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Authority, collective learning and agentic action in teaching: tracing a pedagogy from Franz Fanon

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Abstract

This paper is based on acknowledging dilemmas and on tracing tensions between the schooling and the colonisation processes from one of Franz Fanon's main texts, namely *The wretched of the earth* (1961/2007). We start from the continuing relevance of Frantz Fanon's insights in light of the continued need for diversity, equity, and inclusive pedagogy.

In the first section, we trace the tensions which exists in the schooling process seen as a colonisation process. The dilemmas occur in relation to a) the concept of authority in the teacher-student relationship, b) the knowledge sources and c) the final goal of the educational process. In the second section, we discuss decolonisation and schooling as a process of self and collective discovery, wherein the distortions of the split intellect and the resultant theory-practice gap are examined. Finally, we encourage a transformative and creative agentic action in multimodal learning engagement, with teaching implications. This paper invites further readings of Fanon, as part of a project of elaborating critical perspectives in education to fully express students and teacher agency.

Keywords: agency, critical pedagogy, decolonisation, Fanon, schooling

Introduction

This paper is based on acknowledging dilemmas and tracing tensions between the schooling and colonisation processes from one of Fanon's primary texts, namely *The wretched of the earth* (1961). It aims to highlight some insights developed by the psychiatrist Fanon in light of a pedagogy of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

As a reminder, we know that Fanon grew up in the Antilles, ex-colony of France. After fighting in the Second World War (on the side of Free France), he trained as a psychiatrist in Lyon, France. Assigned to Algeria, Fanon worked as the clinical director of the mental hospital Blida-Joinville, outside Algiers. Here he applied so-called 'institutional psychotherapy', an approach he learned from exiled Catalan anarchist Francois Tosquelles. Fanon's approach was a psycho-political informed practice that included both the tortured and the torturers, analysing psychic distress brought about by colonisation. Due to the ethico-political compromises of doing mental health practice in a context of increasing insurrection, and his personal political involvements, Fanon resigned from his public office as Medical Director in 1957 leaving Algeria for Tunis to work as both a psychiatrist and a political spokesperson for the National Liberation Front (FLN). Alongside being recognised as a political revolutionary within the Algerian liberation movement, Fanon's political project involved political transformation as intrinsic to personal transformation and healing. For example, in *The wretched of the earth*, he presents evidence of the distress caused by racialised and colonial oppression. In this, his last, book, written during the revolutionary anti-colonial struggle in Algeria, he makes explicit calls for mass mobilisation and popular democracy, while also highlighting the key role education has to play as an essential politicising process. The racial topic is Fanon's main focus when it comes to political and professional engagement: 'In no case should my colour be felt like a flaw', he wrote in the *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon's writing on race is widely discussed in the literature (Allen, 2004) and the topic of decolonisation has recently come to the forefront in the daily media discussions.

In education, some disciplines, like psychology, have started to question how to decolonise their teaching practices - (Fuentes et al., 2021) - the American Psychological Association has highlighted the importance of cultural diversity in both undergraduate and graduate curricula. Decolonised education is what is asked for all over the world (for example, Botha-Nel and Ferreira-Meyers (2020) on decolonisation of the teaching and learning of French in Southern Africa). Questioning the actual process of schooling, especially Western-based, is one of the main issues in current science education too:

> "Thus, schooling allows for cognitive acceleration. Still, it does not necessarily allow for forms of learning and teaching that are more compatible with our evolved dispositions for shared intentionality." (Preiss, 2019, p.5)

In this paper, we propose to acknowledge dilemmas and trace the tension between the decolonisation process outlined by Fanon and today's educational processes to intensify the move toward a pedagogy of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The research question that guides the discussion is as follows: which dilemmas and tensions in the colonisation process can give insights into actors and processes in the education sector? Our unit of analysis is the relationship between teacher and students. We do

not wish to deradicalise or generalise Fanon's key ideas, focusing on racism, by applying them to educational practices and adult-child relations. Instead, we want to acknowledge the existent and potential dilemmas and move on from some considerations in the light of current educational literature, social actuality and personal and professional experiences. Rather than a linear reading of Fanonian theories, the methodological approach explores tensions and ambiguities between the schooling and the colonisation processes.

The paper arises from the participation of the first author in a reading group about 'Social Theories in Research and Practice' proposed by a U.K. university in the middle of the Covid-19 period and recent research by the second author on decolonisation of the teaching and learning of French as a Foreign Language in the Southern African context. The Covid-19 pandemic, its multiple social and health problems notwithstanding, has refreshed many types of research discussions in online settings to overcome local and temporal isolation and extend departmental walls within universities and schools. Social poverty is a social issue experienced daily in both contexts. For example, Marseille, the second largest city in France with a population now estimated at 1,613,797 in 2021, is one of the poorest of Europe. In general, France struggles with social mobility, a situation which has deteriorated in the past fifteen years. Indeed, the educational PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) score shows that the French schooling system reinforces the existing social division: France is at the back of the pack (30th out of 32 among OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, 45th out of 50 among PISA participating countries) when it comes to the socio-economic profile of the students' families predicting performance in school. South Africa shows one of the strongest correlations between students' home background and academic performance (Taylor and Yu, 2009, cited in Wills and Hofmeyer, 2019). Shepherd (2016, cited in Wills and Hofmeyer, 2019) finds that differences in home background explain the majority of the learning gap (roughly 60%) between poorer and wealthier South African students. Socio-economic constraints, like poverty, have a continued impact on pupils' learning. Fanon's diagnosis finds an echo in current clinical understanding of trauma: the victim, in the various forms of post-traumatic stress disease (PTSD), often manifests forms of denial and avoidance, also through the use of a fantasy of refuge.

