRODUCTION HIGHER EDUCATION AS A SPACE OF (DE)COLONIZATION TRANSFORMATIONS

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The claim that education is an important sphere of implementation of colonial policy was formulated quite a long time ago, in the works of the founders of the anti-colonial research discourse. In particular, Frantz Fanon, in his first book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), states that communication of his white contemporaries with educated people of color activates racist “archetypes” that are destructive for both of these groups. He characterizes education as a social institution that deforms the identity of colonized peoples, since, as a result of education, “the young Negro subjectively adopts a white man’s attitude” (Fanon 1986: 147). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in the essay “Can the subaltern speak?” (1988), considers education, along with law, as one of the leading social institutions that becomes a source of so-called “epistemic violence” of the colonizer against the subaltern in colonized and postcolonial countries (Spivak 2015). Edward W. Said in his work “Culture and Imperialism” (1993) considers British education in India as part of the system of persuasive means of colonial power, which deceptively convinces the colonized that they are related to the colonizer by their identity. Moreover, the influence of these persuasive means on the indigenous population is much more effective than direct domination and physical force (Said 1994: 109). The importance of education in the past colonization processes is an irrefutable thesis of anti-colonial

studies, as well as the idea of the importance of decolonizing education in order to overcome destructive impacts of the past on the descendants of former colonizers and colonized.

Initiated in the middle of the 20th century, decolonial studies undergo gradual transformations in accordance with the sociocultural and – in general – epistemic changes of modern times. In particular, the gradual transfer of decolonization foci in education from jurisprudence and economic sciences to the realm of humanities is widely recognized (see, for example, Prinsloo 2016; Sanchez 2018). Tamara Hundorova postulates such a feature of up-to-date decolonial studies as a tendency to differentiate content of the concepts and experiences that were considered universal in the previous discourse: “Therefore, the development of modern post(de)colonial studies leads to the denial of the universality of the concepts “empire”, “imperialism”, “colony”, “colonialism” and to the search for variants of these phenomena and processes” (Гундорова 2024).

Among the main “sore spots” that should be discussed more broadly in the context of decolonization of higher education curricula still remain history, memory, language (Wa Thiong’o 1988), and, more broadly, the very position of stratifying the community into unequal groups, about which Nina Asher asks: “Why and how do such curricula of ‘us’ and ‘them’ endure?” (Asher 2009: 393).

Nowadays, the concept of decolonization in higher education encompasses a rather broad and variegated set of “diverse efforts to resist the distinct but intertwined processes of colonization and racialization, to enact transformation and redress in reference to the historical and ongoing effects of these processes, and to create and keep alive modes of knowing, being, and relating that these processes seek to eradicate” (Stein, Andreotti 2016: 1).

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