

The role of White Academics in developing Decolonised Curricula

Tuesday 14th July 2020 Dr j Milo Taylor Course Leader B.A. (Hons) Sound Arts

Racialisation: relational, and contextual

- Where does the power reside in any given relation?
- What is the power doing and who is it working for?
- Who is benefiting?
- How can we work to share that power?

Recognition of privilege

- Curriculum as colonised: Foucault: **Knowledge / Discourse / Power / Subjectivities**

References

Arday, Jason, Mirza, Heidi Safia **(2018)** *Dismantling Race in Higher Education. Racism, Whiteness and Decolonising the Academy.*

Foucault, M. (1973) *The Order of Things.*

McIntosh, Peggy *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*

Decolonisation is the work of everyone

- Challenging supremacist structures – this is not about adding black bricks to a white wall.
- But what, if we take down the wall, can we then build together?
- Skilling oneself – collective working
- Ethics: Righting the wrongs of the past.
 - Newsinger, J. (2013) *The Blood Never Dried: A People's History of the British Empire*"

This ship is sinking – who has the expertise to save us?

- Everyone needs to offer a solution and everyone can have this opportunity.

Contradiction #1

- The performance of decolonisation – management and capitalism.
- What we want to do for our fellow humans. The world we want to create. Substance
- Can we align these two agendas to achieve positive change?
 - Proposal for an **International Conference on Decolonising Art Education** hosted at LCC.
 - Proposal for an offer of 10 bursaries for students of colour in next academic year
 - Proposal for a discipline specific conference: **Decolonising Sound Art**

Sonic Strategies: Take Action

- Listen
- Make Space
- Speak Out
- Make Noise
- Act: Individually and Collectively
 - Staffing, Reading Lists, Case Studies
 - Embracing Diversity in European Film Schools: The Canon Exposed / The Canon Reframed

Sound Art Scholarship and Activism

- Sound art un-investigated underexplored / underdeveloped – India, North Africa, S.E Asia
 - Contradiction #2
 - Who would do this labour? Decolonisation as labour of The Other
 - Collaboration with us – but would this be a neo-colonial endeavour?
- The work is to involve marginalised histories into the canon. What is absent?
- Also, new approaches to what is present – its whiteness.
 - E.g. Sound Arts through an Afro-American Studies paradigm.
 - Weheliye, A. G. (2005) *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity*. Duke University Press
 - Louis Chude-Sokei (2016) **The Sound of Culture: Diaspora and Black Technopoetics**. Middletown: Wesleyan UP.

Discussion and Debate with Colleagues

- CRISAP Research Unit. Professors, PhD students and Researchers
 - This conversation is very late.
 - What is the labour of others? – managers! Concrete action – investment – for all staff and students. Find some experts
 - Expand her noise – delegate to Middle Eastern women?
 - Issues with the vocabulary – destabilising white supremacist structures - a more useful way to investigate current material. Decentering. The language is complicated – do we understand the words?

Conclusions Future Action

- Problematising the very notion of “curriculum”
 - Etymology: mid 18th century: from Latin *curriculum* ‘course, racing chariot’, from *currere* ‘to run’
 - Associated elements of discourse
 - Cohort: an ancient Roman military unit, comprising six centuries, equal to one tenth of a legion.
 - Pedagogy:
 - a teacher, especially a strict or pedantic one.
 - late Middle English: via Latin from Greek *paidagōgos*, denoting a slave who accompanied a child to school (from *pais*, *paid-* ‘boy’ + *agōgos* ‘guide’).
 - Theoria / Praxis / Poesis

Conclusions: Case Study

African Leadership University. Mauritius

The seven commitments

1. Everything we assign our students will be open source
2. Language beyond English
 - Students who read, write and think in English often forget that knowledge is produced, consumed, and tested in other tongues.
3. 1:1 Student exchange ratio
4. Text is not enough
5. We cannot work alone
6. Producers, not only consumers
 - It might take years to know how to write a publishable scholarly article – but an op-ed, podcast or YouTube video is not quite so demanding.
7. Ethics above all: “do no harm”

Future Action

- Proposal for an **International Conference on Decolonising Art Education** hosted at LCC.
- Proposal for an offer of 10 bursaries for students of colour in next academic year
- Proposal for a discipline specific conference: **Decolonising Sound Art**
- Reapproved Sound Arts B.A. course: Update staffing, reading lists, case studies, offering audio essays as alternative to written dissertation.
- To Listen. To Discuss. To Act.