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The following is the condensation of our input at the February 2010 conference, plus our hindsight reflection; we will proceed by stringing our thoughts together without any particular organic structure. To begin with, we suggested a number of focalizations through which to approach the issue of decolonial change in higher education:

- positionality of the teaching subject, as in: how to do decolonial from the position of the white middle class tenured, or untenured German professor (male or female)
- the particular institutional framework
- the necessity to make generations of the decolonial project
- the theoretical conditions of the project
- epistemology in the context of practice and intervention

Resuming from previous discussions about the theoretical implications of a decolonial agenda, we shifted the focus to a pedagogy of decolonial content within a white European classroom context. This context which is owed to a classical humanist modern educational tradition forces the teacher into a paradoxical position, namely to adhere to the institutional framework while at the same time to undermine its colonial, racist legacy. The problem being, of course, that this paradox is not visible to the students and they consider themselves innocent of its implications. In detail, we raised the following crucial points: Who is in the position to find texts about colonialism and enslavement “interesting”? How to engage those who do not care or drop the subject as irrelevant to them? Who can claim discussions about racism to be too personal and who posits a difference between objective scholarship and personal investments in the first place? How to address defensive or dismissive reactions on the part of white students in discussions about racism? Questions we addressed pertained to: How to teach white students that they are implicated in a history of colonialism, especially in a town with an explicit colonial history; how to teach that this history has repercussions for the present?

A further question arising from the immediate pedagogical context as well as from epistemological considerations is that of the limits of disciplinarity, and consequently, the options for institutionalizing a decolonial agenda. One could in fact say that we need a decolonial epistemology of pedagogy for higher education. One crucial feature of at least German higher education is its severe demographic lag in that the student demography by no means mirrors the ethnic and racial composition of German society – so that some sort of revised affirmative action

program would be one of the first institutional steps to take to actually “change the subject” of higher education and make it far more ethnically and racially inclusive. In the meantime, however, the challenge will be to create a pedagogical impetus that carries our mostly white students (and teachers) beyond the ethnographic desire to know ‘more’ about the ‘others’, and initiates some sort of white western critical self-ethnography, as it were, to depart from the position of hegemonic white scrutiny of racegendered others (be it individuals or groups). While that, of course, in another paradoxical turn, centers white hegemony as the focus of attention, it seems to be the only available strategy, particularly in a white western European context, to relieve students of their innocence. In other words, decolonial pedagogy will need to prepare white students for acknowledging loss, and redistribution of epistemic privilege, e.g. to teach the Enlightenment from the point of view of Haiti’s revolution, through the lenses of Black narrative and scholarship, instead of recycling the vantage points of the European and US revolutions and proclamations of white bourgeois freedom. To teach white students a positional surrender of a priori entitlement to human history, decolonial pedagogy involves an ethics of humility vis-à-vis Black authoritative articulation in its various instantiations (written text, music, film, cyberspace media, historiography). The colonial legacy of European modernity (within its own metropolitan histories and cultures) asks for what one might call a “hermeneutics of epistemological suspicion” and a *decision* for epistemic disobedience to make the implicit but unacknowledged history of colonial investments at the core of white Europe visible in features where students would least expect it, e.g. the history of gardening, the development of insurance companies, the articulation of musical forms etc. Obviously, this project will encounter institutional resistance, and white students’ discomfort; which raises the question of how to institutionalize decolonial studies, without either being rendered ineffective or risking insurmountable obstruction.

The project of freedom thus needs to be carefully rethought in a context of teaching mostly privileged white students: whose freedom will be talked about, and by whom will it be articulated and fought for, and whose “unfreedom” might it necessarily entail? And, of course, can we thus take on a traditional humanist notion of universal and unqualified freedom as our claim? White European students, generally speaking, assume their own entitlement to civic freedom which may be generously “shared”, widened etc. – at least that is the general consensus in progressive circles. That this civic freedom has been intimately tied, by Enlightenment philosophy and its successors, to a literal and metaphorical possession of *self* as well as of *other* needs primary articulation; it also entails rethinking the white subject’s position to move from the pursuit of one’s own un-curtailed “freedom” to becoming an active witness to other people’s historical and contemporary unfreedom.

The pedagogical difficulty in this endeavor arises from the pressure to avoid what one might term a *pedagogy of guilt* in favor of a pedagogy of accountability and, to say it with Toni Morrison, response-ability to and for one’s own implicatedness (teachers as well as students). Nonetheless, decolonial higher education is not only about epistemological projects of re-reading and re-constitution of ‘knowing otherwise’ but also a methodological, and in the end, didactic

shift to an *eros of conflict, friction, irritation* which teaches the sustenance of white discomfort. Against the backdrop of higher education policies that align university education with high-speed training for the global job market, how can we as teachers provide classroom space for the pedagogy we propose here? We suggest that such an approach calls for "slow motion", deep thinking, and reflection. This might entail revisions in curricula and the "thinning out" of syllabi. To be sure, two sessions on a particular slave narrative, for instance, may spark more classroom controversy than one because it takes time, for lack of a better word, for white students to shift from a mode of complacency to a sense of implicatedness, from guilt to recognition, from safe comfort to exposure.

Implementing a decolonial project, as it were, also raises questions about the relationship between universities, schools, and political groups outside the academy. As an interventionist project, decolonial studies in the academy needs to consider its relationship to secondary education and social activism. How to bring these different perspectives to a table?

What can the future of a decolonial studies project look like? With respect to its institutionalization within the academy, we argue that it should cut across disciplinary boundaries to become effective. (Even if the transdisciplinary layout of a decolonial agenda poses challenges of disciplinary belonging, particularly for untenured scholars,) decoloniality is not a discipline that can be contained and added on. It is an attitude that calls for a re-visitation of the epistemological assumptions of established curricula in a transdisciplinary perspective. Imagine, e.g. a collaboration involving, for instance, historians, cultural studies scholars and geographers in a project on global climate change: studies on changing weathers in tropical zones might, among other archival materials, resort to eighteenth-century diary entries written by an English plantation overseer in Jamaica. A decolonial approach would then ask for addressing the ways in which this material is deeply engrained in a colonial setting: how to access knowledges that counter the colonial script of "nature"? In other words, an attitude of decoloniality calls for historicizing and de-territorializing the disciplines, their methodologies and objects of study. Even though the agenda of institutionalizing decolonial projects such as we have outlined here consciously runs the risk of being appropriated as new and hip, it will be challenged to keep its edge of negativity, in Adornian terms.

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