(Re)imagining a Dialogic Curriculum: Humanizing and Epistemically Liberating Pedagogies

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Abstract

This paper is a call to university leaders across the United Kingdom to stand in solidarity with racialized and racially minoritized students by embracing humanizing and epistemically liberating practices that open up possibilities for authentic dialogue and action. This dialogue should seek to resist the barriers which have resulted in the marginalization, and often systemic discrimination of racially minoritized students within higher education. We seek to illuminate the revolutionary leadership of university students, who have initiated the movement toward racial representation, multiple truths, and a more equitable curriculum that subverts the violence of Western cognitive imperialism. Black feminist thought informs our standpoint in this paper and we reflect upon our experience of the Childhood studies curriculum as both students and staff. We offer recommendations for university leaders to stimulate meaningful, equitable, and socially just change.

Keywords

Introduction

Participating in dialogue instigated by students worldwide, we call for university leadership to champion racial justice and equitable curriculum by standing in solidarity with racially minoritized students to resist systemic racism and racial microaggression, by embracing humanizing pedagogy. We seek to (re)imagine a dialogic curriculum; one which is epistemically liberating and collectively transformative, with the potential to counteract inauthentic learning experiences by generating space for liberated thought, the redistribution of power, and equitable action. We argue that this requires authentic dialogue, consciousness, and authenticity to enable multiple ways of being, doing, and knowing to co-exist and reinforce each other. Engaging with the works of Paulo Freire and Audre Lorde, we seek to (re)imagine a dialogic approach to curricula, but one which works to redistribute power and challenge privilege, to collectively transform higher education (HE) institutions. Freire (1967) motivates us to reflect and act upon structural systems of oppression, whilst Lorde (1984) inspires us to transform silence into language and action. We also offer our reflections on the Childhood studies curriculum, as we have both experienced it as undergraduate students and academic staff. As Black women in academia, we write from a position of emergence, silencing, precarity, exclusion, and navigation (Rollock 2019) to stand in solidarity with students in HE across the United Kingdom (UK). In 2018-19, between zero and two Black academics were recorded as working in the most senior positions; even less than the years prior, and out of 21,000 in total, only 25 Professors in the UK are Black women (Busby 2020; Adams 2020). We are conscious of the under-representation of Black women in professorial and leadership roles across HE and it was not until 2015, just five years ago, that Valeria Amos became the first Black woman vice-chancellor at SOAS (School of African and Oriental Studies).

We embrace intersectionality as an aspirational concept, to (re)imagine a bridging of the perceived gap between academia and activism and to strengthen the 'synergy between critical inquiry and praxis' (Tefera, Powers, and Fischman 2018, p.viii). In this sense, our paper is rooted in speculative thought; a radical possibility to 'imagine futures, reclaim histories, and create alternate realities' (Gunn 2019, p.16). By engaging with Black feminist thought, we do not seek to reductively theorize what liberatory praxis could, should, or might look like. We speak only for ourselves. Although we may share experiences or feelings with communities who also encounter and resist marginalisation, we *do not*, and more importantly *cannot*, represent the diverse population that has prejudicially been categorized as 'BAME' (Black,

Asian and Minority Ethnic) or 'BME' (Black and Minority Ethnic) in the UK. Despite its popularity, we question and dispute the majoritarian assumptions invested in mobilising these terminologies. 'BAME' as a label suggests heterogeneity amongst the diverse communities who are subsumed by this term and perpetuates a monolithic narrative which positions racialisation as a single-issue process. Still, changing terminology alone will not address the root of social inequity; without transparent efforts to understand, reflect upon, and learn from the necessity for change, the status quo is maintained and sustained by a new term that simply replaces the previous. We seek not to offer a new term to be adopted to categorize individuals, groups, and communities. Instead, we think with Paolo Freire (1967) who inspires us to (re)insert humanity into our encounters. We believe that individuals possess the agency to name and (re)define themselves and believe that authentic dialogue will empower a shift away from the deficit biases perpetuated against racially minoritized communities.

