Engaging decolonial pedagogies as praxis

Exploring the field of decolonial pedagogical practices in the Netherlands

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Abstract

This explorative study is dedicated to tracing decolonial pedagogical practices around. Focusing on decolonial pedagogical practices situated in the Netherlands, this research maps what such practices are; where they respond to; what questions these practices raise and which dilemmas are brought to the fore by practitioners engaging with decolonial pedagogy. This research takes on a scavenger methodology (Halberstam, 1998), that centers around conversations with students and teachers either affiliated with the university or with art colleges, and with activist collectives. The aim is to think *from* and *with* the struggles when decolonial pedagogies are practiced and to situate them in an 'ecology of decolonial practices' (Stengers, 2016). This research brings forward the proposal to 'stay with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016), as way of continuing collective practices of imagination and experimentation with decolonial pedagogy. As such, this study can be considered an empirical contribution to both decolonial proposals from theory and decolonial practices already on their way.

Keywords: decolonial pedagogy; decolonial praxis; Netherlands; (re-)imagination; scavenger methodology

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Acknowledgments

Although I take full responsibility for the selection of words and stories that are presented in my writing and research, I wish to acknowledge that this thesis belongs as much to me as to the people who have thought, struggled and imagined with me along the way. I am grateful for the time and energy the people whom I have engaged with in conversations have made available for realizing this thesis, including conversations with the dialogists, the many meetings with the Collxctive, the extensive feedback from my supervisors and peers, and motivational talks from family and friends.

Above all, I am grateful that these people have showed me how to practice care and solidarity in ways that exceed the writing of my thesis; how they navigate through struggles and dilemmas I likely will face in the intended, yet unknown, future of my activism and research. My hope for my thesis is that, even though it is small in scale, it can contribute to further conversations on how to engage with decolonial pedagogy in praxis, how to practice solidarity and care. As such, I wish to start my master's thesis where I ended my bachelor's thesis, with this wonderful quote by Sara Ahmed on solidarity:

> Solidarity does not assume that our struggles are the same struggles, or that our pain is the same pain, or that our hope is for the same future. Solidarity involves commitment, and work, as well as the recognition that even if we do not have the same feelings, or the same lives, or the same bodies, we do live on common ground. (Ahmed, 2014, p. 189).

Introduction

How and *what* we learn are often taken for granted. But as we are witnessing today, the taken-for-grantedness of the traditional, Western educational model is increasingly contested by students, teachers, artists and activists. I was in my second year of my bachelor studies at Erasmus University College (EUC) when my fellow students addressed the lack of womxn and persons of colour representation in the curriculum in tandem with issues about the lack of diversity in the student population and the staff. It was through their articulations of this issue that I started to recognize and eventually question the Western-centered and male-dominated curriculum of my philosophy and politics studies. With the support of staff members and student committees at our institution, we set up 'the Collxctive': a student-led initiative affiliated with the university, but working independently on projects that propose to learn together otherwise.

The work of the Collxctive has served as a starting point for me to think about the topic of decolonial pedagogy, which I aspire to explore in this thesis. While illustrating our experiences and struggles, I also want to touch upon the current momentum gained by decolonial scholarship and activism, and will delve into the context of the Netherlands. For our work of the Collxctive, our struggles and our experiences, cannot be considered in isolation from these movements and the Dutch context. It is this specific context that orients and grounds my thesis, which aims to understand better how 'decolonizing' could take shape in educational practice, by looking at how teachers, students, activists and artists are engaging with decoloniality.

Over the past few years, calls to decolonize education are increasingly pronounced in many countries including the Netherlands. These calls sound the alarm about present-day manifestations of colonial domination and violence which are perpetuated and exacerbated by a neoliberal capitalist system (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). The continuous exploitation and

dehumanization that feed this system's infinite greed for profit urge us to re-imagine the ways in which we live together. On part of higher educational institutions, whose policies and organisation conform with corporate ideals of competitiveness and professionalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000; Harney & Moten, 2013), these alarming sounds urge us to teach and learn otherwise. After all, we cannot re-imagine another world with the same conceptual tools that sustain the current neoliberal capitalist order "for the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." (Lorde, 2018, as cited in Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 7)

Dismantling the master's house entails taking seriously the colonial universal paradigm that dictates the terms upon which knowledge is produced and may circulate (Quijano, 2007; de Lissovoy, 2010). Whilst educational institutions in the Netherlands are increasingly concerned with missions of diversifying education, scholars like Ahmed (2012) and Tuck and Yang (2012) remind us that such missions and commitments remain empty if they are merely about adding alternative knowledges to the curriculum, or diversifying staff. Rather, diversification and decolonization necessitate a complete restructuring of the university; they cannot become tools for window-dressing but have real, material implications for dismantling the colonial structures upon which educational institutions are built.

Even more so in the specific context of the Netherlands commitments to diversity paradoxically go hand-in-hand with depoliticizing discourses: post-racial, post-colonial and colourblind discourses deny and gloss over present-day manifestions of racism and colonialism (Wekker, 2016). It is precisely through this invisibilization of racism and colonialism, that it is possible for educational institutions to speak the language of diversity and decolonization, whilst simultaneously their participation in whiteness remains uncontested (Ahmed, 2012; Essed & Trienekens, 2014).

With the Dutch context and the current momentum of decolonial scholarship and activism in mind, I would like to return to our Collxctive. Whereas initially our projects

focussed on making space to discuss societal issues, we realized after some time that such discussions are unavailing when the institution continues business-as-usual. Reading Sara Ahmed (2012), we became more radical in our demands: we created a manifesto in which we proposed to institute 'otherwise': we hoped that we could re-think hierarchical divisions between students and staff, but also epistemic hierarchies in which Western knowledge is taken as the most legitimate form of knowledge (Quijano, 2007). In doing so, we aimed to work towards decolonizing the institution.

The initial responses to these demands – both by management employees, some staff members and students – were not always as accommodating: they viewed these demands as jeopardizing the current state of affairs in education. Of course, they were right in viewing the manifesto so, as its demands precisely wanted to get rid of business-as-usual. Yet, the resistance our Collxctive faced is not specific to our institution. Rather, the reluctant attitude towards considering alternatives and towards structural change is symptomatic of a society which is embedded in infrastructures of colonialism, racism and whiteness (Quijano, 2007; Wekker, 2016).

In addition to the bureaucratic blockages we stumbled upon while engaging decolonial pedagogy in practice, we also encountered more personal inhibitions to be critical of our own education. Especially given that we were students, and some of us were working for the university as assistants, it often felt as if there was a cognitive dissonance to be critical of the university that had provided us with the very tools to be critical. Still, we were dedicated to the cause of decolonizing our institution and were supported by fellow students and staff members who wanted to help us realize our projects. However, in our dedication, we stumbled upon more questions than answers:

What does a decolonial educational institution exactly look like? Where does a process of decolonizing the institution start and where does it end? While we were reading more about

decolonial pedagogy– including the seminal works of Freire (1970) and bell hooks (2014) – we found that these theoretical proposals do not answer the practical questions that resonated with the Collxctive. At the same time, we noticed that many initiatives were already taken by students, teachers, artists and activists to decolonize institutions in the Netherlands. Initiatives we could take inspiration from.

These included initiatives that are tied to a university such as the Erasmus School of Colour, and the diversity commissions of the university of Amsterdam and Utrecht. But also initiatives that seek to stress the importance of conjoining decoloniality with artistic approaches, including talks and projects organized by Sandberg Institute, and courses on decoloniality and aesthetics at Willem de Kooning Academy and Piet Zwart Institute.

