

Occupy the classroom radically

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Abstract

Around the globe calls are being made to decolonise curricula and the university. Teachers in westernised universities, who are educated and socialised in the Global North, face challenges in recognising where and how western epistemologies and ways of being produce the coloniality of knowledge and the coloniality of being in the classroom. Teachers are also challenged to develop decolonial teaching practices. This paper provides an analysis of how western epistemologies and pedagogical practices structure and inflict wounds on historically marginalised students. Linkages are revealed between what happens in the classroom and resulting knowledge society has of itself. In order to transform the dehumanising effects of coloniality in the westernised university and classroom, an argument is made for the decolonisation of teaching and learning practices. The creation of decolonial atmospheres in the classroom is proposed as a prerequisite for creating the necessary conditions for students to experience a decolonised education.

Keywords: Critical pedagogy decolonising the curricula decolonial atmospheres ethico-onto-epistemology

Empire's most powerful apparatus is the education system. It initiates us into a culture and knowledge system that instructs us to want to be of a specific ethnoclass of humanity.

Sylvia Wynter (in Rodriguez 2018, 831)

Practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated. We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world.

Karen Barad (2007, 185)

I came into this world anxious to uncover the meaning of things, my soul desirous to be at the origin of the world, and here I am an object among other objects.

Frantz Fanon (2008, 29)

People are turning up to learn bringing with them questions.¹ 'Strong questions' (De Sousa Santos 2011) for which the westernised university – the university built on EuroAmerican principles (Grosfoguel 2013) – will have no answer. The academy will have no answer to questions such as: *given that capitalism is antithetical to well-being, what kind of political economy can we invent? And, how do we understand the sudden awakening to racism, in 2020, in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd?* The scientific method – the gold standard for answering questions that our students are inducted into – will be unable to address these and other existential questions that are at once personal, social, cultural, political, economic, historic, psychological, ontological and epistemic.

People are also turning up to learn bringing with them their life experiences, including uneven experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, people's realities and questions pose for us a strong pedagogical question: *what does this historic moment ask of us as teachers?*

Occupy the classroom radically

As I prepare to return to the classroom, I am paying attention to the need to occupy the classroom radically. Classrooms that mirror existing social structures and relationships are burial grounds for the

mind. They sink the imagination before it is able to float alongside theory and praxes. Not only do they entomb the birthing of connections students are able to make between knowledge of their social worlds and concepts that might aid them understanding their worlds more deeply, but they bury the possibility for humanness to emerge between us.

Classrooms must have something precious, alive and dynamising about them. Teachers and students – people – must feel in awe of the events that take place in them. Increases in understanding occur because of the movement, the motion, between ideas inserted into the room, circulating between people, who themselves embody thoughts, affects and acts. This is the soil in which ‘emancipatory thought can flourish’ (Rosemont 1976, 24).

We must therefore occupy the classroom not as agents of stale ideas, out of touch with reality, but as hosts for the development of students’ subjectivities. If students do not receive the signal that the classroom is a theatre for them to enact questioning, grappling, critiquing and dialoguing, then we are aligning ourselves with the death and decay that marks the ‘plantation university’² (Bell 2018).

Resisting hyper-digitalisation

The second (related) thing this historic moment asks is that we figure out ways to be as analogue as possible about teaching in these hyper-digital times. Because we know that liberatory teaching and radical learning lean on human-to-human, preferably face-to-actual-face relationality and not social distance which encourages social alienation, how can we resist hyper-digitalisation? Can we humanise digital teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond? Post COVID-19 lockdown measures, necessary for public health reasons, will we resist the emerging neoliberal justifications for increasing highly profitable hyper-digital modes of teaching?

One of my teaching mentors, Professor Steve Volk³ (personal communication, 2014), taught me early on that there are reasons why, in order to learn, we come together in a classroom. Listening to anesthetising lectures is not one of them. I took from what Steve said, and what I know to be true, that learning is a social experience. We learn from others and in the presence of others. We learn in dialogue with each other.

Those of us for whom teacher–student and student–student relationships are central know that how relationality is experienced by people engaged in the praxis of learning tilts us in the direction of opening, or closing – opening towards each other and towards learning, or closing against each other and against learning.

Ontologic closure and epistemic foreclosure

Classrooms that open towards the rehumanisation of social relations are not high on intersubjectivity

and are low on intellectual rigour. Nor are they a contributor to the neoliberal project of deintellectualisation of the academy. Classrooms, openly occupied, are a repair to the ‘Cartesian cut’ (Barad 2003), the wound inflicted by western epistemologies that sever the connection between being and knowing.