Revolutionary Leaders

> There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes "the practice of freedom," (Freire, 1967, p.34).

Student-led critical consciousness and empowerment are evident in the *Rhodes Must Fall* protest at the University of Cape Town, South Africa and Oxford University, UK. Building further, *Why Is My Curriculum White?*, and *Why Isn't My Professor Black?*, demonstrate student mobilisation which challenge issues of representation and discrimination across UK HE, much of which is rooted in colonial legacy and imperial nostalgia. A colonial curriculum is 'unrepresentative, inaccessible, and privileged' (Staff Development Forum 2020, para. 3) and the National Union of Students is championing *#DecoloniseEducation* to raise awareness of how universities sustain colonial legacies (NUS 2020). Despite students' campaigns, universities have failed to pledge action with any tangible, visible, or authentic commitment to eradicate racism as well as cultural and cognitive imperialism in academia. Only 24 of 128 universities responding to Freedom of Information requests (FoI) declared a commitment to decolonizing the curriculum, with 84 declaring a commitment to making their curriculum more diverse, international, or inclusive (Batty 2020). At present, there is a 13% gap between the likelihood of students from 'BAME' backgrounds to achieve a 1st, or a 2:1 degree compared to their white counterparts (UUK and NUS 2019). This reflects a racial inequity which suggests

that institutions are not meeting the learning needs of diverse student communities (Ferguson 2011).

Efforts to decolonize curricula thus far, have been directed toward limited disciplines such as history, art, drama, or English literature and often fail to act beyond 'diversifying' reading lists or 'inclusive' practices. This is perhaps reflected in Black students reporting lower levels of satisfaction also being more likely to exit their studies, than their white peers (UUK and NUS 2019). Contributory factors include: a lack of cultural connection to the curriculum; difficulty forming friendships with divergent student peers; and difficulty forming relationships with academic staff due to divergent backgrounds and customs (Bulman 2017). Instead, decolonial practices must act beyond the 'inclusion' of 'diverse' scholarship to critically unpick what has dominated the curriculum thus far, and also how this dominance came to be. To actively resist the inequities (re)produced by curricula, we must decenter hegemonic forms of knowledge and racialized structures of oppression by challenging the deep-seated coloniality that silences, delegitimizes and undervalues the knowledge, history, and experience of marginalized and racially minoritized groups. An authentic reflection of how historical legacies privilege some to the detriment of others, and how this maintains the minoritisation of racialized students and staff within contemporary structures, needs to be more explicitly challenged.

Deconstructing Silence

> For it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence. And there are so many silences to be broken (Lorde, 1984, *Sister Outsider*).

Despite surface-level efforts to widen participation and access in HE for students from underrepresented groups, universities commitment to tackle racism, discrimination, and racial microaggressions encountered by racialized students is insufficient. Universities need to acknowledge that 'issues of race are embedded within wider strategic goals' (UUK and NUS, 2019, p.2). Unconscious bias training will not address the systemic or structural issues that enable racial discrimination because accountability for unconscious processes is contradictory. By failing to acknowledge how structural inequities underpin differential outcomes, institutions perpetuate cognitive imperialism and curricular violence through a range of institutional and individual practices and processes. Racism designates a belief system in which certain 'races', and people who are racially minoritized, are considered inferior by virtue of characteristics or traits of that 'race'. Subsequently, institutional racism occurs when the policies and practices

of an organization unfairly discriminate against individuals and groups who are racially minoritized (Ngo 2017).

