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Philosophy of education in a new key: Cultivating a living philosophy of education to overcome coloniality and violence in African Universities

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Introduction

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In this conversational article, we consider cultivating decoloniality in university education by drawing upon Jacques Rancière's (2010) notion of a living philosophy. Rancière's (2010) living philosophy holds the possibility of both a medium and a space for a re-thinking and a re-contemplation of what life is in relation to what it might be. Through engaging and sharing real human experiences from and within African societies and universities, we (re)imagine decoloniality as a fiction brought to life through a living philosophy of education. In this regard, we proffer eight points of departure and reflection.

In the first instance, we turn to Plato's allegory of the cave as an illustration of the darkness and insularity that can occur when a university community is chained and constrained by its own injustices. Maintaining Plato's dialogical setting in the cave, we continue by arguing that listening *with* others is a pedagogical act of becoming non-violent whereby teachers and students assume a deliberative and compassionate responsibility for their actions. This leads us into our third contention of decoloniality as couched as a fusion of epistemologies that can provide a living philosophy of education to stimulate fictitious imaginaries of a society in which people engage in iterations and the free exchange of provocative ideas.

Fourth, following our consideration of decoloniality as an interchange of stimulating yet confrontational ideas, we assert that decoloniality can be advanced through deliberation as an act of transformation in and about the hegemony of coloniality and violence. We entrench this argument in a Freirean stance that structures of domination such as coloniality cannot be rooted out

by an education *'forged for the oppressed'* but rather by an education *'forged with the oppressed'* as products of a wider public order hosting and shaping the university. As our sixth point, therefore, and in establishing the foundational paradigms for decoloniality, we show a commensurability between the notion of Afrofuturism and Rancière's (2010) living philosophy. Both, we maintain, function as an artistic aesthetic, and a framework for critical theory by combining elements of Afrocentricity, fantasy, historical fiction, science fiction, speculative fiction, and magic realism with non-Western beliefs. Consequently, Afrofuturism aims to establish a critically Africanist narrative in its own right and may be necessary for producing a decolonial mindset among students in university settings. As we bring this conversational circle to a temporary pause, we contend if higher education in South Africa is to unshackle itself from its historical injustices, it has to show a preparedness to disrupt discriminatory hegemonies, while simultaneously adopting more humane policy approaches. By so doing, we re-imagine a living philosophy of (higher) education as a manifestation of epistemic justice. Likewise, if higher education in the country were to become more disruptive, deliberative pedagogical actions can emerge that would accentuate students as equal speaking beings with teachers. In this way, a living philosophy of education could enhance equal pedagogical actions and undermine exclusionary or violent pedagogical actions that continue to be present in indefensible forms of university education.

In his book, *Chronicles of Consensual Times*, the French philosopher Jacques Rancière (2010, p. 79) depicts his understanding of a living philosophy in relation to the cinematographic work of Amélie Poulain. Rancière (2010, p. 81) offers the following account: first, as a real person Amélie is 'the little fairy who changes the lives of those around with her simple decision, assuaging their inconsolable hearts, unifying solitary souls, punishing the wicked, rewarding the good and moving the sedentary' (Rancière, 2010, p. 81)—a matter of escaping the greyness of reality into the ideal. She carefully recreates her world by orchestrating the lives of people around her—intent upon finding happiness. In this regard, a living philosophy means that one casts a look at what seems ideal or imaginary from the vantage point of one's real life experiences. Second, as put by Rancière (2010, p. 81), 'it would be all mere illusion if the one who projected her ideal sky into the lives of others did not also take care of herself and know how to cash in on her dreams for an occasion that has offered itself in prosaic reality'—a matter of returning from the ideal sky back into reality. What a living philosophy does is to contrast the real experiences of people on earth with their idealized (fictitious) lives in the sky, and then returns by leaving the imaginary position in which people find themselves and are happy to rejoin the reality of their familiar earth-like experiences of perhaps racism, torture and violence. This leads (Rancière, 2010, p. 81) to claim, '[f]iction is more beautiful than reality. Reality is more beautiful than any fiction'.

When we apply a living philosophy to stimulate decoloniality, we think of encouraging academics to think of how their research—in relation to teaching, learning and scholarship—can stimulate fictitious imaginaries of a society in which people engage in iterations and the free exchange of provocative ideas. Such a society might even be an imaginative one where people live in harmony despite their differences that seem to be irreconcilable. People might even renounce antagonism and encourage the free integration of pluralist ideas of a common humanity. And, when such a living philosophy draws people back to their real experiences, it would contrast life in the idealized world with the perilous societal malaises of hostility, torture and continuous violence. Considering that such a living philosophy is mostly concerned with changing the lives of those who dedicate themselves to it, it might just be that ordinary people would begin experimenting more on how to take better care of themselves and to change undesirable situations in their societies. In other words, amateurs who practice a living philosophy might turn the debilitating real life experiences into an art of good living. In a very profound sense, this kind of fictitious reimagining lives within all of us on a daily basis—it echoes in our collective outcries against violence, pain, calamity and oppression. As we turn against that which strips away our humanity, that which turns us against others and ourselves, we enact a living philosophy of desiring better, softer, kinder—more humane.