In westernised university classrooms that teach only from the EuroAmerican canon, historically marginalised students and teachers experience the Cartesian cut (Barad 2003) because, as Fanon (2008) shows us, colonial epistemologies produce racialised/ethnicised/classed/gendered objects by constructing humans categorically. We see this clearly when hierarchised social identity constructions of, for example, ‘Black’, ‘working class’, ‘female’, ‘disabled’ replace our status as whole human beings in the classroom. In EuroAmerican epistemologies, social identity markers are used to cut inferiorised people out of the category of human. Having been cut out of being thought to be fully human, historically marginalised people’s epistemologies and ontologies are erased from the canon and therefore from taught knowledge. Through this process western epistemologies sever the connection between being human and being known, categorically, as human in the world. Unless we decolonise the classroom, historically marginalised people, objectified by colonial epistemologies, will continue to be wounded by descriptions of insufficiency and inadequacy that colonial epistemologies produce.

Classrooms that cut produce ontologic closure and epistemologic foreclosure. They bar first-person knowledge of colonially produced social realities from entering into the westernised university. Western epistemologies cut social realities off from inquiry through narrow definitions of data, validity and replicability. They block interrogation not only of experiences of coloniality – the ongoing web of hegemonic ideologies, social power relations, ordering practices and ways of being that govern the social world – but linkages between colonial structures that construct our existence. When, for example, researchers from the Global South apply for ethical approval to conduct inquiry into academic inequalities within the westernised university from a structural and systemic perspective, their applications are approved only after their questions have been whitened. Questions are whitened when inquiry is reduced in scope, when strong questions are weakened. When inquiry is narrowed to descriptive experience rather than structural and systemic analysis, scope has been restricted. Limiting scope ensures that possibilities for decolonial epistemologies to contribute to the canon fade. Knowledge of linkages between the colonial structuring of epistemology and ontology are further blocked when university management censor publication of critical pedagogical research that takes place on their campuses, in peer review journals. Colonial epistemologies therefore thwart the future which is the transformation of colonial ontologic and epistemic obstruction.

Teaching and learning that separates existence (ontology) from consciousness of existence (knowledge) prohibits questioning through which the world comes to know and understand itself. Separating ontology and epistemology creates the illusion, the false sense, that our being is divorced from our knowing – that our ways of being in the world are detached from our ways of knowing the world.

We know that epistemology shapes ontology (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2021). And we know that without knowledge of the world as it is experienced by those who live it, on our own terms, people are deprived of possibilities for understanding lived experience. During a class on collective trauma, taught from a critical perspective, a student shared that they were being treated for clinical depression in the western medical model tradition, with moderate success. When they encountered Kai Erikson's critical theory on collective trauma, defined as a 'blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality' (1976, 154) they began to understand their sense of hopelessness and despair in a new way. Being exposed to critical epistemology opened up new understandings of the relationship between the self and the world in which that self experiences itself.

We also know that ontology informs epistemology. Calls to decolonise the university, to open up knowledge, to create the conditions for 'epistemic freedom' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2021, 886) are driven not by the powerful elite but by historically marginalised people whose experience of being oppressed drives us⁴ to study critical thought and praxes as decolonial hermeneutic resources. Ontology and epistemology are incontrovertibly implicated in the struggle for decoloniality.

Cartesian cutting in the EuroAmerican classroom

Under EuroAmerican epistemologies the status of historically marginalised people, as full human beings, is barred entry in the classroom. We are excluded from being seen and experienced as fully human (Wynter 1999; Fanon 2008). Our knowledges, including the theories and processes through which we come to know – therefore our epistemologies – are replaced by first-person experiences of invisibility and dehumanisation (Wynter 2003, Maldonado-Torres 2007).

When we teach the EuroAmerican canon uncritically and monoculturally, we invisibilise the majority of the world because the EuroAmerican canon is from the point of view of itself, despite its effort to position itself as universal. We erase the thinking, priorities, values and ways of being of the numerical majority of the world's people. In effect, we 'desocialise' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2021) the majority world. By unteaching and supplanting Global South onto-epistemologies with those of the Global North we demobilise self-knowledge. We disorder knowing and being through a process of 'intellectual alienation' (Ndille 2021, 1044). In sum, we cancel the majority world's epistemologies and ontologies.