Efforts directed toward addressing the differential outcomes experienced by a diverse population should not emanate from a deficit view that blames students but should tackle the structural inequalities that underlie the 'gaps' in attainment. For example, the employment of racialized terminology to describe 'attainment gaps' or attrition rates perpetuate stereotypes, prejudices, microaggressions, discrimination, and Otherness whilst relinquishing institutions from the responsibility of unjust practices in providing opportunities or awarding degrees. This view detracts from the centrality of endemic racism, racialization, and Islamophobia in HE, absolving institutions from any responsibility of the awarding gap. The politicization and securitization of students by The Prevent Duty (2015) and employment of the 'BAME' acronym technocratizes, excludes, and is dehumanizing. Terminology as such, disfigures, conceals, and homogenizes the experiences and histories of populations who encounter racism and racialization. The perceived 'BAME attainment gap' is framed from a deficit perspective, where racially minoritized students are unfairly viewed as not possessing intellectual skills and attributes required to attain 'good' degree classifications. Instead, we view the 'attainment gap' as the 'education debt' which encourages recognition of this as a cumulative process; one which requires an understanding of how social, economic, and historical processes have impacted negatively upon racialized communities by restricting their access to equitable and meaningful opportunities which empower them to reach their potential (Ladson-Billings 2006; Welner and Carter 2013).

Majoritarian stories maintain systems of dominance by silencing the voice of minorities (Solórzano and Yosso 2002). As 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house' (Lorde 1984, *Sister Outsider*); majoritarian stories maintain, enforce, and repeat the historical erasure of diverse knowledges, cultures, and histories from institutional and systemic practices in the UK HE. These conscious and unconsciously textured discourses, practices, and processes perpetuate the status quo and are further reproduced by ethnocentric epistemology that silences and erases the cultural capital, histories and experiences of students who are racially minoritized as it perpetuates the reproduction of subjectivities of ethnocentricity. The homogenisation and technocratization of 'BAME' communities dismiss the differential barriers to participation in HE, as well as wider society, encountered by racially minoritized students. This includes the unequal and differential risk of emotional labour and psychological trauma when students are engaged in discussions on racism. There is, therefore, a need for staff

to recognize when there is 'an imbalance of power rooted in racial or religious oppression' (Akel 2019, p.32). Olson (1998, p.450) drawing on Lorde cautions against categorisation of individuals as 'high risk-groups' but rather, to acknowledge the 'high-risk communicative practices' which silence, devalue, and marginalize them.

Intellectual inferiority is further perpetuated by the lack of diverse representation in HE, which contributes to the domination of ethnocentricity as the standard or norm. Consequently, universities must become familiar with the invisible labour often 'expected' from marginalized members of the academy. This is evident in the burdening of responsibility to dismantle racism placed on 'BAME' students recruited as 'role models' or 'ambassadors' and expected to represent a minoritized community. The overburdening of these 'role models' or 'ambassadors' has far-reaching and often unacknowledged physiological and psychological impacts on their mental health and wellbeing; including race-based stress, trauma, and racial battle fatigue (Franklin 2019), particularly when working toward change within a space of resistance. As

Tembo (2020, p.3) denotes, race is 'both a socially constructed myth and a reality', these racialized 'role models' or 'ambassadors' are both hyper-visible and invisible. Where universities contribute toward placing or pushing students into hyper-visible spaces, we feel that they have a duty to support humanizing and epistemically liberating dialogue and authentic action. For this, we promote 'sacred truth spaces' as a means to empower students to 'share their realities' and 'multiple truths' (San Pedro 2017, p.102) and university leadership to champion and enact meaningful, equitable, and socially just change.

Dialogic Education

> Dialogue cannot be carried on in a climate of hopelessness. If the dialoguers expect nothing to come of their efforts, their encounters will be empty, sterile, bureaucratic and tedious (Freire, 1967, p.92).