Despite the fact that so many decolonial initiatives exist in the Netherlands, they are underexposed and marginalized within the educational system. I argue that this marginalization of decolonial pedagogy is particularly illustrative of the fact that the Dutch university, embedded in infrastructures of colonialism and neoliberalism, centers whiteness and Western knowledge and peripheralizes 'alternative' ways of knowing (Quijano, 2007; Ahmed, 2012; Wekker, 2016). By demarginalizing these different knowledges and practices, and tracing which realities these knowledges and practices do and enact both within and outside the university setting, I hope to shine a light on "how to continue to resist and resurge in the face of ongoing colonialism" (Simpson, 2017, p. 19).

In this thesis, I do not wish to uncover what a decolonial pedagogy *should* look like. Such an ambition would keep intact a colonial way of researching in which I as a researcher would distance myself from the topic at hand – without taking into account positionality and situatedness – and thereby would reproduce epistemic hierarchies. Rather, I wish to understand the different forms decolonial pedagogy can take when practiced into-being, which issues and controversies they respond to and which questions and dilemmas they bring to the fore in the

context of the Netherlands. As such, I pose the questions: "*What are controversies in the field of decolonial pedagogical practices in the Netherlands?"* and *"How are multiple forms of decolonial pedagogy practiced-into- being in the Netherlands?"*

Given the fact that there is much literature about decolonial pedagogy, but a lack of empirical accounts, I argue that it is particularly relevant to study how decolonial pedagogy is practiced. Therefore, in my approach to these research questions, I wish to scavenge (Halberstam, 1998) through conversations with fellow students, teachers, artists, and activists, through lectures and seminars, in order to find which decolonial pedagogical practices are already on their way in the Netherlands. In doing so, the intention of this research is to think *with* and *from* the struggles, tensions, questions and dilemmas that these conversations and seminars bring to the fore, which will be presented as meaningful opportunities for "staying with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016; Walsh, 2018).

Decolonial pedagogy in theory

In this theoretical framework, I first discuss the notion of decoloniality as praxis, what the onto-epistemological considerations are that decolonial praxis brings forth, and how this relates to prefiguration and imagination. Secondly, I delve into theoretical proposals for transformative pedagogy, which further bolster my ambition to explore decolonial pedagogies as practiced into-being. Lastly, the context of the Netherlands, which orients and grounds my research, will be discussed.

Decoloniality as praxis

Decoloniality has its roots in Latin America with scholars articulating their rejection of Western supremacy and Eurocentrism that dictate the world order. Decolonial theorists take the year 1492, the beginning of European imperialism as the starting point of a modern/colonial world order in which the Western modern imaginary – centering around values of progress and development – has been forged into being (Quijano, 2000; Bhambra, 2014; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). This imaginary has underpinned the 'civilizing' project of colonial conquest for centuries. It has breath into being a logic that conjoins the idea of modernity with rationality, which in turn has structured all relations in society along racist categorisations. This is what Quijano (2000) refers to as "the coloniality of power" (p. 216): a logic still present today that continuously exorcises black people and people of colour, and their ways of living and knowing, from the modern imaginary, so that the white colonizers remain their sense of superiority vis-à-vis the (formerly) colonized.

Decoloniality is grounded in precisely those experiences of people who have been expelled from modernity. Thus, rather than claiming to represent the world as it is – which is the universal project of modernity – decoloniality engages with the people, knowledges, worlds that have been erased from the discourse of Western modernity (Vázquez,

2011). The work of Lugones (2010) for instance interprets the coloniality of power alongside the axes of both race and gender, in order to emphasize that the ongoing dynamics of (settler)-colonialism particularly dehumanize women of colour and black women through their double subordination. Although the gendered-aspect of decoloniality will not be dealt with explicitly in this thesis, it further illustrates the argument that many of the societal issues articulated today, including racism and sexism, are rooted in the modern/colonial distinction that was forged into being 500 years ago under the European projects of 'civilization' and 'universalism' (Quijano, 2000; Bhambra, 2014).

Yet, far from only being a theoretical notion that debunks beliefs in universalism and Western superiority, decoloniality is "contextual, relational, practice based, and lived" (Walsh, 2018, p. 19). Decoloniality is not simply a reaction to the persistence of colonial systems of power, but a *praxis* which brings forth proposals for displacing Western rationality and creating ways of living and thinking together otherwise. Whereas the modern colonial project is to impose a universal, Eurocentric worldview, the project of decoloniality is to "disturb the totality from which the universal and the global are most often perceived" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 2). This implies that decolonial praxis disrupts the belief in universality and engages with the notion of the pluriverse, which recognizes that *multiple* realities, *multiple* worlds can exists alongside each other and are in relation with one another.

Implicit in this notion of the pluriverse is an ontological orientation of 'multiple', which is elaborated on in the work of STS scholar Annemarie Mol (1999). For Mol, multiple realities can exist alongside each other, but they do not exist a priori. Rather, multiple worlds and realities are performed in different practices, "they are *done* and *enacted* rather than observed" (p. 77). This idea of multiple ontologies as adopted in my research thus also has great implications for my epistemological orientation: in contrast to the colonial modern preoccupation of inferring 'legitimate' knowledge about the world, my epistemological

undertaking is to look carefully at the variety of deconial pedagogies as performed in practices (Mol, 1999). Furthermore, such decolonial practices do not only enact different realities of the present; they are intimately tied to the practice of imagining alternative futures and the enactment of these imaginations in practice (Rojas, 2016). In other words: decoloniality as praxis does not only encompass an ontological politics of multiple, but also a form of prefigurative politics tied to the practice of imagination.

Propositions for transformative pedagogies

A great amount of academic literature has been dedicated to exploring the possibilities and stipulating the conditions of decolonial pedagogy. For Freire (1970) the inclusion of oppressed people within institutional structures is not enough "The solution is not to 'integrate' them into the structures of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become 'beings for themselves'." (p. 47). From Freire's theory, several proposals are brought to the fore. For instance, he advocates for the disruption of 'the banking model' in which the teacher is conceived of as the 'knower' and students as a passive receivers. Furthermore, he proposes that the classroom should be a space of dialogue in which students develop a 'critical consciousness' of the world and their position in it, and that action should emerge out of such reflection (Freire, 1970). This conjoining of reflection and action is what he names 'praxis' (p. 40).

In the feminist, decolonial and critical pedaogical approach of bell hooks (2014), emancipatory education begins with the creation of a learning community in which everyone's presence is acknowledged and valued. This demands that students and teachers are able to recognize what their positionality is in the classroom, how they influence the classroom dynamics, and how they can learn from the contributions of others. In advancing this, hooks invites students and teachers to transgress the boundaries of their conventional, desired roles,

and collectively challenges societal issues including racism, sexism, ableism, classism (hooks, 2014).

Furthermore, as De Lissovoy (2010) urges, to create conditions in the classroom in which diverse knowledges and positionalities are valued, educational institutions should adopt an anti-dominative approach to the curriculum. This curriculum should decenter dominant European epistemologies and center the historical and contemporary contributions to different scholarly disciplines from outside the Global North, so as to give these contributions "strategic priority in curricula" which facilitates students with tools to "imagine a new global knowledge, culture, and society" (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 286).