When we teach the EuroAmerican canon via the banking model of education that Freire (2017) shows us leaves no room for students to bring themselves, their realities and knowledges – their ontological and epistemological existences – into the classroom, assessments and projects, we erase who they are and the facticity of the nature of their existence, experiences and knowledges.

When EuroAmerican classroom culture makes no room to engage in the reality of coloniality, when it delegitimises students' and teachers' experiences and knowledge of it, historically marginalised people,

in order to remain in the university, grow silent (Alexander 2005). We disable knowing. We do this by cutting ourselves off from our knowledge of the world in which we live. In an effort to present ourselves as knowable in the western epistemological framework, we silence our subjectivity. But self-silencing is painful. As a form of onto-epistemic closure it is a self-in-the-social inflicted wound, an internalisation of the Cartesian cut (Barad 2003). To heal from this majority world people go outside of the westernised university to learn who we are. Historically marginalised communities have a long tradition of creating extra lessons, 'Saturday Schools' for example, to teach youth non-Eurocentric onto-epistemologies. But why should historically marginalised people make up for the omissions of allegedly universal EuroAmerican onto-epistemologies in westernised classrooms?

Some teachers have refined ways of Cartesian cutting by perpetuating ontologic and epistemic destruction. This is done when we permit students to address the worlds in which they live in their assessments and projects but then find ways to penalise them, mark them down, for not meeting the standards of excellence set by the westernised university's monocultural framework for assessing knowledge. There are numerous examples and lived experiences of this in the way teachers use marking criteria to bludgeon people's work. When teachers mark down historically marginalised students' work in which there are an 'insufficient'⁵ number of EuroAmerican references this penalises referencing thinkers from the Global South. Supervisors of students' research projects perform ontologic closure and epistemic foreclosure when they give students no or inadequate supervision to thicken their projects. 'This is not my area' is an often heard refrain when teachers are asked why they have denied historically marginalised students adequate supervision.

So, how can we cease to engage in the practice of cutting down human beings in the classroom?

Resuturing the ethico-onto-epistemic incision in the classroom

Because being human is experienced through knowing ourselves in a relational world of beings, we know that ontology and epistemology belong to each other. By creating the term ethico-onto-epistemology, Barad (2007) recognises the inseparability between relationality, knowing and being. Conceptually, ethico-onto-epistemology allows us to resuture being and knowing through relations. As a decolonial principle, ethico-onto-epistemology creates the conditions for putting being and knowing back together again, in the classroom. Radical occupation of the classroom can support the decolonisation of the ethico-onto-epistemic cut as we come to be and know ourselves more wholly in the presence of others.

To move towards creating the conditions for resuturing the ethico-onto-epistemic wound in the classroom we need to acknowledge that the teaching and learning experience is not neutral. It is either an encounter with coloniality or it is an embrace of decoloniality. In the classroom, we are either using a technology of coloniality (reifying EuroAmerican onto-epistemologies, holding them up as the

pinnacle of what is known and acceptable) or we are enacting pedagogical love.

When we fill the learning experience solely with the EuroAmerican canon – a body of thought that history confirms is rooted in the world of colonialism (historically and ideologically) – we are sustaining a colonial atmosphere in the classroom. We are bringing the weight of racism, classism, ethnocentrism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, ableism, ageism etc., into the teaching and learning encounter. We are aligning ourselves and our teaching with racialised, gendered, classed hierarchies. Ndille (2021) shows us that concealed within colonial education is a hidden curriculum intent on perpetuating cultural imperialism. By omitting majority world knowledges from the classroom, EuroAmerican epistemologies deny students – all students – the opportunity to learn from the universe of knowledge humans have created. This is why, as a first step, it is so important for us to identify bodies of thought that expand the theoretical basis of our subject area so that the EuroAmerican canon is joined⁶ by other canons we expose students to.

This is why it is important to increase the modes of inquiry we teach students, so that they are armed with multiple epistemological frameworks for seeking answers to the strong questions they bring. For example, in liberation psychology classes I teach students are introduced to participatory action research as a decolonial methodology. Learning to engage in potentially socially transformative inquiry liberates students in multiple ways. As they become unshackled from lab-based empiricism they begin to pose their strong questions through their research projects in service of the numerical majority of the world's peoples. Because the tradition of participatory action research is based on the onto-epistemic principle of the inseparability between knowing and being, students experience inquiry not simply as a knowledge production exercise but as a mode of being and healing from the onslaught of the Cartesian cut (Barad 2003). Fals-Borda teaches us that participatory methodologies are processes through which 'reliable knowledge upon which to construct power for the poor and exploited groups' (1987, 33) is created. Participatory methodologies synthesise knowledge and understanding majority world people have that is habitually excluded from the canon but which, when engaged with, can advance decoloniality.

