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**Global Social Theory: Building Resources**
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There has been an intensification of student protests around the world addressing issues of racial exclusion and racialized hierarchy within the university, including its teaching and research practices. These have ranged from the Rhodes Must Fall movement, which started at the University of Cape Town in South Africa; to Rhodes Must Fall Oxford, Why is my curriculum white? and broader struggles to decolonize education across the UK; to protests against caste injustice at Hyderabad University and Jawaharlal Nehru University in India; to the Black Lives Matter campaigns across campuses and civil society more generally in the US. These movements point to urgent concerns about what and how we teach and research, and how the resources of universities might be used to support the amelioration of injustice rather than its reproduction.

There has been much work in recent times, often by intellectuals from (formerly) colonized contexts, that has analysed the inequalities and forms of extraction and domination in knowledge production and representation. Scholars such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, 2012) and Vine Deloria Jr (1991) have drawn attention to how contemporary research practices and teaching often reproduce colonial power relations. Some of this critique is reflected in recent debates around 'decolonizing the university' and other movements within higher education (see Holmwood 2011; Shilliam 2016; Tilley 2017; Bhambra, Gebrial and Nisancioglu 2018), but these recent debates reference much more long-standing interventions in the politics of knowledge production (Freire 2014 [1968]; hooks 1994; Ngũgĩ 1986).

In this short piece, we identify some of the main issues, particularly in relation to the curriculum in terms of who and what gets included and excluded. We also indicate some actions that we can take to mitigate against those aspects we find troubling and how to build resources for a more dynamic and adequate curriculum. Following Holmwood's (2011) use of Dewey to argue for the idea of the public university as a vital repository of the common learning of communities, we seek to create and curate a space within our research and teaching practices to facilitate the calls for decolonization and the necessary deepening of democracy in these times.


I


Some of the responses by cultural commentators and academics to the movements highlighted above have expressed fears about the politicization of the cultural values that inform learning and scholarship. The argument has been that what we learn and who we study should emerge out of the scholarly processes of reading and engaging across texts and long-standing traditions. As Bhambra (2014) has argued, however, such an understanding rarely takes into consideration the fact that canon formation has always been political, indicating particular 'forms of attention' (Kermode 1985) and inattention. While canons have sometimes shifted and adapted in line with changing demographics, forms, and conventions, such changes have rarely occurred easily or smoothly. Concerns about proposed changes have often been expressed in the language of quality, rigour, and the maintenance of standards. Yet, as Toni Morrison (1989: 1-2) has noted, the concern is usually – implicitly if not outright explicitly – most vocally expressed when there is any hint of a question being raised about the 'whitemale' origins and definitions of 'the canon'.

The collective processes through which canonical status comes to be ascribed is complemented by, and constituted through, the historical configurations of social relations that enable and obstruct the participation of particular others at any given time (Guillory 1987; Bhambra 2014). It is no accident that it was with the increasing number of women entering the UK academy in the post-war period that greater attention was paid to women's lives and experiences within scholarly research. This initial movement to address the absence of women was followed by a concern to address the methods of research that had enabled and perpetuated such exclusions. Arguments about a 'missing feminist revolution' (Stacey and Thorne 1985) were followed by those about the 'missing queer revolution' (Stein and Plummer 1994).

As Bhambra (2007) has argued, while absences around gender and sexuality could be incorporated by disciplines (given that the absences within the scholarly literature were easily countered by an argument of women and gay people having existed within the societies under consideration), issues around race have been more difficult for the academy to address. This is, in part, because, with race, the deeper divide of the 'modern' separates out the historical existence of those perceived as 'non-modern' – usually those who were/are colonized and were /are not white – and does not recognize them as historically having existed within the societies under consideration (Bhambra 2016). However, again following Toni Morrison (1989), absence from the canon, or scholarly literature more broadly, does not imply those thinkers or thoughts are not available to be included.

Absences, as much as presence, are curated and, as such, can be mitigated against through different curation practices. One such practice is of producing reading lists for teaching. Within universities today, for example, academic canons are still made and remade in ways which serve consistently to centre Euro-American epistemologies and scholars. In relation to this, disciplinary conversations continue to be rehearsed and embedded through predominantly 'white/male' understandings of the world. We may all agree that we have a scholarly duty to introduce students to the broadest possible intellectual landscape and yet, the exclusions reproduced epistemically in university teaching undermine the integrity of scholarship and the possibilities of academic work engaging a wider range of voices.