These are beautiful proposals from theory, but the question remains how such proposals for emancipatory, transgressive and global education could be introduced in practice. Being attentive to the work of Harney and Moten (2013), the current reality of higher educational institutions like Western universities is that the time, knowledge and labour of students and teachers are extracted in the service of capital accumulation. Even being critical of these educational structures becomes yet another means of production, as critique becomes instrumentalized to improve the institutions. What Harney and Moten (2013) propose instead is "an exodus from the inside" (p. 64) in which students and teachers create meaningful spaces in the nooks and crannies of the university, where they collectively can seek refuge from the extractionist practices of the university. But also Harney and Moten leave open the question of how their proposal is put into practice, which further fuels my ambition to research how multiple forms of decolonial pedagogy are practiced into-being.

Context of the Netherlands

The Netherlands prides itself as a progressive country in which "the freedom to be who you are" prevails in national discourses of dealing with differences. This proud and tolerant self-image is (re)produced through colourblind, post-racial and post-colonial discourses, which

nourish the belief that racism and colonialism belong to a distant past (M'Charek, Schramm & Skinner, 2014; Wekker, 2016). It is through this imaginary of pride and tolerance that race and colonialism become "touchy matter" (M'Charek et al., 2014; p. 462); that present-day experiences, narratives and structures of racism and colonialism are glossed over or denied. This is the paradox of colonialism and race Wekker (2016) talks about, in which white people fall back on discourses of "but in the Netherlands we have no racism and we do not see race" to claim their innocence in the participation and reproduction of racism and whiteness.

Far from simply being about skin-colour, 'whiteness' entails an infrastructure that segregates between those who racially belong to society and those who do not (Wekker, 2012; Essed & Trienekens, 2014). In this infrastructure, being white becomes a default option, so that those who do not pass as white are racially located as being 'the other'. Here again, we see the forces of the present-day coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000) at play which uphold white supremacy through segregating between the white colonizers and the colonized, racialized others.

In the Netherlands willful ignorance and discomfort prevail with regards to facing racism and addressing present-day manifestations of colonialism (Çankaya & Mepschen, 2019; Wekker, 2016). Pointedly, this willful ignorance and discomfort do not only concern individuals or groups, but also institutions: (educational) institutions can reproduce whiteness by failing to address the power imbalances between people who are racially located as white and people who are racially located as other (Essed & Trienekens, 2008; Ahmed, 2012).

In this thesis, I focus on how people with different positionalities within higher educational institutions (e.g. as a student or as a renowned professor) engage with decoloniality in/as praxis (Walsh, 2018). Thereby, the theories and context discussed in this framework raise the question of how these people, from their different positionalities, deal with the complexities and struggles of practicing decolonial pedagogy into-being in the Netherlands.

Methodology

My thesis is dedicated to exploring the research questions "*What are controversies in the field of decolonial pedagogical practices in the Netherlands?* and *"How are multiple forms of decolonial pedagogy practiced into-being in the Netherlands?*". Approaching these questions necessitates a research method that is attentive to lived experiences and offers the opportunity to "stay with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016): to understand how people engaging with decolonial pedagogy make sense of their experiences working within institutional structures on projects and initiates that are often in friction with these very structures.

On my part as a researcher, staying with the trouble asks for a great level of open-mindness, a willingness to embrace the unexpected, and an understanding of my own positionality as being implicated in – rather than merely observing – the realities produced in the conversations about practices of decolonial pedagogy. This implies a continuous struggle and reflection of "how to write without describing and reproducing what we rebel against" (Anzaldúa, 2015, as cited in Walsh, 2018, p. 21); a struggle with refraining from re-inscribing the dominant European epistemologies and ontologies of the Western modern/rational knowledge paradigm, but rather thinking *with* and *from* the multiple knowledges and realities that are produced in practices (Mol, 1999; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018)

Scavenging through the field of decolonial pedagogy

For my data collection, I take on what Jack Halberstam has called "*a queer/scavenger methodology"*(1998). Much like Freire's (1970) empowerment education insists, this methodology aims to co-produce knowledges on and with subjects that are marginalized with regards to traditional (Western) knowledge economies. Besides recentering these traditionally excluded voices, this methodology is *queer* in the sense that it "refuses the academic compulsion toward disciplinary coherence" and allows for the combination of methods across and beyond disciplines (Halberstam, 1998, p. 13). This scavenger methodology is particularly

suitable for my research that seeks to explore multiple forms of decolonial pedagogy, as it transgresses the dichotomies of interviewee-respondent, and epistemic hierarchies between science-art, which are effectuated in more traditional forms of qualitative inquiry (hooks, 2014).

In my research specifically, I scavenge through the field of decolonial pedagogical practices in the Netherlands by engaging in conversations with students, teachers, activists and artists (from now on referred to as dialogists); and by looking at lectures, seminars provided by influential thinkers in the field; participating in protests revolving around decoloniality/decolonial pedagogy. This scavenging leads me to name and highlight such practices that are underexposed and marginalized in the conventional educational system.

Data collection and analysis

The search for dialogists started with the Collxctive and people who have been engaged with us, as well as with people in my network who are also engaging with decolonial pedagogy. Further building on their networks, proposed lectures and events, I have sought to trace decolonial pedagogies around (see Ecology of decolonial practices). I had the opportunity to speak with and listen to thirteen practitioners, have revisited six seminars of influential practitioners and thinkers who are engaging with decolonial pedagogy; have participated in several protests centering around decolonization (see Appendix A).

The conversations were semi-structured along very general themes, e.g. what is your practice?; how do you situate your practice in your institution? I sought to stay close to Freire's (1970) methodological proposal to co-intend on reality with the practitioners whom I spoke with in meaningful dialogues, and have therefore asked the dialogists to help determine the setting, themes, central questions, and 'next steps' of the conversations. These conversations included recorded zoom-meetings, walks, meetings in the park, and a voice-memo walkie-talkie-like reflection with members of our Collxctive. The dialogists have consented to their

participation in my research either by signing the informed consent form (see Appendix B), or by verbally giving their consent on record.

Importantly, I wish to stress that the practices of the dialogists affect and are affected by the specific contexts in which they occur, and are affected by the positionality of the dialogists in relation to the educational institutions they work at. For instance, practicing decolonial pedagogy means something different, and evokes different struggles, for a student than for a professor who makes a living from working at their educational institute. In consultation with the dialogists, I will only refer to them by their initial letter(s) and their gender identifications to protect their anonymity. Furthermore, I describe their occupations and the institutes they work at in general terms. Especially since the dialogists have addressed sensitive topics, talking for instance about the dilemmas they face at the institutions they study/work at, and practices of resistance they engage with, safeguarding their anonymity is highly prioritized.

The conversations and lectures have been transcribed and coded in Atlas.ti. For the conversations, open coding followed by axial coding (Bryman, 2016) yielded 60 codes which have been translated in the themes that now serve as the headers of my analysis. Building on the categories established after the conversations, selective coding (Bryman, 2016) was used for the lectures and seminars to further substantiate and contextualize the findings of the conversations.

(De)colonial controversies in the Netherlands

Before delving into how decolonial pedagogies are practiced into-being, it is instructive to analyse the context in which these practices are situated, and the societal issues and controversies that these practices articulate and respond to (see Marres, 2007). A such, the first part of the analysis will serve to answer the questions: what are the issues that the dialogists' practices are a response to? And what are controversies in the field of decolonial pedagogical practices in the Netherlands?