These two moves – expanding the canon and expanding research methods – are basics, prerequisites for pedagogical restructuring and beginning to teach decolonially. But to respond more fully to the colonial encounter – the colonial atmosphere that is almost everywhere in the Global North and in many spaces in the Global South – we have to, in the classroom, actively repair the damage wrought by colonising the presence of historically marginalised human beings in the moment of teaching itself, in the room. This calls for educational justice, a form of pedagogical love.

By remaking human-to-human, horizontal and intersubjective relations with people who are our students we can begin to undo multiple forms of coloniality including the coloniality of knowledge – the universalisation of EuroAmerican knowledge (Quijano 2000), the coloniality of power – the

exploitation and domination of historically marginalised people (Quijano 2007) and the coloniality of being – the lived experience of oppression (Maldonado-Torres 2007) in the classroom.

Opening towards being *and* knowing

Radical occupation of the classroom is a reparative act. As a pedagogical praxis it holds the potential for decolonising the colonialities of knowledge, power and being – EuroAmerican onto-epistemologies – within the halls of the westernised university itself. It is, profoundly, an ethical imperative of decolonial education.

Radically occupied classrooms are marked by subjectivities in revolt – teachers’ and students’. They exalt the human in relation to other humans in the ethico-onto-epistemic encounter. They implicate the teacher–student relationship in the struggle for epistemic freedom.

Our pedagogical philosophy is derived from our ethico-onto-epistemic position in the world. It shapes our teaching praxis and moulds classroom ethics. My teaching philosophy, shared below, informs the ideas that follow it in the section titled ‘The teacher’s tasks’.

A Statement of Teaching Philosophy (Deanne Bell)

On the first day of Psychologies of Liberation class in graduate school at Pacifica Graduate Institute, I witnessed Professor Mary Watkins describe Martinican psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon’s awareness of his experience as, first, a Frenchman in Martinique, becoming a Black man when he goes to France, and an inferiorised man under the white gaze. Up until then I had never heard Black thought taught before in a university classroom. I had also never heard addressed, in psychology, the shifting, therefore unstable, sense of self people of colour experience as we travel through various identities imposed by coloniality.

I learnt from that experience that teaching is not only epistemological, but also ontological. The act of teaching is a way of being that signals a teacher’s, a discipline’s, a university’s and a society’s relationship to knowing the world. Does the classroom open up the world for students? Are students – all students – able to increase their understanding of the worlds in which they live by being in it? These questions (or their lack) drive our approach to teaching and learning.

Because, increasingly, the classroom is a site where not only the privileged but also historically marginalised people gather to learn, I think of it in Mary Louise Pratt’s (1991)

term of the 'contact zone' where unequally empowered people and cultures meet. Navigating this reality means that in addition to introducing students to theories and research we must come prepared to support dialogue between the EuroAmerican canon and theories deemed to have lower epistemic value in the academy, but which represent knowledge from the majority world.

The teacher's tasks

Below are responsibilities that emerge in response to the question, *how can we support processes of ethico-onto-epistemic resuturing in the classroom?*

- We can contribute to decolonising the classroom by creating the conditions for students – all students – to be able to develop their subjectivity, to participate as equals intersubjectively and to, therefore, develop a voice capable of contesting coloniality. Creating the conditions for subjective freedom to emerge is a prerequisite for understanding social realities and accompanying lived experiences in the world of coloniality.
- Teachers can promote the freedom to revolt against coloniality in the classroom. Kristeva (2002) characterises revolt as psychic, analytic and creative shifts that are potentially socially transformative when used to unrelentingly question the way the world appears to be structured and understood. In the classroom, decolonial revolt begins with a crack, a break with the imposition of coloniality in ourselves and in our students. Often, by introducing decolonial theory and praxes in the classroom, teachers and students become armed with epistemological resources for questioning and understanding how the coloniality of knowledge and being are symbiotically implicated.
- Regardless of our discipline, we need to accept that the responsibility for creating the conditions for students to be able to experience revolt against the system of coloniality is ours, not our students'. This then requires that we examine our ways of being that promote closure rather than opening towards each other and towards learning. What do we do that shuts down dialogue and instead promotes colonial discourse? When students insist that they wish to learn from thinkers with a social location and point of

view other than elite, white males and from theories based on inquiry with majority world people, how do we respond?