II

A growing movement, embodied in the call of 'why is my curriculum white?', seeks to demonstrate that we can no longer present a highly parochial form of scholarship as a universal one. The breadth of authors and the range of thinking contained within reading lists, including social theory reading lists, was central to the quest for epistemic justice and scholarly rigour within these calls. In particular, the movement asked whether we can make meaningful claims to 'academic rigour' when many intellectuals and their scholarship are consistently left out of teaching and research along lines of racialized exclusion? Having taught social theory modules for over a decade, and having been involved in discussions at various institutions about broadening the range of those whom we consider theorists, Gurminder K Bhambra decided it was time not simply to discuss these issues, but to do something that could contribute positively to the ongoing discussion. It was with these issues in mind, that she set up the *Global Social Theory* website (globalsocialtheory.org) as a resource that could be used by those teaching

social theory to diversify their reading lists and by students studying standard social theory module to do the same.

*Global Social Theory* is a critical, collaborative pedagogical resource that seeks to make available short introductions to thinkers from around the world as well as concepts and topics that are less readily available within standard social theory reading lists. The website was founded by Bhambra with the technological wizardry provided by Pat Lockley (pgogywebstuff.com). Lucy Mayblin and Lisa Tilley (and later Angela Last) were recruited by her as Associate Editors. Much of the initial content was written by the editorial team and then contributions were also sourced from scholars from around the world. As such, the site has developed organically through submissions from a range of people, from established academics to early career scholars and researchers, all of whom are writing from a broad base of cultural and geographical positions. The posts themselves are generally concise and accessible, written with the curious undergraduate student in mind. However, many are also compelling and analytical in their own right, serving eloquently to map the expansive global field of thought and thinkers.

In one sense, the Global Social Theory site performs a function as an additional resource by including and presenting as theorists those who often do not make it onto standard theory reading lists. Yet the objective is not simply to globalize or 'colour' theory, but instead to challenge exclusions through expanding the notion of what kind of social expressions can be said to constitute theory itself. The site is also not necessarily presented as a comprehensive resource, but given that it is a website, this means that there is an unlimited capacity for expansion and we are keen to build it. The intention really is for this to be a collaborative site where the key task of the editors is to solicit and upload contributions to the three sections: Thinkers, Topics, Concepts.

The 'Thinkers' section of the Global Social Theory site contains entries on the work of scholars from around the world. An important part of building this section is not simply to include established scholars such as Gayatri Spivak or Frantz Fanon, who are increasingly being recognized, but also those who are less commonly regarded as 'theorists', such as the poet Audre Lorde or the musician Nina Simone. It is important not only to acknowledge the influence of these thinkers on social movements and theoretical developments, but also to show how their theories are performed. As Lisa Tilley (2015) argues in her entry on Nina Simone,

> 'Nina Simone can be said to have lyrically theorised the ontological state of violence constituting America's racial order, but more effectively, she took it to the stage and *performed* it. And beyond this, her most radically productive move on stage was to reverse the racial power relation and amplify it, discomfiting and alienating white audiences through a bodily authorisation of counter-violence.'

The two other sections of the site are Concepts and Topics. 'Concepts' provides space for the discussion of key terms and ideas that have been developed by theorists to make sense of the worlds they inhabit; and 'Topics' carries contributions on broader themes and fields of research. These two sections point to the importance not only of focusing on the contributions made by individuals to theory, but also engaging with their work to make their theoretical insights available to wider audiences. These sections also provide space to look again at established concepts and fields from other perspectives. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003: 45) writes, as quoted in the topic entry on Feminism by Kasia Narkowicz (2015),

'Unlike the history of Western (white, middle-class) feminism, which has been explored in great detail over the last few decades, histories of Third World women's engagement with feminism are in short supply.'

Angela Last (2017) makes a similar case in her entry on Materialism, in which she accuses discourse on historical and new materialism of not only failing to address racial inequality, but also inattention to race within its discourse. The Global Social Theory site also highlights attempts at countering or experimenting with the notion of concepts. For instance, as the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee Zapatista Army of National Liberation argues, cited by Levi Gahman (2015) in his entry on Zapatismo,

"Zapatismo is not a new political ideology, or a rehash of old ideologies. Zapatismo is nothing, it does not exist. It only serves as a bridge, to cross from one side, to the other. So everyone fits within Zapatismo, everyone who wants to cross from one side, to the other. There are no universal recipes, lines, strategies, tactics, laws, rules, or slogans. There is only a desire – to build a better world, that is, a new world."

**III**

Since it was set up in March 2015, *Global Social Theory* has regularly published contributions on Thinkers, Topics, Concepts and continues to add to the site on a regular basis. It is an open educational resource and people are free to use and share information with attribution. All content is published under a Creative Commons licence (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0). This allows people to share the content for non-commercial purposes, with attribution to the relevant author and a link to the Global Social Theory web-page for the entry. The site has had around 200,000 visitors thus far, with between 200 to 3000 views in any single day. The site is also referenced as a teaching resource by many academics at universities across the UK and further afield. If you would like to contribute, please get in touch with one of the editors! We would very much welcome your engagement and contribution.

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