Issue 1: The politics of invalidating knowledge(r)s

In the theoretical framework, I discussed how the imaginaries of universality and Western superiority segregate and exorcize knowledges and knowledgers that are not deemed modern, including Indigenous knowledge(r)s, non-academic knowledge(r)s, and lived experience. The following paragraphs will be dedicated to exploring controversies through which the dialogists articulate the issue of invalidating subaltern knowledge(r)s in the context of the Netherlands. This issue centers around the questions: what counts as knowledge? And who is recognized as a 'knowledger'?

Controversy 1: textbook erasure

Before moving to the Netherlands in the 1990s to study, Q (artist, teacher) went to high school on one of the Carribean islands: "The history of the islands begins with the indigenous population", he tells me. Yet within the textbooks that he had at that time, this history nor the history of slavery and the colonial period were mentioned. "It also gave me the idea that the knowledge that we're getting in school, which is prescribed for us, is not enough". This reflection of Q is a textbook example of how colonized cultures and their histories are glossed over and are considered peripheral to the imaginary of Western modernity (de Lissovoy, 2010; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). It illustrates how the colonial project of universality narrates global

history (in the singular) through the viewpoint of the victors/oppressors. Specifically in the context of the Netherlands, as Wekker (2016) show, this colonial project of universality manifests in the absence of knowledges, experiences and narratives of colonized people – and the prevalence of discourses of the Netherlands as a just and ethical nation – in the way that the history of four hundred years of imperialism is told.

Controversy 2: white innocence

Controversy 2 brings to light how post-racial and post-colonial discourses, which feed the Dutch imaginary of a proud and tolerant country, effluence into a discourse of white innocence (Essed & Trienekens, 2014; Wekker, 2016). Innocence reproduces whiteness, by feeding the belief that in an ethical, Enlightened nation like the Netherlands 'racism (no longer) exists'. Speaking in the language of innocence is a willful tactic, which hampers white people to understand the racist world we live in, whilst they continue to reap the fruits from this (Wekker, 2016). As Q has witnessed, the evasion of discussions on race and racism in Dutch discourses also manifests as a lack of addressing racial relations and positionality within the classroom:

> I think one of the most bizarre things that happened, which I realized only afterwards, is being the only black man in class and then going to see the film 'Birth of a Nation' from D.W. Griffiths … it's a film about the creation of the Ku Klux Klan. And then the conversations were about everything but race and racism

Wilful ignorance does not not only include not-knowing, but also encompasses not wanting to know. As Essed and Hoving (2014) mark, the denial of racism can turn into an aggressive form of 'smug' ignorance (p. 24). This paradoxically leads to offensive representations of black people and people of colour; their invalidation through the perpetuation of everyday racism. Hearing about Q's experiences, it increasingly becomes clear how practices of silencing and

erasure of histories, experiences and narratives, are shaped and enacted through the discourse of white innocence, which sustains the Dutch proud self-image in and beyond the classroom.

Controversy 3: diversity, inclusion, tolerance

Currently, as enshrined in the 'National action plan 2020' (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2020), many universities in the Netherlands are dedicated to the mission of fostering inclusive and diverse education, which would enhance students' tolerance of different ideas and makes them more capable to deal with society's complexity (Brookfield, 2007). Still, as student R observed at her university, non-Western knowledge(r)s are included in the curriculum, but they remain the exception to the curriculum already in place. Similarly, N (assist. prof, diversity co) witnesses that the university she works at is diversity-washing, which entails adding different perspectives and thinkers in the curriculum, without changing anything to the existing structure and power relations present in the university.

Analyzing these remarks made by the two dialogists, I want to elaborate on two interesting, interconnected dynamics: firstly, as Wekker underscored in her seminar for KU Leuven (2021), commitments of diversifying education that do not seriously tackle the norms of Eurocentrism and whiteness only serve the purpose of window-dressing. As Ahmed (2012) argues: "diversity becomes about *changing the perceptions of whiteness rather than changing the whiteness of organizations"*(p. 34). Secondly, as Brookfield (2017) stresses, this form of diversifying the curriculum becomes a practice of repressive tolerance, in which every perspective and knowledge is equally valued, whilst refusing "to point out the ideologically skewed nature of particular contributions" (Brookfield, 2017, p. 562). Thus, although universities increasingly taking on commitments of inclusivity, tolerance, and diversity, such commitments only recenter European epistemologies and whiteness, if the status-quo remains untouched.

Controversy 4: (re)peripheralizing non-Western knowledges

Furthermore, Icaza Garza's seminar on decolonizing (2021) hosted by UTwente, and the conversation with dialogist N emphasize that universities do not take seriously the knowledges that are produced in practices outside of the current, Western scientific setting. The exclusion of such knowledges hinges on a colonial logic in which knowledge = theoretical (Ahmed, 2017). Additionally, this logic considers theory as something separate from (everyday) practices and lived experiences, so that practices and experiences are not considered as knowledges. Notably, this logic devalues the lived experiences of marginalized people who are violently subjected as intellectually inferior, including womxn, people from the LGBTQIA+ community, black people and people of colour, Indigenous people (Walsh, 2018). Taking their lived experiences serious, requires an understanding that "the personal is theoretical", as Ahmed (2017, p. 10) notes. Furthermore, it requires the recognition that knowledge-production is not limited to the Western scientific setting, but has "always been done" by communities exterior to this setting (Simpson, 2017, p. 22).

Controversy 5: teacher (depositor), student (receiver)

So far, I have discussed how the dialogists articulate the issue of how Eurocentric epistemologies – that are deeply engrained in the Dutch academic model – invalidate non-academic and non-Western knowledges, as well as how this epistemic violence glosses over lived experiences and the existence of societal issues like racism. Zooming in on the classroom, the following controversy brings to light how such epistemic violence, that divides between what counts as knowledge and whose knowledges count, is perpetuated in dynamics between teachers and students.

A key component of Freire's (1970) work on empowerment education is his critique of the banking model of education, a model in which teachers are the active depositors of

knowledge and students are passive receivers. Talking about this conventional student-teacher relationship, S shares the following picture with me:

Figure 1

Teacrer

It's the most beautiful paradox captured in an image. This idea of an individual who has knowledge to share with students and then the obvious mis-spelling of the English word 'teacher'... It proves the problem of thinking of teachers as these figures that have this knowledge that is send over, and that [this knowledge] has some sort of factuality. (S, teacher, artist)

Note. The artist of this image is unknown

As S elaborates, the *Teacrer* example helps us question the classroom dynamics of knowledge production and diffusion, which hinge on Enlightenment ideals. According to S, these dynamics underscore the fact that 1) students bring their own knowledges to the classroom; and 1) teachers are not mere channels of knowledge; their educational practices are not untouched by their own lived experiences. It is important yet difficult to question this banking model, as it is presented as a taken-for-granted, which hinders students and teachers alike to scrutinize their positionality in relation to one another, but also their positionality in relation to societal issues: "the more students work at storing the deposits entrusted to them, the less they develop the critical consciousness which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world" (Freire, 1970, p. 46). In conformity with corporate ideals, this banking model creates 'professionals' who may flourish in the society as it is (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000; Harney & Moten, 2013). What this model hampers is a collective, decolonial practice of imagining an 'otherwise', a society which may be (Rojas, 2016).