Here, we think about the unpredictable outcomes of decoloniality—those moments of learning, which might not have occurred otherwise. Conceptualizing decoloniality leans on the capacity of university teachers and students to imagine how things might be different to what is. It requires a hopeful desire, which believes in the unpredictability and serendipity of human connectedness. When teachers and students engage with one another about decoloniality, they deliberate on the basis of openness and reflexivity in the pursuit of new and unconsidered possibilities.

On the one hand, our attraction to Rancière's (2010) conception of a living philosophy in relation to a reimagined decolonized world, should not be confused with escapism, but rather, with finding reconceived ways of being and living. On the other hand, we do not lose ourselves entirely in Rancière's depictions, and choose instead to maintain a deliberative position. In this sense, as we examine decoloniality, we do so, by taking issue with Rancière's (2010, p. 115) position on new fictions of evil. In his analysis of three films (*Elephant*, *Dogville* and *Mystic River*) that speak to us of evil in general, law is radically absent (*Elephant*); the accomplice of evil designates the victim to suffer and leaves the care of punishing the torturers to the bandits (*Dogville*); and the accomplice of evil leaves unpunished the crime of the honest family father/gangster/righter of wrongs (*Mystic River*; Rancière, 2010, p. 115). These fictitious films come to the same conclusion, namely 'that doing good in a bad world is impossible and so violence is necessary' (Rancière, 2010, p. 115). Here, we find ourselves at a crossroads with Rancière, in that we cannot agree with his assessment that evil 'cannot be righted except at the expense of another evil which remains irreducible' (Rancière, 2010, p. 115). Such an understanding, we believe, takes us on a dark path where the eventual outcome can only be an endless and meaningless onslaught of violence. Instead, by using his conception of a living philosophy, we hold that the possibilities for non-violent action are always present—that is, that the human propensity for goodness and peace waits beneath the surface of even the most violent of violence. To us, violence necessarily suggests harm or affliction; it, therefore, cannot also imply good. Anger, depravity and rage—those emotions commonly associated with violence, cannot be transposed onto that which produces harmony. Perpetuations of such contradictions serve only to justify the unjustifiable.

Living Philosophy, Research for Decoloniality and Violent Protests in Post-Apartheid South African Higher Education

Thokozani Mathebula

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In Plato's view, what is known, is known forever, that is to say in the 'the real of being' what is known must not only be true but also 'perfect, internal and unchanging' as Dupré (2007, p. 9) maintains. If this view holds, then a philosophy of violence and philosophy of non-violence are not only distinct, but intrinsically irreconcilable. Despite immeasurable policy reforms and strides in democratic transitioning, higher education in South Africa remains beset by violence. Violence, as confirmed by historical reams of writing, is not new to the higher education landscape. Considering the diabolical desegregated construction of higher education, it would seem that violence has always been a part of the very conception and inception of universities. Much has been written on this violence—to make sense of it, to understand its source, to allay its outcomes, and of course, to find solutions—

Violence [i]s a constructor, the university performs acts of violence on ... students, faculty members and workers ... use of armed forces to contain protests [violence is also] ... a means to deconstruct and decolonise the status quo ... violence[s] denote an open list of various forms of resistance, defences, agitations, disruptions, counter-epistemologies and physical actions ... (Ndelu, 2017, pp. 73–74).

Gazing upon the state of higher education in South Africa, it seems apt to turn to Plato's (1994) allegory of the cave. The world outside the cave represents 'the real of being'—the

intelligible world of truth postulated by the objects of knowledge, which are perfect, eternal and unchanging (Dupré, 2007, p. 9). By contrast, the cave represents ‘the realm (world) of becoming’—the visible world of our everyday experiences, where everything is imperfect and constantly changing. The chained captives (symbolizing ordinary people) live in a world of conjecture and illusion. While the former prisoner, free to roam within the cave, attains the most accurate view of reality possible within the every-changing world of perception and experience (Dupré, 2007, p. 9). If Plato’s (1994) allegory of the cave is accepted, the task awaiting researchers in higher education is to undertake Hountondji’s (1990, p. 7) clear identifiable steps of scientific investigation: first, collection of data (the visible world of our everyday experiences of research in Africa)—this is the initial stage, that is, the original focus; second, the interpretation of raw information, the theoretical processing (intelligible word characterized by autonomous, self-reliant scientific activity—this is, the decisive stage ‘hurts, dazzles, bewilders, pains and distresses’ (Plato, 1994, p. 240); and third, the application of theoretical findings (the chained captive is now free to roam within the cave)—this is the final stage, that is, the achieved insight that deals with African challenges of our time. In the face of this process of scientific investigation, the very nature of research points to the intimate connection between the allegory of the cave—and its power of persuasion, the logic of its argument and the possibilities of elucidations and renewed imaginings. What matters most, it would seem, is a willingness to strip away the noise and residue, the violence itself, and return to that which centres human beings in relation to the kind of research and knowledge they wish to produce. Higher education as an epistemological and institutional space cannot be used as a means or justification to turn inward. Rather, the perspectives provided by a university and its education has to ensure a perpetual gaze outward—towards that which is yet to be realised.