If, as Freire (1967) writes, that people transform their world by naming it, then dialogic curriculum at all levels, has transformative potentialities. Advocating for a 'problem-posing' approach to education, Freire encourages students and staff to challenge the assumptions that uphold oppression and institutionalized racism, each reflecting upon: *who* is teaching, *what* is being taught, and *how* it is being taught. The curriculum provides structure to how we think and talk about the world, as well as how we acquire and value knowledge (Ferguson et al. 2019). Designing units, compiling reading lists, planning sessions entail narration of stories; how these stories are told, which actors are privileged and placed at the center, and whose

voices are authoritative are all important considerations in learning, teaching, and research. However, focus on the curriculum alone, situates students as passive learners and ignores the multifaceted learning process behind its delivery and acquisition. Universities should not encourage students to look outward only, but to unpick the politics which govern, oppress, privilege, and disempower amongst localities. Freire (1967) further stipulates that dialogue should be permanent. Universities must not be afraid to enter into dialogue, otherwise, they must accept responsibility for upholding inequitable power relations and practice. To engage in dialogue is to disrupt silence and reject complicity and HE institutions must participate in a transparent dialogue with students and staff.

Conversations about race are important as they enable students to appreciate the reasons why certain experiences and histories are privileged to the detriment of the Othered. Teaching and research need to respond to the lived experiences and realities of racially minoritized students. However, there is a need to act beyond perceptions of racism as a term or concept to be merely analysed and deconstructed, but rather taught with efforts and intent to dismantle it (Anderson, Saleem, and Huguley 2019). A dialogic curriculum requires 'relational and revolutionary spaces', where difference is celebrated equally (Becker 2013, p.225). Mutual vulnerability is a central principle of humanizing pedagogy, reflexivity is a necessity for those in dialogue to be present and conscious (Zinn et al. 2016). To stand in solidarity, university leadership need to 'step into spaces of silence' and empower individuals to speak on their behalf, rather than push them to recreate the dominant ways of doing, being, speaking, or knowing (Wagaman, Obejero, and Gregory 2018, p.1).

Rejecting the naturalisation of ethnocentric discourse, we adopt an intersectional approach to pedagogy across HE to resist the marginalisation of Black communities in academia, as well as Childhood studies as an academic discipline. We exemplify Childhood studies as a fruitful space for epistemic agency and highlight the need for a more critical approach to the study of childhood. Critical studies challenge the principles which uphold academia and call for the reconstruction of knowledge, while non-critical approaches run the risk of leaving the 'core of the discipline intact' (Eschle and Maiguashca 2006, p.4). Universities must do more to center 'theories from the margins' (Pérez 2017, p.49). We uphold that Black feminist thought can 'broaden the explanatory power' of the traditional theories of childhood, by engaging with the cultural context and geographical location of group memberships (Few 2007, p.466). By embracing Black feminist thought, the domination of patriarchal knowledge across the theorizing of childhoods can be unpicked and the lived

experience of children, and their families, demystified. For this, universities, leaders, educators, researchers, and learners must engage with minoritized communities to resist the oppressions encountered by these groups (Pérez 2017). It is, however, vital that when Black feminist thought 'travels' into the discipline of childhoods, that it is not depoliticized (Konstantoni and Emejulu 2017).

We wish to illuminate the under-representation and devaluing of Black women in academic spaces, as well as in the curriculum and although we value the formative works of Freire, which inspired much of our writings here, we chose purposely to insert Lorde as a way to demarginalize Black feminist thought and contribute to the development of critical theory. However, we do not call for the mere 'inclusion' of Black women and children in case studies or the promotion of Black staff as 'role models' within the work field, but a complete appreciation of the way that power relations of race, class, gender and age have influenced theories of childhood as we study them today. Within the field of Childhood studies, students are encouraged to unpick the normative ideologies which maintain the domination of ethnocentric knowledge and its role in the oppression of alternative epistemologies.

Souto-Manning and Rabadi-Raol (2018) critique the normative concept of 'quality' in early childhood education, as well as the monolingual, monocultural and deficit-based ideals of 'best practice' which this maintains. They promote 'intersectionally just' redefinitions and design principles of quality. To uphold that there is an objective measurement of quality is inherently biased and defined by an ethnocentric discourse which is naturalized as ground zero; this naturalisation of ethnocentric rhetoric prioritises the English language and textually based information. Something which Rabello de Castro (2020) argues contributes to the universalism of 'moral awareness' and the Othering or marginalisation of alternative childhoods.