Issue 2: The (absent) politics of liberal education

The examples given in the controversies discussed so far demonstrate how liberal discourses of colourblindness, tolerance, and universalism repress discussions on positionality, racism, whiteness, and repress students' development of a critical consciousness. Paradoxically, the liberal discourse denies ideology– under the banner of safeguarding neutrality – whilst being heavily embedded in colonial ideologies of Western superiority (Clarke, 2012). As the speakers in the 'decoloniality and activism' seminar from 'Through the Window' mark, it becomes increasingly apparent at the moment that societal issues are articulated by students, teachers, and activists that this depoliticizing liberal discourse also influences educational policies in the Netherlands.

Controversy 6: practice what you teach

On May 31st 2021 students from Erasmus University, Erasmus University College, Willem de Kooning Academy, and Piet Zwart Institute gathered together and marched from one institution to the other, holding banners and signs that read: 'universities, practice what you teach' and 'justice for Palestine'. The march was part of a series of events and campaigns organized by students and staff members from various educational institutions throughout the Netherlands. These campaigns focussed on creating awareness of, and solidarity for the Palestinian struggle in the face of ongoing settler-colonial violence commited by the Israeli state. A week before the march, fellow students from WdKA, Piet Zwart and the EUC Collxctive had hung up banners on the outside of their educational buildings with the Palestinian flag and demands to cut (economic) ties with Israeli universities. These banners were removed for policy-reasons, which spurred a great controversy in and around these institutions about what the role of educational institutions is when it comes to engaging societal issues.

Figure 2

'Practice what you teach' march

Note. This picture was taken at Willem de Kooning Academy during a protest in solidarity with Palestine (June 2021). The photographer wishes to stay anonymous.

On behalf of our educational institutions, the much made argument was that they had to safeguard neutrality and not take a side, in order to provide students and staff members alike to form their own opinions about the issue. On behalf of the students, supported by some staff members, the argument was that the educational institutions pride themselves on teaching critical thinking and encouraging civic responsibility to speak up against injustices, but that there was a lack of actual commitment, manifested in action, on the side of these institutions. With fellow students of the Collxctive we discussed that this tension is especially compelling at EUC where on the one hand problem-based learning underscores the curriculum, but where on the other hand students and staff members express that the action part, which is crucial in the Freirian (1970) sense of problem-based learning, is missing.

In another conversation, the following points were brought to the fore: "There is a paradox operating here: if you teach courses on decoloniality, you cannot remain silent", Ç (teacher) told me. "And not remaining silent goes beyond verbal commitment", Y (student)

remarked. This paradox that the dialogists have identified ties in with an important remark made by Tuck and Yang (2012): that decolonization is not a metaphor. This implies that the language of decolonization is adopted in educational policies as a synonym for everything that should be improved in education, without seriously considering the material implications of what it means to decolonize. Instead, we argued that 'to practice what you teach' means to take seriously the dismantling/abolition of coloniality of power, which we are taught about in our decolonial theory courses; to boycott and divest from companies and institutions that sustain (settler-)colonial violence; to abandon the language of neutrality.

Towards praxis

In relation to the previous controversy, N observes that, although educational institutions like the university seek to educate pioneers, "universities are not pioneers, they respond". This is in line with Clarke (2012) who argues that educational policies, which are embedded in depoliticizing liberal discourses of neutrality and diversity, are not designed for taking action and taking a firm position when major social issues are articulated, but only aim at responding at the moment controversies are already brought to the fore. As explained earlier, this is the case because it is in the interest of these institutes to continue business-as-usual (Ahmed, 2012)

Nevertheless, as dialogists N emphasized, we must not forget that there are many actors working within and outside of educational institutions who are instigating change, who are in multiple forms and shapes engaging with decoloniality in their pedagogical practices. These practitioners create alliances with one another and invent their own tactics for engaging decolonial pedagogy as praxis in an environment that is not necessarily always receptive to change and action; "it's action outside of the mainstream", as dialogist G calls it. The aim of the following paragraphs is precisely to see where and how such tactics and practices take place; to reflect on the decolonial pedagogical work that – despite the limitations that the Dutch liberal educational context imposes – is already being done.

Ecology of decolonial practices

The second part of the analysis is dedicated to exploring how decolonial pedagogical practitioners respond to the controversies discussed above. In other words, it delves into the question: how are multiple forms of decolonial pedagogy practiced into-being in the Netherlands? Building on Stengers' (2016) notion of ecology of practices, this research brings forward the proposal that the decolonial pedagogical practices of the dialogists produce knowledges in different forums (academia, arts, activism) that are not closed off from one another. Rather, these knowledges, practices, practitioners and ideas travel through a "web of often highly interdependent connections" (Bell & Paolantonio, 2018, p. 573). The existence of such a web is also affirmed by the fact that the dialogists express to form alliances both within and outside the setting of their educational institutions, which I have traced around through speaking with the people, and visiting the events and seminars, they proposed in our conversations.

This ecology of decolonial practices is illustrated as follows: although the dialogists do tactics differently, their practices can be brought together by analysing which common imaginations operate under these tactics (Rojas, 2016); imaginations that propose an "otherwise" to the issues and controversies dealt with in part one of the analysis. Furthermore, staying attentive to the partiality and situatedness of the practices – and staying attentive to the messiness inherent in the scavenger method (Halberstam, 1998) – each analysis-section will 'end' with open-ended questions and dilemmas that these practices evoke, not as forms of critique, but as opportunities for staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016).

Towards pluriversal knowledges

As marked in the first part of the analysis, one of the main issues that is articulated by the dialogists is that the Western modernity/coloniality paradigm exorcizes, periphalizes and

erases histories, narratives, and 'alternative' knowledges so as to reproduce modern Western domination and superiority. The practices of remembering and cultivating knowledges that the dialogists bring forward can be considered as explorations of demarginalizing such knowledges and histories, explorations of "producing worlds and knowledges otherwise" (Escobar, 2007, p. 179; Freire, 1970).

Practice of remembering

Two of the dialogists have told me about how they use the practice of remembering in their work and daily life. For Q (artist, activist), who grew up on the Carribean islands, the practice of remembering translates into his performances and poetry in which he brings into focus stories and memories from the islands; the colonial structures underlying what counts as knowledge; experiences of everyday racism in the Netherlands. He tells: "In my work I try to decolonially remember the Dutch colonial archive". Importantly, according to Q, with the practice of remembering comes certain actions that the work calls for. For him, this entails being politically active and speaking out against manifestations of racism in Dutch society.

For R (student), born and raised in Paraguay, the practice of remembering entails "retaking things from my culture, and using that in my education, using that in my life". R shared with me that she had been brought up with the imaginary that the Western world was perfect, and that the Spanish colonizer language was more civilized than the indigenous Guarani language. In a course on postcolonial theory and decolonial theory R was confronted with the fact that she had disregarded her roots for a long time. She notes: "so I first had to decolonize that idea… and I am still in this process, I still have a lot of unanswered questions." Engaging with the practice of remembering, she is currently writing her final paper for the mentioned course on how she is navigating herself through this process.

The practices of remembering take different shapes: Q's artistic and political work is considered with collectively remembering, whereas R firstly considers remembering as a

practice for herself, a process of decolonizing her mind. These practices do have in common that they are intimately tied to their lived experiences growing up in (formerly) colonized countries, and seeing how their histories and cultures are glossed over in the imaginary of Western universality, and more specifically in the context of the Netherlands (see controversies 1 and 2). Through their praxis, they not only question this imaginary of Western universality, but also propose how education could be informed by engaging with different imaginaries of the past.