On Decoloniality as Listening With Others

Judith Terblanche

University of the Western Cape

Of what use is it to be tolerant of others if you are convinced that you are right and everyone who disagrees with you is wrong? That isn’t tolerance but condescension (De Mello, 1992, p. 135).

Decoloniality demands a particular response from higher education. To ignore the call for decoloniality will be, in itself, an act of violence made possible through perpetuated systemic unjust practices. Teaching and learning pedagogical practices and curriculum content could be perceived as acts of violence, either as a result of the disruptive nature of such practices or as a consequence of the value (or lack of value) associated with particular knowledge systems evident through the selection of curriculum content. Seemingly, the centrality of teachers in relation to pedagogy and curriculum, implies that the initiation of justice resides with them. Terblanche and Van der Walt (2019, p. 221) argue that ‘[s]etting up pedagogical spaces with the intention to contribute to the process of social transformation requires the vulnerability of risk and the willingness to enter into troubling spaces of discomfort’. Simply put, teachers assume a responsibility of creating a deliberative pedagogical space—one of compassion and reasonableness—for students and themselves. Yet, the understanding that teachers are the only initiators of justice might be sorely misplaced—since such an assumption neglects the intelligence and autonomy of students. For students to come into their own thinking and voices, however, teachers need to be willing to ‘relinquish certain understandings, and to think about concepts anew’ (Davids & Waghid, 2016, p. 1145) through listening and feeling ‘with’ students (Hansen, 2011). The act of doing things ‘with’ one another is what allows for a teaching space to become deliberative and by implication, non-violent. Hansen (2011, p. 166) argues that listening with others is ‘an imaginative, aesthetic exercise of trying to see the world as they do, to try to grasp the underlying values, beliefs, and aspirations that inform their ways of looking and knowing’.

The promise of such imaginative listening as a result of doing things ‘with’ one another, is the difference between tolerating others and their different views and a vindication and recognition of their humaneness in being willing to be transformed by their being. Listen-*ing* and notice-*ing* in this way, could affect the be-*ing* of both learners and teachers who invariably enhance the possibility for a more socially just community. This idea is corroborated by Derrida’s (1997) ideal of democracy-*in-becoming* that could lead to justice and peace for all-*in-becoming*—an ideal of overcoming decoloniality non-violently is (in part) grounded in the agility, emancipation, humaneness, care and deliberative capacities of teachers. To envisage universities with such teachers, those that can lead justly, might be unimaginable. Teachers ought to be reskilled to initiate students through restorative justice: this means that such teachers should be re-educated, so that they in turn compassionately care for students to cultivate decoloniality.

On Rethinking Decoloniality and Violence

Philip Higgs

University of South Africa

The centuries-old subjugation of Africa to colonial exploitation, ranging from slavery to the creation of socioeconomic structures during the colonial era wreaked serious damage that remain palpable years after the demise of colonial rule. Colonialism in Africa thus provided the framework for the organised subjugation of the cultural, scientific and economic life of many on the African continent. This subjugation ignored indigenous African knowledge systems and impacted on African people’s way of seeing and acting in the world. In fact, being African, to all intents and purposes, became an inverted mirror of being European. This gave rise to numerous attempts to reclaim the significance of indigenous African knowledges in the face of hegemonic European forms of knowledge, and which confirm the existential and humane need today for discourses on decoloniality in Africa.

However, when it comes to reclaiming the cultural heritage of indigenous African people in discourses on decoloniality, then the controversial issue of regaining and affirming a distinctive African identity as opposed to a predominantly European identity is still very much an issue. This is evidenced in those calls for decoloniality that, for example, find expression in the use of violence in its many forms to overthrow the evil of colonialism. In response to such a use of violence in the enactment of decoloniality, I would argue that this reclamation should not exclude and negate European forms of knowledge but should rather be directed at what I refer to as, *a fusion of epistemologies* which seeks to integrate both indigenous African knowledges and European forms of knowledge (Higgs, 2020, pp. 193–195). Such a *fusion of epistemologies* would provide a living philosophy to ‘... stimulate fictitious imaginaries of a society in which people engage in iterations and the free exchange of provocative ideas.’ What is more, such a *fusion of epistemologies* would give rise to the enactment of a *postmodern dis-position* (Higgs, 2016, pp. 121–134) which when deliberating on the enactment of decoloniality, would do so ‘... on the basis of, openness and reflexivity in the pursuit of new and unconsidered possibilities’.