- One of the strongest forces of coloniality is the way in which it silences the oppressed. To break colonial cultures of silence we must listen – listen to historically marginalised people. But listening through silence is no easy task. One way we can begin to do this is by listening for ways in which what we are teaching does not support the development of self-knowledge. Here, self-knowledge does not refer to information about the self but to knowledge and understanding about the self anchored in the social world – the self-in-the-social.

Wrapping Freirean dialogue in decolonial atmospheres

Freire (2017) shows us that knowledge of the self-in-the-social is built through dialogue, never monologue. In the teaching and learning encounter dialogue is intersubjective sharing of thought about an issue that promotes criticality. Dialogue is not a speech act that transfers the EuroAmerican canon from person to person. Freirean dialogue is a methodology for increasing knowledge and understanding of social reality, which, in this historic moment, continues to be governed by coloniality. Some teachers, who self-identify as critical pedagogists, use dialogue as part of their pedagogical armament with feeble results. We must wonder why. What is missing? Why doesn't sharing thought about social problems always bear decolonial fruit?

To transform the coloniality of being oppressed in the westernised classroom in the Global North we have to take Freirean dialogue a step further. We have to intentionally create the conditions for, and co-create with our students, qualities of space in which voice can emerge and true dialogue can flourish. To catalyse this we can wrap dialogue in a decolonial atmosphere (Bell 2018). In the classroom, decolonial atmospheres are ambiances in which teachers and students experience 'ourselves, coming together as passionate, intellectual, embodied beings' able to bring 'our commonly held desire to reclaim our humanity' (254) as we engage with decoloniality. They can be facilitated by remaking teacher–student relations along horizontal lines. Meaning and markers of decolonial atmospheres include the following:

- Decolonial atmospheres emerge when affect is present and intense. When affects noticeably charge the atmosphere in shared social space, human beings are able to move away from responding to social realities with alienation and numbness and move towards 'disalienation' (Fanon 2008) or reunion with the world.

- Affects such as hurt, sadness, distress, overwhelm, pain, devastation, anger, anxiety, guilt, shame, desire and love clarify thought. They don't muddy it up as some would have us believe. They confirm what new actions are needed to build decoloniaity.
- Affect-filled critical self- and social reflexivity are social and public acts that transform coloniality because they break oppressive silencing. They do this in the classroom if we create the conditions for them to emerge organically, in response to social issues that are critically and collectively interrogated.
- Because the accent in decolonial atmospheres is on transformative learning, the ambience includes an active struggle to transform lived experiences of coloniality. Theory, praxes *and* affective responses to the psychosocial effects of coloniality are engaged with together and dialogically as pedagogical resources (Bell 2018).
- Because what we feel affects what we think and therefore what we know, our 'emotional interests are simultaneously embedded within knowledge interests' (Alexander 2005, 177). We are led to increase our knowledge about the world by our affective relationship to it. Our search for knowledge and understanding is driven by what affects us.
- Decolonial atmospheres allow human relations to unfurl. They facilitate the emergence of knowledge that is embodied – known but hitherto muted in cultures of colonial silencing. During a class on collective trauma and social suffering a student spontaneously recited lyrics from Bob Marley's song titled 'Concrete Jungle' (2005) :

No chains around my feet but I'm not free

I know I'm bound here in captivity

(Marley 2005)

By bringing Rastafari anti-colonial poetry and philosophy into the room he transformed the learning encounter by charging the atmosphere with a Global South onto-epistemology which people in the room could engage with.

- Decolonial atmospheres include ways of engaging through which people's shared knowledge and understanding of social realities is central to what happens in the classroom. When people's lived experiences enter into dialogue with theory and praxes,

not discursively, but directly and with immediacy, Freirean dialogue (2017) can be experienced. While engaging with theories on the colonality of power in the classroom a student brought up on the display monitor 'The Colour of Power', a graphic analysis of racialised power in the United Kingdom by Operation Black Vote (<https://www.obv.org.uk/colour-power-2021>). By introducing aesthetics of power into the classroom the student shifted the mode of learning away from abstract engagement with theory towards a dialogue rooted in and led by students' awareness of a denied social reality.