The question remains, however, to which audiences such practices of remembering are intelligible: R makes her practice of remembering public through writing an academic paper for a university course; Q makes his practice public through poetry and performance. But how can the practice of remembering, which is so important in a national context of white innocence (Wekker, 2016), become intelligible to a larger, general audience? This question feeds into a larger dilemma, which will be touched upon after the practice of cultivating knowledges, in which practitioners are faced with a choice of aligning themselves with current institutional structures/languages in order to get things across, or departing from these structures.

Practice of cultivating knowledges

Precisely because the universalist colonial project grants superiority to modern Western knowledges over subaltern knowledges (see controversy 3), the dialogists find it important to bring in such knowledges in their educational practices. In the ESOC seminar 'What does it mean to work against the institution you work for?', the speakers discussed that the idea of 'co-creation' of knowledge, which is becoming a buzzword in educational policies around diverse and inclusive education, might still hing on a capitalist idea of production. They proposed instead to speak in the language of 'cultivating knowledges', as a way of both realizing new knowledges that may arise from collaboration, as well as recognizing the knowledges that have already been there. They note that attention has to be paid to whom can be considered a co-

cultivator, precisely since many knowledgers currently do not have access to the Western capitalist knowledge economy. But how can this be done in practice?

For example, N (assist. prof, diversity co) engages with the practice of cultivating knowledges by bringing in different knowledges from her circles outside of the university and "incorporating those knowledges in teaching and scholarship, either in writing, but also by inviting speakers to the university". Amongst others, she is using the platform of the bottom-up diversity committee she has co-founded to invite people from activist circles that engage with issues such as racism and sexism. In this way, N also breaks away from the idea that knowledge is only produced in the university (see controversy 4), and aims to demonstrate that lived experience is also knowledge (Ahmed, 2017).

Still, on a critical note, I wonder how this practice resonates within the larger structures of the university, considering the following: in their diversity committee, as N explains, when they talk about diversity, "it must be embedded in this notion of social justice, and must be deeply tied to history". By contrast, in the institutional language, diversity is de-politicized as a tool for window-dressing and obscuration of the manifestations of racism at the university (see controversy 3). There is hence a friction between how the committee mobilizes diversity and how the institution does it. Taking Ahmed's (2012) caution of the institutional mobilization of diversity and inclusion in mind, how can you ensure that diversity work, like that of N's diversity committee, does not become adopted in the university's "happy talk", as prove of its commitment to diversity?

There are no ready-made, comprehensive answers to the questions evoked by the practices of remembering and cultivating knowledges. But what the dialogists do identify as a way of navigating the dilemmas is the following: In order to get things done at the university it is sometimes the most efficient to not only work against the system, but also to see where to align oneself with the current structures and languages in place, N argues. So to speak in the

language of diversity, to speak in a language intelligible to many, is in that sense also a strategic choice, because it does enable practitioners like N and Q to get support for their ideas, events, and proposed changes (Ahmed, 2012). Thus, rather than choosing one or the other, carefully calibrating when to align and when not to align, could facilitate that proposals for changes get a foothold.

Towards a learning community

On the following pages I will explore what tactics are involved for practicing an imagined learning community into-being. The importance of re-thinking teaching and learning is voiced by bell hooks:

> There is a serious crisis in education. Students often do not want to learn and teachers do not want to teach. More than ever before … educators are compelled to confront the biases that have shaped teaching practices in our society and to create new ways of knowing (hooks, 1994, p. 12).

This quote illustrates that the practice of cultivating plural knowledges, in addition to calling in knowledges from outside of the university, also calls for a renewal of teaching practices within the university. Thus, in order to foster a learning community, we must not only transgress disciplinary boundaries, but also re-think power relationships within the classroom (Freire. 1970; hooks, 1994). The following paragraphs will illustrate how the division between students as knowledge-receivers and teachers as knowers is disrupted in praxis:

Practice of co-learning

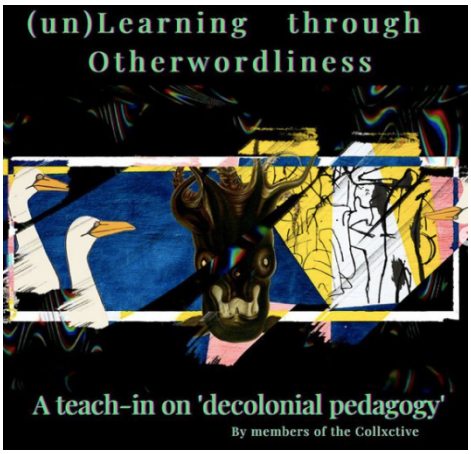
In the winter of 2020-2021, our EUC Collxctive was invited by experimental pedagogical trainers to develop a workshop (Teach-In) on the topic of our choosing. This track provided us with the opportunity to experiment with practicing decolonial pedagogy. In February we

presented our TI, which revolved around entanglement, embodiment and otherworldliness. My fellow students shared the following reflections on the why's and how's of our TI:

V: "It was very interesting to debunk the colonial mechanisms that are in place in conventional education". Further reflecting on these colonial mechanisms, B adds: "In our Teach In, we looked at all the binaries in education and tried to disrupt, shift and highlight them". As K shares, a crucial element of the TI was to break up the student-educatory binary (see controversy 5) "whereby the educator is the sole source of power and knowledge. Doing so by emphasizing that everyone possesses different knowledges, and emphasizing equality of knowledges".

Figure 3

Unlearning through otherwordliness- Collxctive



How we practiced this was by 1) replacing the word 'teachers' with 'guides' throughout our TI, so as to emphasize that knowledge sharing is reciprocal rather than unilateral, and that our tasks as facilitators of this event was to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to share, and 2) we sought to participate in the same way in all the activities and discussions as the participants so as to create a more equal playing field. The imagination operating under this practice that disrupts the student-educator relationship was an imagination of a learning community in which teachers and students are co-learners.

In the beginning of the TI, it was expected from us that we would decide and judge how the exercises were executed. Eventually, both guides and participants got more comfortable with the idea of reciprocity, resulting in wonderful discussions in which we collectively re-imagined education. Plausibly, the fact that we were able to move swiftly towards these more horizontal relationships between guides and participants was because the participants

recognized that we as guides are also students ourselves, who only *temporarily* performed the role of teachers. As such, it may have been easier in this specific setting to denaturalize the conventional categorisations of students and teachers, than in a setting in which the student teacher relationship – through the repetition of performance (see Butler, 1988) – is more sedimented. To illustrate this, the following part will discuss the practice of disrupting the student-teacher relationship, and the struggles this practice evokes, from the experience of teacher S:

For dialogist S, disrupting the conventional student-teacher relationship entails what Harney and Moten (2013) name "refusing to call to order". He explains: before the class starts, students are already engaging with 'study' in the sense that they exchange experiences and knowledges and are learning from and with each other. This study is both interrupted and disparaged at the moment that a teacher comes in, who commences what is considered 'real learning': "The formality of bringing up the first slide of your PowerPoint presentation and say 'now we start', clapping your hands (...) this is an act of colonizing", S comments. So for practicing a learning community into-being, "refusing that call to order is important".