Such an engagement would also give rise to a deep personal transformation that impacts on the way, we engage with others in our everyday experiences and, in the way, we think and act, and reveals itself in a capacity for: appreciating the viewpoints of others, and caring enough about others to exert the effort necessary to hear and understand what they are saying; for change prompted by one’s own recognition and acknowledgement of error in the active reconstruction of one’s frameworks of understanding; tolerating uncertainty, imperfection and incompleteness as the existential conditions of human thought and action. In adopting such a *postmodern dis-position* discourses on decoloniality would enact a wisdom that will allow them to acknowledge the necessity for an intercultural discourse of intent where rationality takes on

the form of a consensual or social knowledge culture that has room for passionate commitment as well as open mindedness, emotion and intellect, in addition to intellectual rupture as well as consensus. Such a sense of wisdom Ramose (1998, p. 13) reminds us is:

... an openness to unfolding practices, which also acclaim co-operation, rather than conquest and competition. The golden rule of wisdom is that reductionism, absolutism and dogmatism are an injury to the complexity of life as a holistic phenomenon.

On Critical and Deliberative Decoloniality

Lester Shawa

University of Kwazulu-Natal

In advancing research, teaching and scholarship, African universities continue to struggle with coloniality (patterns of power as a result of colonialism) and violence. Decoloniality seeks to challenge coloniality with its epistemologies and pedagogies that alienate Africans in their research, teaching and scholarship (Mbembe, 2016; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). To stimulate decoloniality and quell violence in these universities, a living philosophy that seeks to encourage fictitious imaginaries in which through deliberation and imagination, academics and students could challenge coloniality and violence is not only necessary but also urgent. In permeating epistemologies and pedagogies in relation to research, teaching and scholarship, and alienating Africans, coloniality is hegemonic (regarded as the dominant way of acting). Academics and students in African universities have mostly internalized colonial hegemonic ways in their research, teaching and scholarship. To quell coloniality thus, a living philosophy has to counter the colonial hegemony by aiming at liberating, transforming and changing the way academics and students engage with research, teaching and scholarship in African universities.

Since coloniality is hegemonic in nature, a critical theory perspective is useful in confronting it. According to Horkheimer (in Carr & Kemmis 1986, p. 130):

... a critical theory is adequate only if it meets three criteria: it must be explanatory, practical and normative, all at the same time. That is it must explain what is wrong with the current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation.

Drawing on the lens provided by Carr and Kemmis (1986), a living philosophy should entail explaining the challenges of coloniality as a hegemonic force and a need thus to liberate academics and students from its colonising effects. Academics and students should clearly identify themselves as actors required to challenge the colonising effects of coloniality and, academics and students should provide goals for transformation. Now to achieve a living philosophy anchored on Horkheimer's philosophical lens, deliberation and imagination are paramount. Academics and students should deliberatively discuss the colonising effects of coloniality in universities and share views on how to challenge coloniality and violence in the academy. Within the deliberative ethos, academics and students are called upon to suggest solutions for transformation within fluidity—desisting rigidity to avoid positing solutions as final.

Furthermore, while thinking about research, teaching and scholarship, a living philosophy tied to transformation requires fictitious imagination to stimulate decoloniality and quell violence. Imagination has the ability to aid in interrogating existing situations and challenging dominant narratives (Pinder, 2002). Anchored in deliberation, academics together with their students could imagine how coloniality and violence could be challenged, the roles they would assume in challenging the practices as well as question how transformation would be achieved.

On Confronting Coloniality Structures of Epistemic Violence Anew

Chikumbutso Herbert Manthalu
University of Malawi

In a critical sense modern higher education is Janus-faced. The education is as full of opportunities for liberation as it is potent with perpetuation of injustices. A hegemonic dimension of modern higher education is particularly manifested in Africa and much of the developing world, concretised in the marginalising nature of the dominant epistemology in higher education. The exclusive Eurocentric epistemology is currently subject for academic debate and student protest in Africa. The more education opens the world to an individual, and opening the individual to the world, the more education simultaneously and tacitly devalues and annihilates epistemologies and ways of being of mostly developing nations as those in Africa. In this vein, there have been demands and protests by students and faculty alike, calling for, not the Africanisation of education but rather the decoloniality of education. Decoloniality in this regard calls for a re-consideration of the criteria for selecting objects of academic inquiry in higher education. Other than demanding a substitution of local epistemologies with non-local ones, decoloniality calls for a fair consideration of what passes for knowledge and the criteria involved, without bias accepting if not encouraging hybridity. The reality of modern education cannot hide its epistemic violence. Largely, the mandate of ensuring decoloniality has been conceived as pertaining to higher education institutions. The pressure and period for protest have arguably yielded decoloniality efforts that are disproportionate to the demands. Perceiving universities to be unresponsive, slow, or just tokenistic in responding to the decoloniality demands, student protests have mostly degenerated into violence. Quelling the violence has employed even more heavy-handed violence by security agents. However, meaningfully confronting decoloniality must focus beyond higher education which largely only manifests the nearly institutionalised marketization of education. Epistemic domination only manifests in higher education but it is in principle rooted in the frame of the political and economic order of the modern state that is itself shaped by the global order. The epistemic coloniality manifesting in academic spaces is merely symptomatic of and anchored by deep roots seated in the political and economic (dis)orders within both the nation and globe.