Childhood studies is a multi- and inter-disciplinary field, which we feel complements the intersectional critique of universalism needed for equitable learning environments. The reflexive and engaging aspect of this discipline, in theory and practice, assumes a social constructivist framework that supports critiques of traditional 'science'. As a field, Childhood studies welcomes open-ended inquiry, and challenges the heteronormative foundations upon which the notion of the 'child' or the concept of 'child development' have traditionally been theorized. We also, however, recognise the constraints enforced upon our thinking and we reject the emphasis of ethnocentric constructions of 'good childhood' and 'child life' which create a standard against which Othered childhoods are valued from a deficit paradigmatic positioning that subjugates the experiences of intersectionally minoritized children and

childhoods. We refute normative constructions of the 'global child' which naturalize ethnocentric discourse of a 'good childhood', rooted in the global hegemonic ideal of the child. Rather, we envisage children's identity as 'dynamic, always in process' (Gabi 2013, p.2) and uphold that unwillingness to embrace, highlight, or celebrate difference contributes to rigid deficit-model approaches to pedagogy that maintain the marginalization and minoritization of Othered childhoods, particularly those from the 'Global South'. We value the holistic lens through which Childhood studies encourages us to challenge and champion individual development and experience and as foundational to the development of our critical thinking. The inherent criticality of Childhood studies, as a culmination of the interdisciplinary nature of unpicking the social constructions of childhood and children's lives and the reflexivity needed to unpick naturalized discourse, supports Childhood studies to have a 'deep and sustained interest in using scholarship for positive change in the world' (Alanen, 2011, p.150).

We suppose that scholars hold ethical responsibility to promote equity and social justice; we invite them to use their cognitive skills beyond theorizing, but to enable cognitive justice. Staff, students, and institutions are encouraged to reflect upon their research, learning, and teaching to consider whether their theory, findings, recommendations, and implications do not require, or recommend actions to improve equity, then they should acknowledge that they risk supporting, enforcing, and maintaining oppressive practices. More than a mere (re)imagining of curriculum, it is important to reflect on pedagogical practices, more specifically, how students are positioned within and across courses. For this, teachers must reflect upon their positions of power and their own complicities in the oppression and silencing of alternative ways of knowing. Rather, institutions should consider *whether* students are learning, *what* they are learning, *who* they are learning with, and *how* this learning is framed. Students and staff must be able to participate in an authentic and humanistic way, where they are, and feel, valued first as humans, before educators or learners. We advocate for students to experience a sense of belonging amongst their peers, staff, colleagues, classrooms, and campus, but beyond the physical environment, students should feel that they *belong* in the curriculum.

Authentic (Be)longing

> It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences (Lorde, 1984: *Sister Outsider*).

We call for cultural transformation and explore 'belonging' as a means and a tool to counteract the systematic discrimination enforced upon racialized students across HE; a transformation

which breaks the intergenerational reproduction of systemic inequity. Capitalized and marketized learning in HE dictates what is taught to who, with the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) dictating the direction of research, teaching, funding, and employment. Both 'excellence' frameworks dictate which student or staff perspectives, or dialogue, are 'valued', and arguably, this target-driven approach embraced by HE positions students as passive consumers of information. Reay, David, and Ball (2001) encourage the University and College Union (UCU) to foster a 'more culturally inclusive definition of academic knowledge' which encapsulates activities outside the prescribed remit of 'research excellence'. The *Framework for partnership in learning and teaching in higher education* (HEA 2014) intends to improve student engagement, learning success, employability, and sense of belonging, and retention, as well support staff to demonstrate greater awareness of their contribution to academia. Principles of the HEA (2014) include authenticity, inclusivity, reciprocity, empowerment, trust, challenge, community, responsibility. It becomes imperative that academic staff become conscious of their own positionality, orientation and knowledge that has the pretension of universality and neutrality whilst also creating a dialogic learning environment.