In the first section, we explore the dilemmas between the schooling process and the colonisation process, and their analytic-political risks and advantages are considered (Cannella and Viruru, 2004), questioning the role of a) the concept of authority in the teacher-student relationship, b) the knowledge source and c) the final goal of the educational process. In the second section, the discussion is about decolonisation and schooling as a process of self and collective discovery; this is examined through the concept of intellectualisation and distortions in society. Finally, we look at transformative and creative agentic action in a multimodal learning engagement, with possible teaching implications, mindful of Fanon's request to anchor action in the present.

In the current Covid-19 pandemic, Fanon's multi-level interpretation is worth reflecting upon, as is shown by the actuality of his work in light of a pedagogy of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI): 'In these uncertain and risky moments of vulnerability, I search for inspiration from the brave innovators and disrupters whose courage feels contagious' (Brown, 2017).

1. The schooling process compared to the colonial process

In his writing, Fanon continuously moves from a personal to a national level, from the individual to a collective psyche, from individual development to collective social revolt for freedom. The multiple levels make his text multi-layered, inviting for a polyphonic interpretation (Bakhtin, 1981).

Burman (2016) mobilises the notion of 'psychoeducation' to include Fanon's oeuvre, as it links psychology and education but also highlights the pedagogical features of psychological technologies and practices, including psychotherapy. An approach oriented to a psychosocial transformation project showing Fanon's

> "subscription to a much more open philosophy of education: an ethical practice of enabling self-authorisation via a pedagogy of uncertainty that insists on a radical openness of contingency as the route to agentic action (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2010; Pinar, 2011)." (Burman, 2016, p.19)

Below we list the dilemmas between schooling and colonialism: the teacher is identified as playing the colonising role and the student as that of the colonised; the curriculum then becomes one of the critical areas in which power and control are exercised.

1.1 Questioning authority in the teacher-student relationship

Colonisers enter a geographical space that does not belong to them, neither historically nor culturally. They impose on the indigenous population a system of unilateral privilege based on violence and power. Similarly, the teacher enters the classroom and finds students with specific individual and collective social and cultural backgrounds; sometimes already historically developed interactional dynamics and organisation are present. From reading Fanon's text and keeping in mind the dilemmas and tensions between colonialism and schooling, there is one main point relevant to explore, namely the question of authority.

Authority relationships set coloniser and colonised in an asymmetric relationship: based on social status and power relationships embedded in the system. This asymmetric relationship between the teacher and the students is resonant in several respects. Historically, teachers have imposed authority on the classroom with rituals and punishments. Reverence was a student's duty, like standing up when the teacher enters the classroom. Today, technology could challenge teacher authority. For example, teachers could let their students show more expertise in using new technological tools or re-building relationships like avatar-based environments with different behavioural codes. The authority given to the teachers by the learners has to be questioned, we have to challenge the motivation of this 'reverence', the psychological implications, the values or the fear on which it is based.

An interesting perspective on teacher authority is presented by Matusov (2020). The author considers that authority has little to do with genuine education since

> "the teacher serves as a Holy Priest of Epistemological Divine Authority to whom the student offers her servitude to avoid punishment and, probably, even to reap some rewards in the form of praise and good grades." (p.36)

In contrast, Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane (2017) stress a non-instrumental, ontological and intrinsic pedagogical perspective. The students become the final authority for their education. A dialogic critical examination of authorial education helps inform student agency as they have the final consent to accept, reject, or modify teacher guides.

Should the teachers assume the responsibility of questioning the authority received, put it into perspective, justify it to themselves and continually re-consider their educational relationship with students? In our opinion, it should be the teacher's duty to challenge passive representations and invite students in critical discussions about the asymmetric relationship between their roles as teachers and students. Putting the authority in question is essential for students who need to express new interactions different from those experienced in the familiar dynamics. It could help some students find new identity positions and express their silent voices (Hermans, 2013).

