



HALF-HUMAN: THE BASTARDISATION OF SCIENCE VIA STANDARDISATION

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To understand the 'modern' human, one must comprehend that it does not exist without context and, even more importantly, without history. The human of today, often examined in isolation or a vacuum, forgets that it is not just a consumer of reality but the product of a society in which it constructs and deconstructs itself. Therefore, it becomes an integral nucleus in the atomic process of meaning-making. The title of this essay, however, is inspired by Frantz Fanon's concept of being "half-human," which offers a lens through which we can understand the phenomena of objectification and standardisation as regulatory methods resulting from colonialism and racism (Fanon, 1952). This human is neither fully human, nor animal and so it suffers a tragic fate. The fate of his father and his father's father. The colonised human can never become whole, but neither can it disappear, as its very endurance is what defines that of the coloniser, and so, it persists. It exists as a mirror, or perhaps even a shadow, of the oppressor. It does not reflect but refracts the image of grandiosity and power, an illusion that sustains the dominance of the coloniser even in their physical absence.

In colonial contexts, objectification is a tool used by the coloniser to dehumanise and subjugate the colonised. The coloniser reduces the colonised individuals and communities to mere objects or commodities, stripping them of their agency, dignity, and humanity. They are no longer the Subject of their lives but rather objects 'discovered' and examined at the hands of the Coloniser. Their discovery is named and categorised, understood and interpreted. They are then no less than bodies in the morgue, dissected and naked, reduced to dismembered organs. The present human is still entranced into that position. Their coloniality captivates them in the romantic notions of the Western and the White. This eventual self-directed objectification, though, is part of a broader strategy of domination and control, wherein the colonised are denied subjectivity and relegated to subordination. Fanon's concept of being 'half-human' dismantles the components of this dehumanising

process, wherein the colonised are made to feel less than fully human, leading to internalised feelings of inferiority and self-hatred.

Fanon's theorisation of being 'half-human' refers to how the colonised people are evaluated based on the coloniser's criteria of humanity, causing them to feel disconnected and alienated from their own identity and culture. This type of standardisation acts as a regulatory weapon in colonial power structures by upholding norms and hierarchies that favour specific groups and exclude others. It involves the erasure of ancestral knowledges, indigenous cultures, and ways of being, as well as the imposition of uniformity and homogeneity. The field of research at large is responsible for the occupation of the storytelling of such people. Academic extortionists scavenge for narratives which they quantify, analyse and interpret, often reducing their meanings to translations and codifications of experiences into measures of statistics. These measures create generalisations and norms against which a group is ranked and diagnosed as either normal or abnormal. The objectification of science refers to this particular reduction of knowledge, individuals, and communities to mere objects, numbers or commodities within the academic realms. This process often involves the prioritisation of certain forms of knowledge and ways of knowing, while marginalising or disregarding others, perpetuating hierarchical structures and power imbalances. It encompasses practices such as the commodification of research, the exploitation of marginalised communities for knowledge extraction, and the erasure of diverse perspectives within academic disciplines.

The historical roots of objectification in science and academia can be traced back to the colonial period, where Eurocentric notions of knowledge and superiority were imposed upon colonised peoples (Smith, 2012). During this time, Western scientific paradigms were used to justify colonial expansion, exploitation, and domination, leading to the marginalisation and erasure

of indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing (Mignolo, 2011).

Colonialism's influence on the objectification of knowledge is profound. It established orders of knowledge production, where Western scientific methodologies and perspectives were privileged over indigenous and non-Western epistemologies (Quijano, 2007). This epistemic violence positions such communities as passive subjects of study rather than active participants in the construction of knowledge systems (Smith, 2013). The implications of this result in the hijacking of epistemologies, producing narratives which are rendered and reduced to colonial languages and allocated meanings which are understood only within its confined infrastructures.

Objectification manifests in various ways within scientific research and academic practices reinforcing colonial legacies. For example, the colonial gaze, deeply embedded in the dynamics of colonial power, functions as a framework through which the coloniser observes and interprets the colonised. It represents a mode of perception characterised by the fetishisation and exoticisation of indigenous cultures and peoples. Rooted in edifices of superiority, the colonial gaze positions the coloniser as the authoritative observer and interpreter of knowledge. This gaze distorts the lived realities of the colonised while legitimising and perpetuating colonial violence and exploitation. It reinforces hierarchical structures based on race, gender, and class, thereby preserving systems of despotism and coercion. The enduring influence of the colonial gaze persists in contemporary discernments and representations of formerly colonised populations, accentuating the lasting impact of colonialism on our understanding of identity, culture, and power (Smith, 2012).

Decolonial analyses serve to interrogate the entrenched Eurocentric and patriarchal underpinnings inherent within scientific and academic frameworks, laying bare their complicity in perpetuating continuing colonial legacies and deeply entrenched power hierarchies (Grosfoguel, 2007). Objectification, a central facet within this discourse, operates to imprint stereotypes by confining individuals and communities within narrow and often distorted representations, thereby relegating them to oversimplified archetypes (Connell, 2007). Particularly discernible within the domain of psychology, objectification materialises through the reduction of individuals to diagnostic categories or statistical measures, thus disregarding and diminishing the intricate tapestry of human experiences and attributes (Crenshaw, 1989). This process inadvertently serves to fortify persisting stereotypes and prejudices associated with marginalised groups, consequently exacerbating societal stigmatisation (Sue et al., 2007).

In addition to objectifying individuals and communities, there's a trend towards treating human emotions as inconsequential in scientific pursuits. Scientific rigour often demands researchers to strip their work of emotional influence, aiming for a sterile, emotionless approach to research.

This quest for objectivity requires researchers to divorce themselves from their personal feelings, ensuring that their work is solely based on quantifiable data and measurable variables. However, by sidelining emotions in this way, we risk overlooking an essential aspect of human experience.

In conclusion, contemplating the ramifications of standardisation within the realms of science and academia, we are confronted with the sobering reality that our understanding of the 'modern' human is intricately entwined with colonial heritages. As we navigate the complexities of objectification and standardisation, we must heed the call for a paradigm shift—one that embraces the plurality of knowledges and dismantles the hegemonic structures that perpetuate colonial violence. Decolonial analyses offer a path towards liberation, challenging the Eurocentric and patriarchal foundations of scientific inquiry and fostering a more inclusive and equitable epistemological landscape. By embracing a decolonial framework, we can transcend the boundaries of coloniality and forge new pathways towards epistemic justice. This necessitates a radical reimagining of our research practices, one that acknowledges the inherent interconnectedness of knowledge creation and human experience. The expedition towards decolonising science is fraught with challenges, yet it also holds the promise of profound transformation.

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