Universities that place too much emphasis on the 'academic' to the detriment of the 'personal' contribute to the perpetuation of inauthentic practices and processes which inhibit individuals from flourishing. To build a community of learners and develop students' sense of connection to the university, it is important to integrate social and academic elements of university life by encouraging students to build community and relations with one another, with staff, and with the curriculum (GoldsmithsSU 2019). This sense of community, as observed by Lorde (1984: *Sister Outsider*) 'must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretence that these differences do not exist'. Rather, it is through navigating those differences that a transformative and liberatory environment where every person thrives as an authentic self in solidarity with peers is formed. We are calling upon HE institutions to enter into solidarity relations with racially minoritized students and staff by (re)centering their uniqueness, without pushing an agenda of uniformity. Diverse student populations bring a plethora of unique and divergent characteristics, circumstances, experiences, and knowledge that enrich the learning environment. Justifiably, HE has much to gain from embracing these diverse knowledges, histories, and experiences that student populations bring.

HE must embrace 'Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy' to ensure that the multiplicity of communities is not lost or displaced throughout the process of education (Alim and Paris 2017).

For example, the 'standards' by which academic attainment is typically measured positions students as passive recipients within a 'banking' model of education; this reinforces deficitoriented discourse and arguable places racially minoritized students in perpetual remediation. This forces students into a constant state of being and longing to belong - (be)longing. As

Ahmed (2014, p.47) reminds us, 'we do live on common ground'; we believe that it is possible to (re)imagine a human relationality that acknowledges the remnants of coloniality, whilst also empowering spaces for collective healing and solidarity. To stand in solidarity with students and staff who are racially minoritized, university leadership must reflect much deeper than a conversation about how they might reduce oppressive situations but must act to unpick and disarm their own oppressive practices. Solidarity is important for achieving racial equity; institutions should do more to invest in developing allies who will stand in solidarity with their racially minoritized peers and speak out in the face of injustice and oppressive systems.

However, Ahmed (2014, p.189) reminds us that 'solidarity does not assume that our struggles are the same struggles'.

Liberatory Praxis

> The true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situations which we seek to escape, but that piece of the oppressor, which is wellbeing, planted deep within each of us (Lorde, 1984: *Sister Outsider*).

Freire (1967, p.51) denotes 'praxis' as 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it'; hence, the acknowledgement of racialized disparities alone will not suffice. Perhaps most importantly, reflection should be followed by action, otherwise, universities risk educating those 'who can reason yet has no desire to solve real problems in the real world; a person who understands science but does not worry about the uses to which it is put; a person who can reach flawless moral conclusions but feels no care or concern for others' (Martin 1981, p.104). University leaders must act to create meaningful, equitable, as well as socially just and sustainable change. We promote, encourage, and make recommendations for a more transformative learning approach where both students and staff challenge past and present knowledges. We appreciate the formative efforts of students who instigated this shift toward liberatory praxis in HE and seek not to downplay the agency and autonomy of students during this action toward liberation but direct our recommendations at university leadership. To

demonstrate a commitment to racial equity and the redistribution power and privilege, we recommend that universities:

1. Support students with Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy to engage meaningfully with complex and multi-layered narratives; these should reflect diverse cultural and sociohistorical contexts and address the barriers to participation and dialogue encountered by HE communities.

2. Demonstrate transparent efforts to represent and disseminate marginalized voices and communities via student-led curricula and culturally sustainable means of assessment (formative and summative).

3. Empower liberating spaces for multiple truths which challenge traditional power dynamics that enable dialogue by, for, with, about, and amongst diverse student and staff bodies from communities who are minoritized.

4. Invest in the development of students' sense of authentic (be)longing and demonstrate awareness of effective allyship through visible representation and access to diverse academic and pastoral support.

5. Ensure that all members of the university assume ethical responsibility to promote liberated thought and champion social justice within academia, localities, and wider society.