Borrowing Paulo Freire's contrasting approaches to liberatory education, I contend that structures of domination such as coloniality cannot be rooted out by an education '*forged for the oppressed*' (as the current framework of protests would yield) but rather by an education '*forged with the oppressed*' as products of a wider public order hosting and shaping the university (Freire, 2014, p. 48). Therefore, ideal confrontation of epistemic violence must initially challenge the unjust economic and political order of the wider country or else the transformations in the university will only remain tokenistic. Unless this is achieved, protest against the university only will lead to frustration that is fertile ground for physical violence. My argument is that the higher education's (un)intentional failure to decolonise is ultimately driven by largely purely cost-benefit conceptualisations of and approaches to education which understand the relevance of decoloniality only in financial other than normative terms. Thus, unless there is a political drive at the national and regional levels to overcome foundational structures of domination that anchor the domination in the university, decoloniality efforts will largely yield more frustration, heightening the possibility of further physical violence.

On Living Philosophy Informed by an Afrofuturist Ideology

Zayd Waghid
Cape Peninsula University of Technology

The rising global awareness in the phenomenon Afrofuturism comes at a time where calls concerning the need to decolonise higher education continue to unfold in contemporary South Africa. Afrofuturism, albeit a relatively new phenomenon, is not new to some of the ideals of

decoloniality. Informed by intersubjective actions that are value-laden, and subjectively applicable to situations concerning colonial thought, Afrofuturism aims to produce fissures in the contemporary moment by using references of the past to envision futures that counter an undesirable historical imaginary. What makes Afrofuturism apposite to this article is its resonance with Rancière's (2010) living philosophy in that it functions as both an artistic aesthetic and a framework for critical theory by combining elements of Afrocentricity, fantasy, historical fiction, science fiction, speculative fiction, and magic realism with non-Western beliefs (Womack, 2013). It, therefore, makes sense to argue that a living philosophy informed by Afrofuturism may serve useful towards cultivating decoloniality in higher education. This is because Afrofuturism aims to establish a critically Africanist narrative in its own right and may be necessary for producing a decolonial mindset among students in university settings. In this sense, knowledge resides not only in pre-determined sets of criteria, but in the lived experiences and narratives of people themselves.

Considering that the discourse concerning the decolonisation of the university curriculum aims to engender social change in pedagogical practices, a living philosophy informed by Afrofuturism may be necessary for cultivating consciousness among students for transformative change in the following ways: First, by integrating broad semiotic elements of social life such as language or text, visual semiosis, and body language such a living philosophy may further assist students in uncovering societal problems concerning inequality, poverty and unemployment with violence. Second, it may further assist students and educators in describing, interpreting and explaining instances of violence in higher education and society in order to scrutinise and challenge relations of power and dominance that may serve as the impetus for such violence. Third, it may assist the student in undermining subordinating power relations in university settings, more specifically, the often-asymmetrical power relations that exist between a teacher and students in a university classroom. Hence, the need to develop a consciousness of freedom, to recognise authoritarian practices, to empower, imagine and connect one's knowledge that is necessary for students to disrupt a neo-colonial mindset that may have been subjugated to a violent curriculum may further be realised by a living philosophy.

In light of the above, it makes sense to argue for the importance of creating conditions for the empowerment of students towards cultivating decoloniality in higher education through a living philosophy premised on Afrofuturism. Our understanding of decoloniality in education is that it explicitly recognises the disparities in societal opportunities, resources, and long-term outcomes among the marginalised, silenced and erased. Freire (2014) contends that every individual student has a specific identity, and an educator needs to create experiences with, and not for, students, integrating their experiences and voices into the educational experience itself. This is why we are attracted to a living philosophy premised on Afrofuturism in the sense that the aim of such an approach is not to 'bank' information through teaching but rather to take into account the identities and situations in which students find themselves—a matter of educating them without imposing 'knowledge' on them (Freire, 2014, p. 94). In this way, the possibility of shifting students towards a kind of freedom where critical reflection and 'authentic thinking' can be realised (Freire, 2014, p. 77). In this way, students can be empowered through re-imagining what could be while critically reflecting on the need to disrupt the status quo. Thus, if university educators were to disrupt any forms of violence, then they would need to cultivate in educational settings values concerning accountability, risk-taking and significant forms of deliberative engagement (Waghid, Waghid, & Waghid, 2018).