- We do not decolonise teaching and learning by inserting Black, Brown, and Beige, Female, 2SLGBTQ + thinkers into the tail end of a course. We decolonise the classroom when we create an environment in which every human being, every subject with their subjectivity, is affirmed, as a knower, in that room.
- When people feel and think together and critically about social realities a decolonial atmosphere is present. A voice breaks through: 'finally, I find myself feeling heard in the context of the university', said a student during a class in which we were analysing the psychosocial effects of austerity cuts in the United Kingdom from the perspective of people whose lives are being eviscerated by the policy.
- We know that we have begun to lay the foundation for decolonial atmospheres to emerge when students notice that their subjectivities are rising, not falling. When what they think and feel and how they act in the world are being transformed, allowing them to escape from under the crushing weight of colonality, decolonial atmospheres are in the air.

When students can launch critical, creative analyses of colonality (that exist in our various disciplines) as they engage with whatever theory, practices and research we are introducing them to in response to the strong questions they ask, then the atmosphere we have intentionally facilitated will allow each and every human being in the classroom to develop their voice. Then we will know we have begun the task of developing a decolonial teaching praxis. This will affirm that we have begun to humanise the classroom, to enact pedagogical love – a powerful tool for facilitating shifts in consciousness, for increasing knowledge and understanding about the world.

Occupy the university historically

Occupying the classroom radically emerges from the recognition that this historic moment asks that we reclaim the university's ontology, its reason for being. That we re-establish the role of inquiry, seeking new understandings of the world through openness to social reality as the *raison d'être* of the university. In this period of history, radical openness is marked by being outside of the colonial ideological framework that seeks to oppress some people's existence in the world. Having amassed 500 years of experiential evidence of coloniality, having learnt that the Earth and the majority of its people cannot bear its effects, relaunching the premise of the academy, not as the bedfellow of political economy but as its examiner, is our responsibility.

Because some colleagues fear decoloniality (Maldonado-Torres 2016), we can expect backlash against work taking place to decolonise the westernised university. We have seen, for example, an intensification of the war against the majority world by doubting the reality of coloniality. Colleagues have also questioned the lived experience of racial violence despite the availability of ample evidence. Some insist that they need more evidence that the academy is structurally and systemically racist, ethnocentric, classist, patriarchal, heteronormative, ableist, ageist etc. Here, not even big data satisfies these doubts. And others, self-described as proponents of critical thinking, refuse to take thought from the Global South seriously. When pressed hard enough, however, the academy will attempt to performatively align itself with anti-racist movements such as Black Lives Matter and the 'decolonise the university' movements.

These and other defensive patterns that seek to deny the presence of coloniality within the academy do not weaken the call to decolonise the university. They are the data, the evidence, that to create the conditions for equal human existence the structures and systems within the university, that produce unequalness, must be destroyed. The EuroAmerican-centric classroom is but one of them.

Conclusion

To occupy the classroom and the university radically is to teach and learn in ways that reaffirm our status as human beings who question. It is to question the terms and conditions in which life is lived, experienced and known. It is to oppose oppositions to life including the collusion between westernised universities, political economy and the ethico-onto-epistemologies that undergird the project of coloniality. It is to advance a new world through rigorous inquiry into and understanding of the one that exists.

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Disclosure statement



No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author. [AQ1](#)



Research ethics statement



Because this paper offers a theoretically informed analysis of coloniality and decoloniality in the classroom and was not based on empirical research with human subjects, there was no need to seek ethics approval.



¹In this polemic I use multiple modes of language to communicate points of view about the lived experience and meaning of higher education to people. I deliberately use a blend of vernacular speech (such as in this opening sentence) and academic prose. By involving vernacular speech a people's perspective is included in my argument for the decolonisation of the classroom.  

²The plantation university refers to the academy as an engine for the production of graduates for the market and the insistence that academics adhere to the corporatisation of the university. These two enforcements shore up capitalism.  

³For more on Steve Volk's (Professor of History Emeritus, Oberlin College) ideas on pedagogy see After Class: Education & Democracy. [AQ5](#)  

⁴As a Black woman from the Global South I identify as a person marginalised by coloniality.  

⁵Students describe this feedback as vague and unspecific, making it difficult to contest.  

⁶In the early stages of decolonising the academy I believe it is useful to put EuroAmerican thought into dialogue with Global South thinking because, when juxtaposed against each other, their respective onto-epistemological positions reveal themselves more clearly.  

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