We have observed examples of epistemically liberating praxis across UK HE, where the curricula adopt a more critical and practical approach toward personal and community development. In 2017, Birmingham City University (BCU) introduced BA (Hons) Black Studies, which aimed to change the face, and nature of academia and transform the ethnocentric curriculum and have expanded to include BA (Hons) Black Studies (Criminal Justice) and MA Black Studies (Andrews 2016; BCU 2020). In 2019, Queen Mary University of London introduced a course in 'social change' which is targeted toward those who want to resist environmental and wealth inequalities. The course attracted 38 applications per place and a racially diverse student population, intending to change the 'face' of charity leaderships (Booth 2019). Considering, it could be supposed that students across HE institutions today are attracted to diverse, representative, and sustainable education experiences. Through co-production of knowledge, individuals experience a sense of belonging, shared ownership and community, diverse and experiential knowledges that are generated outside the university have the potential to enrich student and staff experience, as well as the learning environment (HEA, 2014). Therefore, we call for culturally sustaining and socially just teaching which empowers

meaningful connections between what students *learn* in education with what they *know* from their culture, language, and life experience. These connections help students access and engage with the curriculum and to make connections between *who* they are and *where* they are.

To promote social justice across HE, we must consider how universities engage with the economic, cultural, and political; recognizing how universities *misframe* individuals with unjust boundaries that contribute to their exclusion (Fraser 2008). In such racially stratified learning environments, race becomes an identity marker that frames what demarcates 'belonging' and 'attainment'. Given that people unjustly subsumed under the term 'BAME' in fact represent a global majority, we suppose that global citizenship, rather than globalization, is much more responsive and not centered around the erasure of one group, community, or culture. As Lorde (1984: *Sister Outsider*) reminds us, 'we are not responsible for our oppression, but we must be responsible for our own liberation' and we strive to support students as they continue to be revolutionary leaders of their own liberation. We suppose that any terminology used to label students, which has not been 'framed' by themselves, is built upon a majoritarian colonial discourse that is constructed in discriminatory and racialized rhetoric. Instead, we suggest that HE seek to emancipate individuals by enabling learning which supports students to develop an awareness of themselves and their political localities; for this, we suggest Clifford and Montgomery (2014) framework for global citizenship. At this point, we would like to make it clear that the notion of 'global citizenship' does not maintain the ideas of globalisation or internationalisation in HE. This *misframing* is prevalent in the naturalisation of labels such as 'BAME' and 'BAME attainment gap' which perpetuate the subjugation of racially minoritized communities to devalue their identities, knowledges, histories, and experiences. The demarcation and framing mechanism of the othered as not belonging in academia is rooted in the privileging of ethnocentric epistemology. Pedagogy which assumes the superiority of any certain type of knowledge assumes the hegemonic norms of society which thus far, have attempted to subjugate those who are racially minoritized.

Summary

We affirm that it is time for HE to redefine, not reform, the boundaries of learning and systemic injustice in academia. We call upon universities and their leadership, who thus far, has remained silent on racism, cognitive imperialism, and racialized disparities in HE. To counteract this complicit silence, we champion a dialogic approach to education and advocate for the right to a sense of belonging for students and staff within the university. We have

reflected upon the construction of curriculum as an act of power and we uphold that universities have an ethical responsibility to act upon the exclusionary boundaries and inequitable power relations which thus far, have impacted racially minoritized students in several significant, yet avoidable, ways. Universities should empower students and staff to be their authentic selves, whereby all who engage in dialogue are celebrated for their difference, and multiple truths are welcomed. They should further actively work to demystify and dispel the rhetoric, practice, and policy which uphold racialized discrimination and cognitive imperialism across UK HE. To conclude, we illustrate how we are all subject to, and complicit within, the same educational system, but we must respond to the call to transform and transcend the institutions which inhibit our authentic being. As Lorde (1984: *Sister Outsider*) states, 'revolution is not a onetime event', but it is through sustained dialogue that we can create humanizing and epistemically liberated universities, where every person thrives.

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