On Rehumanising Policy Structures to Ensure Non-Violence

Celiwe Ngwenya

Stellenbosch University

Social inequality in South Africa is still one of the determining factors of who gets access to quality education, who should relish going to a tertiary institution, and who can experience upward

social mobility. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 10) views this custom as one of the remnants of coloniality, which he describes as epistemological designs that lie at the centre of the present world order. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) further explains that these designs have embedded principles that hierarchise human beings according to notions and binaries of primitive versus civilised and, developed versus underdeveloped. Since South Africa became a democracy, being confronted by these binaries at universities become a much more vicious cycle because the binaries become determinants of types of schools that students attended, and thus technically allows for the perception of privileged versus disadvantaged. These hierarchies have a way of propelling the privileged students up the social mobility ladder with the disadvantaged students needing a stroke of luck to escape their dire circumstances, which then illustrates the notion that getting higher education for disadvantaged students is easier said than done. Such circumstances can somewhat become triggers of violent eruptions in the form of the #FeesMustFall campaigns of 2015 to 2017.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only foisted new challenges onto the state but all states organs, which means education institutions are also feeling the pinch. The pandemic has also exacerbated poverty, unemployment and inequality, which should be worrying as disadvantaged students' lived experiences are caught within poverty and unemployment. To address this matter, it is essential that social inequality in higher education is not seen as a polemic subject. Discourses surrounding these challenges need to take place especially considering that encounters in higher education are inclined to favour those with significant social, cultural and economic capital (Ngwenya 2020, p. 32). Salazar (2013, p. 122) suggests Freire's notion of humanisation that focuses on the pursuit of one's full humanity to promote decoloniality and prevent violence in education. Salazar speaks on educational goals that need to be transformed away from cultural replacement and assimilation into mainstream values and practices. Salazar (2013, p. 123) argues, 'When students of color [*sic*] experience academic difficulties, their struggles are often attributed to their culture, language, and home environment'. From this perspective therefore arguing from Jacques Rancière's (2010) notion of a living philosophy I would say given South Africa's past practices of structural injustice, our higher education system needs to disrupt the discriminatory practices and adopt more sensitive and humane approaches in policy making. Universities should therefore attempt to decolonise bureaucratic structures and introduce humanitarian policy structures. According to Maldonado-Torres (2017, p. 118), the Western concepts that are a blueprint for university systems are not lacking of hegemonic traits and therefore there is a need to explore decoloniality as a shift from the acceptance of inferiority to Europe, which would allow for discourse and questioning of the lack of a full humanity of the processes that were designed for the colonised in order to find a way for more humane structures that recognise actual lived experience.

On Epistemic (In)justice, Subjugation and Violence

Joseph Divala

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Freirean scholars and many in the critical tradition would agree that oppressive educational policies and practices are mostly characterised by impunity in the teaching approaches (Freire, 2005). In our times, we have also come to accept particular teaching methods like the banking system, as opposed to the dialogue and problem-solving approaches that we believe to be critical for the emancipation of societies. Like many in the critical tradition, current scholars like Higgs (in this contribution) also posit that 'Colonialism in Africa provided the framework for the organized subjugation of the cultural, scientific and economic life of many on the African continent; and that this subjugation ignored indigenous African knowledge systems and impacted on African people's way of seeing and acting in the world'. On a different note, Waghid and Davids,

in interpreting what forms of living philosophy could mean, use Rancière's (2010) notion of living philosophy as tool for reimagining a decolonised world that is not in any 'confused with escapism, but with finding reconceived ways of being and living'. It is this existentialist format of re-imagining being and living that in my view provides and provokes the seed for a flipside position on what epistemic justice should not mean when dealing with conditions of violent under-privilege in the African context.

As a first stance, consider Rancière's (1991, pp. 13–31) chance experiment in *The Ignorant School Master* that it would be in the interest of the conscientious professor (Jacotot) to transmit his or her knowledge to the students so as to bring the students to his or her own level of expertise through the essential act of explication, from simple ideas to complex sets of ideas. This noble process is not as simple as it appears though. It is possible for the student's intelligence to be subordinated to that of the professor without genuine emancipation. The students can only be liberated by developing an intelligence that obeys itself while itself being under the guidance of another will, that of the master. Hence, self-liberation is the true form of the liberation of the mind. It is no doubt here that emancipatory knowledge is the most required knowledge as it enhances critical conscientization, self-awareness and transformation (Habermas, 1971). Emancipatory knowledge has everything to do with the development of the mind. But does such emancipatory knowledge have chances of succeeding in current higher education practices? Higher education practices pre-Covid-19 times and after are under enormous strain. Society has for some time been lamenting the rate of underachievement in our schools. This phenomenon catapults itself into higher education. As much as that is the case, higher education practices have also become fancy with through-put rates. This scenario presents itself in two forms: on the one end are students who are ill-prepared and ill-positioned for the kind of academic rigour required for higher education learning. On the other is the university management that rightfully argues that student conditions and circumstances should be considered. One of the favourite Covid-19 statements has been 'no student left behind'. The 'no student left behind' slogan despite being commonly used in the Covid-19 discourses on opening universities is not a new slogan. UNESCO and other organisations also use 'no child left behind'. But in the context of higher education studies, 'no student left behind' leaves an uncertain taste when explored in different contextual settings. In the case where management uses 'no student left behind' uncritically of the implication in relation to legitimate knowledge development in the student, such a move would be tantamount to giving the student, a roar deal, a form of knowledge whose value in one's life will remain questionable. In this regard, even the notion of a reimagined decolonized knowledge space of this fashion would be the first vehicle in the promotion of Rancière's (2010) escapism. On the other hand, a hardcore interpretation of the burdens of knowledge that fails to consider how current forms of knowledge perpetuate the othering of forms of life not westernized would be reminiscent of the 'stultifying effect' of pedagogy, a non-liberative kind of education. In essence, uncritical concessions to the formation of legitimate forms of knowledge and training in knowledge is the worst form of present-day racism and the continual subjugation of the previous disadvantaged masses. This could be the present form of epistemic violence.