However, dialogist S marks that it can be difficult as an educator to shift the conventional student-relationship in class "because a certain performance is required of you". He refers both to the institutional requirements for teachers, as well as to the students who expect a teacher to take the lead in class. To unsettle the dominant conventions of teacher-student dynamics, it is necessary that this practice of refusing to call to order is repeated numerous times, and by different teachers, so that the students can reformulate their expectations of the role of the teacher. However, as S notes, apart from the institutional demands that hinder such a teaching-style, another hitch is that there often is an unwillingness on part of teachers who have been teaching in the conventional way for decades to consider alternative teaching styles.

What these two examples of the practices highlight are multiple ways in which both students and teachers can create a setting in which (fellow-)students are 'nudged' to disrupt the conventional ideas about what the role of a teacher is, and can become active co-learners. However, it is increasingly difficult for students and teachers alike to practice reciprocal and emancipatory learning whilst working within a structure of neoliberalism, with determined curricula and audits that militate against such empowerment education (Jackson, 2007). The productive question then becomes: what *is* feasible in terms the energy, time and labour these practitioners can put into their decolonial work?

Practice of polyvocality

As argued before, the banking concept of education (Freire, 1970) is so focused on knowledge transmission *from* teacher to student, that it does not recognize the multiple knowledges that may be exchanged *between* students, *between* students and teachers. For this reason, dialogists S and Ç (teachers) want to draw attention to the notion of 'polyvocality', meaning to have multiple voices present within the classroom. They identify that this can be fostered by setting ground rules prior to classes in which it is made clear that everyone can share their experiences without being interrupted. Precisely those differences in knowledges and subjective experiences present in the classroom can contribute to the development of a critical consciousness with which learners can perceive their own position in society and can recognize and act upon (!) societal issues (Freire, 1970). Of course, realizing this is more complex in reality than simply validating everyone's opinion equally. As Ç wonders: "what happens at the moment that a student says something problematic?".

In an earlier conversation, educator G has also reflected on how she engages with this polyvocality in practice:

> I do not think that international or decolonial education should be merely about validating every viewpoint or perspective or experience or history… The main drive should be critically assessing and reassessing our belief systems, critically discussing our histories how hey relate to social structures.

And this also calls for uncomfortable discussions, if someone says something problematic, she adds. This stance is elaborated on vigorously in literature about 'pedagogy of discomfort', with authors suggesting that "if a major purpose of social justice education is to unsettle cherished beliefs about the world, then some discomfort is not only unavoidable but may also be necessary" (Zembylas, 2015, p. 164). Discomfort and polyvocality are not mutually exclusive, as G emphasizes, but they demand careful calibration and balancing so as to "make ourselves uncomfortable.. that is necessary for learning, but not threatened".

The difficulty of this practice is that it puts a great amount of responsibility (and authority) in the shoes of the teachers who have to draw the line between the viewpoints and experiences that contribute to polyvocality and those that threaten polyvocality, as well as the line between the safety and discomfort that are both needed for learning. Moreover, how to deal with this also depends on the position of the teacher within the larger institute: for a starting tutor these lines may be less recognizable than for an experienced professor. Nonetheless, in both cases the careful calibrations of these dilemmas demand a great amount of extra work and energy on top of what is already demanded for teaching. Especially given the increasing neoliberalization of higher education with its trends of 'flexibility', accreditation and competition (Stein & de Oliveira Andreotti, 2017).

The practices of co-learning and polyvocality inevitably raise the questions: how are these practitioners holding up? What keeps them driven when their work is often ignored or even when their work is extracted as surplus value? There is no unequivocal answer to these questions, it also differs greatly per dialogist depending on what their positionality is within

the university, what their mental and physical capabilities are. Still, what does resonate with me personally is a remark that assistant prof J made, who said that:

> It is worth keeping in mind the costs of conforming and non-conforming. Whatever you do, there will be a cost. I don't know if we can be in solidarity with one another, but the cost of trying is less than the cost of not trying. This does mean that sometimes you are more complicit, and at ther times there are more openings. But that's different than being for/against.

Towards solidarity and care

While scavenging, I found many controversies, dilemmas and struggles that decolonial pedagogy evokes. Indubitably, these issues raise the question: what motivates the practitioners, what keeps them driven whilst working within the institutional structures they are also working against? 'Solidarity' and 'care' were identified by most of the practitioners as the drivers behind the time, work and energy they put into practicing decolonial pedagogy into-being.

Practice of abolition

Solidarity and radical love are expressed and practiced in a myriad of ways. For Z (PhD candidate), his practices of researching and activism outside of the university are geared towards solidarity and emancipation: "It's not some kind of saviour complex… It's an understanding of these vital structures that are so genocidal". With genocidal, Z refers to the violent manifestations of (settler) colonialism that not only influence how we live with each other, but also – as becomes clear in the current Palestinian struggle – who is allowed to live at all. "And none of us are free until all of us are free", Z and W (professor) remark, echoing the words of Mariam Kaba's *We do this til we free us* (2021).

As identified by the dialogists, to practice this solidarity and love means to engage with abolition and care. To abolish does not simply mean the destruction of things, Z assures.

Abolition, as elaborated on in the work of Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2021), is about seeking to build life affirming institutions, so that "destroying and building go hand-in-hand" (Z, PhD candidate). Notably, 'institutions' here does not only refer to organisations like the university, but also to the informal/semi-formal organisation of social life, such as collectives and friendships. Taking abolition seriously, J (assist. prof) argues that it is important to talk about "what we want the university to be, what we want to do with each other and whether or not that is possible within something that is called the university".

Imagining how such life-affirming institutions can be built in the university-setting, Z imagines a space "where we can study together, where there is no racism, no sexism, homophobia, transphobia … it should be a place of care". Such spaces may not exists, and even if they could, it is incredibly difficult to actualize the possibilities of such an imagined space under the current circumstances of increasing polarisation and exploitation at the service of neoliberalisation (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). Yet, the key of imagining life-affirming institutions is "that you do not get sinked in what does not work or is not impossible, but focus on what we can be done", R (student) reflects. In this line of thought, it is productive to see what *can* be practiced in terms of solidarity and care. I will now summarize such practices that the dialogists have identified.

To practices solidarity and care means: G: putting your money where your mouth is; Q: educating yourself on histories and societal issues and their manifestations, rather than putting that work on the shoulders of marginalized people; R, B, V & K: thinking about your own positionality and embodiment, and making space so that marginalized communities can be listened to; N & S finding your allies within and outside your educational institutions; Z & W: creating your own spaces in the Undercommons of the university (Harney & Moten, 2013).

Of course, the questions remain how such tactics can eventually mount into emancipation on a broader societal level, and at which point we can say "all of us are free".

Although the dialogist' practices are informed by some idea about what the future of education, or specifically the future of the university, could possibly look like, we can never really know. J (assist. prof) for instance argues that even if we would completely flee from the current (imaginary of) the university, we would not know where to go, we can not determine beforehand what a good institution would look like. "So part of the work is also trying to figure that out, rather than assuming that we know beforehand. We have to let things emerge, so try to create the conditions in which things can emerge." This again shows the importance of collective imagination as decolonial praxis, as a way to navigate through struggles together and performing realities of solidarity and love into-being which displace the colonial, neoliberal reality that reigns today.