On Students Becoming Equal Speakers with Teachers through Ruptured Pedagogical Actions

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There has been much debate as to what constitutes decoloniality within South African higher education. I posit that 'chalk-and-talk' teacher-centred pedagogical practices that seem to be prominent at some higher education institutions in the country, have done little to alleviate some concerns that have been raised by university teachers and students with regard to

decoloniality. This is so on the basis of what can commonly be referred to as ‘chalk-and-talk’ practices seem to remain primarily concerned with the actions of the teacher, for instance, he or she standing in front of a university classroom sharing his or her own understandings of colonial epistemologies with students to the extent that students are excluded from pedagogical encounters. At some universities, there appears to be a common misconception that students need to be taught, rather than looking at what they can also contribute to the teaching and learning activities. In many instances, students (mis)construe understandings of knowledge that they are deprived from sharing with others. My contention is that a Rancièrian notion of democratic pedagogical practices foregrounds a disruption in teacher-student power relations that can contribute to the decoloniality of higher education. In terms of a disruptive view of democratic action, students will no longer be seen as merely passive recipients of knowledge and the views of teachers but in a ruptured way enact speech to rupture unequal teacher-student power relations. Through the enactment of a Rancièrian notion of equality within democratic pedagogical encounters, students are not only afforded opportunities to share their understandings within learning spaces, but are able to deliberate with teachers and other students, enacting critical thinking skills and demonstrating their autonomous coming to speech. By implication, through the democratisation of pedagogical practices within higher education in relation to the cultivation of a ruptured notion of pedagogical action, teachers and students can exercise their equality in a decolonial way. Students can emerge as legitimate and equal speakers with teachers in pedagogical practices. In this way, a living philosophy of education could enhance equal pedagogical actions. When teachers imagine students exercising their equality, they (teachers) open up pedagogical actions to moments of disruption whereby students can come to speech (Rancière, 1991). In this way, the possibility of violently excluding students from authentic learning would be undermined.

Open Review 1: Philosophy of Education in a New Key: Cultivating a Living Philosophy of Education to Overcome Coloniality and Violence in African Universities (Open Review)

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Waghid and Davids begin with the creative suggestion of decoloniality as ‘a living philosophy’ for African universities ‘constrained by its own injustices’ through eight points of reflection including ‘listening *with*’ as a non-violent dialogical pedagogy, ‘a fusion of epistemologies’, ‘deliberation as an act of transformation’, an ‘Afrofuturism’ designed to encourage the development of an Africanist narrative ‘to disrupt discriminatory hegemonies’ and ‘enhance equal pedagogical actions’. The positive and brave concept of ‘a living philosophy’, so necessary to African societies and universities, is taken from Jacques Rancière who himself bases the notion of the work of the cinematographer Amélie Poulain. From this conception, Waghid and Davids derive a living experience based on real experience that can ‘stimulate fictitious imaginaries of a society’ and encourage unpredictable moments of learning directed at a new openness, reflexivity and ‘possibilities for non-violent action’. To this challenge, Mathebula responds by returning to Plato’s allegory of the cave to outline the steps of scientific research designed ‘to strip away the noise and residue, the violence itself’ and ‘the possibilities of elucidations and renewed imaginings’. Terblanche theorises ‘decoloniality as listening with others’ as an imaginative and aesthetic experiment to cultivate emancipation and humanity. Higgs begins the process of rethinking the relation between decoloniality and violence through his concept of the fusion of epistemologies enabling ‘the free exchange of provocative idea’ and ‘the enactment of a *postmodern dis-position*.’ Shawa examines the notion of a critical and deliberative decoloniality argues ‘a living philosophy tied to transformation requires fictitious imagination to stimulate decoloniality and quell

violence.' Manthalu's reflection focuses on 'confronting the colonial structures of violence new' and Zayd Waghid outlines an Afrofuturist ideology that 'aims to produce fissures in the contemporary moment by using references of the past to envision futures that counter an undesirable historical imaginary.' Ngwenya focuses on 'rehumanising policy structures' and Divala focuses on epistemic justice under 'conditions of violent under-privilege'. Faiq Waghid elucidates the general argument to outline a 'Rancièrian notion of democratic pedagogical practices foregrounds a disruption in teacher-student power relations that can contribute to the decoloniality of higher education'. In their conclusion, Waghid and Davids reflect on the nature of decoloniality as an aspect of a living philosophy and as 'a retrieval of what it means to be human'. This is a nicely coherent selection of mini-essays that address a living philosophy of decoloniality in a distinctive African way, focused on the need to confront violence of coloniality to resurrect and reimagine a new humanity in higher education. In my view, this is a major contribution to philosophy of education in a new key, one that adds enormously to the notion of non-violent *action* as lived experience.