Navigating through the struggles of decolonial pedagogy

In the first part of the analysis, attention has been payed to the current realities in which the practices of the dialogists are located and to which they respond. The ecology of decolonial practices presented in the second part of the analysis went into more detail about what these practices are, how they relate to one another, which prefigurative tactics they encompass and which alternative realities these prefigurative tactics imagine and enact (i.e. towards pluriversal knowledges, learning community, and solidarity). In this part, I have also discussed the struggles and dilemmas that are evoked when decolonial pedagogy is practiced into-being, including the dilemma between aligning with current structures of the educational institution to get things done, and departing from these structures; the costs of conforming and non-conforming; the fact that even though we imagine education "otherwise", we cannot pre-determine what this otherwise looks like, what the final destination of the decolonial pedagogical practices are.

What these dilemmas highlight above all is that decolonial pedagogies as praxis do not simply result in a choice of either working with or against. Rather, these practices carefully calibrate between departure and alignment; escaping and returning:

> It's like this analogy of a river: if you try to straightforward get from one shore to the other, you just waste a lot of energy and do not get there eventually. But you have to go a bit diagonally and let the current take you a bit. And play with that along so you can get to the other side." (R, student).

By thinking with and from the struggles (Walsh, 2018), I pose these questions and dilemmas not in anticipation of finding answers, but as reminders that these practices are by definition partial, situated, experimental and speculative. Considering these practices as situated in an ecology of alliances and interconnections, this final part of the research will argue that there are productive approaches to be found in the collective struggles and dilemmas, and unresolved

questions that the practitioners face. If anything, leaving such questions and dilemmas open allows for continuous experimentation with decolonial pedagogical practices, for staying with the trouble of decolonial pedagogy.

Staying with the trouble

Navigating through the dilemmas, finding moments of escaping and returning to the current state/imaginaries attached to educational institutions like the university, entails trouble: "to stir up", "to make cloudy", to "disturb", as Haraway phrases it (2016, p.1). Trouble in the sense that controversies will continuously be articulated by decolonial scholars, activists, practitioners, which demand persistent re-formulations of what is at stake in the field of decolonial pedagogy; what can be practiced; how this is practiced, and what realities are produced in these practices. Trouble in the sense that such questions do not have unequivocal answers, that different tactics can be used to engage with these questions. Trouble in the sense that these tactics, as practiced by different people with different positionalities within different (institutional) contexts, might overlap, diverge, build on one another, but also may be at odds with each other. Trouble in the sense that researching the field of decolonial practice entails scavenging, searching and finding what is already happening, whilst simultaneously acknowledging that this scavenging can never be complete, that there are many practices that simply have not been found yet, that many more practices will pop-up on the way.

Using the scavenger methodology (Halberstam, 1998) in this research has meant collecting scraps from conversations, lectures, texts, in order to piece together which controversies are articulated in the field of decolonial pedagogy in the Netherlands, and how multiple forms of decolonial pedagogy are practiced into-being in this context. Notably, the scope chosen for this research and my own positionality have greatly influenced how I have scavenged. For the scope, for instance, one of my dialogists remarked that decoloniality and

decolonialism means something different in the specific context of the Netherlands than in other contexts, which also means that we must understand the practices discussed in this research as context-specific, not generalizable and not directly comparable to the practices that are happening in other countries. In addition, some of the dialogists talked about the usage of academic language and how that can also be a way of excluding people, denying them access to education. These are some of the roads I did not go into whilst scavenging through my research, but would like to explore someday.

With regards to my positionality, I have sought to stay away from the supposedly existing, desired position of objectivity by also including our experiences of the Collxctive in this research. After all, many of the questions and dilemmas the dialogists have raised are also questions and dilemmas we have encountered or likely will encounter whilst staying engaged with decolonial pedagogy in practice. Following this train of thought, the possibilities for future research will present themselves when we are staying with the trouble, which firstly requires "learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivotal between awful oredenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings" (Haraway, 2016, p. 1). This demands of us that we collectively reflect and act (praxis!) upon the issues and controversies that will be articulated in the field of decolonial pedagogy, and that we collectively imagine and experiment with practices of radical love and solidarity, whether as practitioners of decolonial pedagogy, as researchers, as both.

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Appendix A

Overview of the research data

Figure 4

Anonymized dialogists

Dialogist's initial letter(s)	**Pronouns**	**Affiliations with/position in relation to educational institute**
S	He/his	Artist, teacher and coordinator at art colleges
G	She/her	University teacher, researcher and trainer in progressive and critical pedagogies
Z	He/his	PhD candidate, teacher
Q	He/his	Artist, teacher at art colleges
R	She/her	Bachelor student, member of the Collxctive
B	She/her	Bachelor student, member of the Collxctive
V	She/her	Bachelor student, member of the Collxctive
K	She/her	Alumna, member of the Collxctive
Y	She/her	Bachelor student, member of the Collxctive
Ç	He/his	University/art college teacher, artist
N	She/her	Assistant professor, member and co-founder of diversity committee at Dutch university
W	He/his	Professor
J*	She/her	Assistant professor

*the quotes used in this research are not from conversations I had with this dialogists, but from conversations during a (semi-)public event. For consistency and anonymity reasons, the quotes have been anonymized in my research. The dialogists has been informed about this and has consented.

Figure 5

Seminars and lectures attended/revised

Seminar/lecture name	**Organisation/institution**
University and decoloniality by Gloria Wekker	KU Leuven*
University and activism	Through the Window
Lecture and Q & A with Rolando Vázques	Erasmus University College, post-colonial theory course
What does it mean to work against the institution you work for?	Erasmus School of Colour, Erasmus Institute for Public Knowledge
Critical and Decolonial Pedagogies with Rolando Vázques	Hear! Here!, Sandberg Instituut
Dr. Rosalba Icaza Garza- Decolonizing the Curriculum: why, how, and what for?	"Dialogical Spaces for a Diverse University" project at UTwente.

*This seminar focused on both the context of the Netherlands and Belgium. For my research scope, I have focused on the former.

Appendix B

Informed consent form

Figure 6

Informed consent form

Details researcher:
Claire Tio (she/her)
Master student Engaging Public Issues,
Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences,
Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Contact:
Claire: 475863ct@student.eur.nl // +31640479486
EUR data protection officer: privacy@eur.nl

The research: Decolonial pedagogy in practice
This master thesis will be dedicated to exploring how decolonial pedagogies take shape in practice. The conversation is part of a series of conversations I will have with students, teachers, and artists in the Netherlands who are engaged with decoloniality. Much as decoloniality insists, I see this research as a form of co-production of different knowledges. As such, the themes and questions that will matter in my research will partially be decided by the people I speak with.

Data collection and management
The conversations will be recorded with a voice recorder/or via the Zoom recording function and will be coded in the programme ATLAS.ti. The recordings and transcripts will only be available to myself, Claire Tio, and in case necessary to my thesis supervisor, Maja Hertoghs, and will be saved as secured files. The transcripts and recordings will be deleted within a year after finishing the thesis.

At any point in this research process, participants have the right to:
1) access their data;
2) rectify, erase or restrict the processing of their personal data;
3) withdraw consent
4) lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority
5) ask any questions about the research to the researcher and have them answered

Anonymity and personal data
The data will be made anonymous by using both pseudonyms/initials in the thesis itself and participant numbers during the data analysis process. Please mark below if you give your consent with regards to the inclusion of your gender identification.

- I give my consent for the inclusion of personal data such as my gender identification and my age in this research Yes/No

By signing this page, I confirm the following:

- I give my consent for my information and study data to be collected, analyzed and discussed as described in this document
- I give my consent for my information and study data to be saved under the security conditions as described in this document until June 2022
- I confirm that I am aware of my participant rights, including the option to choose to stop being a part of this study at any time