Open Review 2: On Cultivating Decoloniality (Open Review)

Marek Tesar

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How do we consider 'cultivating decoloniality' in university education and what does it mean to cultivate a living philosophy of education in order to deal with coloniality and violence in African universities is the next edition of collective writing about Philosophy in a New Key. This piece follows the paper by Peters (2020), which set the tone for these collective dialogues from diverse geographical parts of the world—recently Hung et al.'s (2020) focus on South East Asia and the philosophy of education, and Papastephanou et al.'s (2020) work on Education for Justice now were published. Waghid and Davids have taken a different approach to collective writing and moved the methodology to more of, what they refer to, as a conversation with their colleagues. Their task is committed to 'engaging and sharing real human experiences from and within African societies and universities, [to] (re)imagine decoloniality as a fiction brought to life through a living philosophy of education'. The powerful way they position and foreground the argument demonstrates how a living philosophy of education is useful both in creating spaces for, and elevating, pedagogy that would be regarded both as equal and actionable in practice; and at the same time questions if not suppress those that lead to violent, racist, and misogynist practices.

Mathebula's response through Plato contests the violence and calls for the return of humanity; human subjects that is relational to the research and pedagogy that the university educator should want to produce. Terblanche joins the conversation and argues that decoloniality cannot happen without listening to others, and that decoloniality demands a response from academia, spaces for possibilities of a more socially just community. Higgs argues for the reclaiming of the cultural heritage of indigenous African people and argues that we should employ a fusion of Western and Indigenous epistemologies. Shawa reminds us in the conversation of the continuous struggles of coloniality, and the importance (and possibilities) of resistance. Manthalu brings to the conversation an argument of how 'higher education's (un)intentional failure to decolonise is ultimately driven by largely purely cost-benefit conceptualisations of and approaches to education which understand the relevance of decoloniality only in financial other than normative terms'—an interesting argument that could be carried over to other continents. Zayd Waghid challenges our understanding of living philosophy and argues that Afrofuturism or Afrofuturist ideology 'may serve useful towards cultivating decoloniality in higher education'. Ngwenya troubles social inequality and structural injustice in South Africa and calls for rehumanising policy structures to ensure non-violence, while Divala adds his take on epistemic (in)justice, subjugation

and violence, where he claims that ‘uncritical concessions to the formation of legitimate forms of knowledge and training in knowledge is the worst form of present-day racism and the continual subjugation of the previous disadvantaged masses’. And finally, Faiq Waghid joins the debate arguing that ‘at some universities, there appears to be a common misconception that students need to be taught, rather than looking at what they can also contribute to the teaching and learning activities’. This collective writing is beautifully written and edited and, reminds us that struggle in our higher education places continues. But, it also reminds us that we have a philosophical legacy and presence to unite and fight against it, and to create pedagogical spaces that will create opportunities for us to thrive, in the new key.

Conclusion

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If our real life experiences are permeated by misery, revolts, exploitation, humiliation, perversity, monstrous trauma, savagery, massacres and crime as Rancière (2010, pp. 117–118) describes in his analysis of evil, then using his living philosophy will enable us to think in an idealised way about what human experiences would look like without being marred by evil. Surely a living philosophy would stimulate one to think of contentment, pleasure, honour, healing, gentleness, and non-transgression? And, if we can recast such idealised fictitious onto our real life experiences there might be a minute possibility that evil can be thwarted without violence. As university teachers and students wanting to use a living philosophy to rethink decoloniality in Africa, we cannot condone student violence in the form of burning down lecture halls and libraries. It seems especially ironic to conceive of decoloniality as having anything to do with violence, or that decoloniality can be achieved through violence. As we close this article (for now), it seems most critical to reflect on the origin and implication of decoloniality. The daily bandying of this term or call (depending on its context) has in many instances served to reduce and weaken the real meaning of decoloniality. As philosophers of education, and as ones who are intent on evoking a living philosophy of education, and hence, peaceful co-existence, we have to insist on a reclamation of decoloniality itself. To this end, ideologically and contextually, decoloniality emanates as a response to the violence of first colonialism, and then, coloniality. Decoloniality exists as a retrieval of what it means to be human, to be seen, recognised and respected. The idea, therefore, that decoloniality is somehow inclusive of violence is not only to be remiss of what decoloniality means, but to misuse it for means other than for what it is intended. In the end, a neglect of concepts, meanings, and indeed a living philosophy, will be the end of own understanding of what it means to be human.

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