1.2 Questioning the source of knowledge

Fanon invites the colonised to develop awareness about the relationship they have with the colonisers: indeed, if the coloniser disappears, the colonised will no longer exist. The colonised lives the relationship with the coloniser passively until s/he starts to have a new awareness about the asymmetrical relationship. The colonised lives in a reality structured by the coloniser, where the possible actions are already framed: 'confronted with a world ruled by the settler, the native is always presumed guilty' (p.53). In a high constraint setting, the colonised has to play with fantasy and imagination to escape from the frustrating context:

> "This is why the dreams of the native are always of muscular prowess; his dreams are of action and aggression. I dream I am jumping, swimming, running, climbing; I dream that I burst out laughing, that I span a river in one stride, or that I am followed by a flood of motorcars which never catch up with me. During the period of colonisation, the native never stops achieving his freedom from nine in the evening until six in the morning." (p.52)

The fear of the others has to disappear to build a mutual relationship of respect:

> "Thus, the native discovers that his life, breath, and beating heart are the same as those of the settler. (…). For if my life is worth as much as the settler's, his glance no longer shrivels me up nor freezes me, and his voice no longer turns me into stone. I am no longer on tenterhooks in his presence." (p.57)

In our comparison between colonialism and schooling, it is noted that, in the traditional scholastic curriculum, students' knowledge is often not immediately relevant to their needs and problems to solve, as there is no connection to their previous indigenous experience. The students join in a codified and expected-behaviour educational system, gradually shaping an academic self (Tateo, 2019) according to the predefined knowledge and learning setting. In contrast scholarship concerned with social justice issues (Hogg, 2011), is based on the supposition that the skills and bodies of knowledge that learners possess are historically accumulated and culturally developed for household or individual functioning and well-being (Moll et al., 1992). This everyday knowledge should be recognised as epistemologically equal to academic knowledge stemming from bodies that constitute the schools' formal curriculum. Often, teachers perceive learners' knowledge base as having little epistemological value in the

mainstream classroom (Zipin, 2009). Esteban-Guitart (2016) develops the foundation of identity concept, which mobilises minoritised students' identities in educational settings for social justice purposes. Two concepts are related: the first, the dark fundaments of identity (Charteris, Thomas and Masters, 2018), defined as the problematic experiences that individuals bring with them to make sense of theoretical concepts in the classroom, and the second, the existential fundaments of identity (Poole, 2019), defined as the positive and negative experiences which need to be appropriated by students to express themselves and to grow as human beings. The development of these concepts shows the need to validate the individuals' identity, emotional and epistemic dimension, in their lived and embodied uniqueness. Students become witnesses of their own biological, cultural and social development.

1.3 Questioning the Curriculum as a space of negotiation and power

Fanon considers that the colonised populations always focus on realistic dimensions and are continuously engaged with survival conditions and not open to negotiations: the vital reified materiality is the bread and the land. These two elements give the people dignity: the earth generates the wheat transformed by manual labour into food, and bread gives the energy to work the land. Furthermore, the colonised people are not satisfied with a process of abstraction, not because it is not familiar to them or because it does not succeed in abstracting value but because the abstraction process does not respond to a primary need for life. The immediate need for survival shapes the theoretical framework: 'But this dignity has nothing to do with the dignity of the human being. They have never heard of this ideal human person' (p.44).

Fanon's point on the process of abstraction is fascinating: his own analysis is an abstraction that touches the ethics of us as modern humans and, at the same time, recognises the right of the colonised and the victim to reject any form of abstraction on their skin. An echo to this denunciation of abstraction comes from Jean-Paul Sartre's introduction to Fanon's text: abstraction is, by definition, the process of constructing a representation of reality, to concentrate the analysis and study of phenomena. A minority, elite, wanted to impose its abstraction, justifying itself and finding ways to validate itself:

> "Today, the native populations reveal their true nature, and at the same time, our exclusive "club" reveals its weakness—that it's neither more nor less than a minority. Worse than that: since the others become men in name against us, it seems that we are the enemies of humankind; the elite shows itself in its true colours—it is nothing more than a gang." (Sartre, p.26)

The external social context is ignored by the colonised. It is replaced with an external and not self-generated abstraction, derived by an outsider material cultural matrix: 'Let's say it, the colonist knows perfectly well that no phraseology can replace reality' (p.45). The colonised must reject an unhealthy, conflicting, ghost-fed, antagonistic, and inhuman solution, and so too the fantasy, the prejudicial and superstition thinking. To do this, the colonised must strive for the universal through real action. Fanon considers how the action has to be expressed according to the challenges of the society to which the colonised belongs: for Fanon, in no way have we to be prepared for the future in a vacuum that led to the inertia and the paralysis of the action. Indeed, the action has to occur now in the current time—the present alone counts as the safest insurance of the future. The present is the anchor of the action.

One main point that emerges from a fruitful acknowledging of the dilemmas between schooling and the colonialist process is the temporal dimension with an ideal future-oriented goal to achieve. The learning processes happen in a spatial and temporal dimension. In the classroom and the school, the temporal dimension is a central reference: to plan a task, the skills and the content projected for the 'after', the not-so-close future. Chronos, time represented as a line of successive, consecutive and irreversible moments, is widely influential in Western society since the Ancient Greeks. Each subsequent moment replaces the one before it. Murris and Kohan (2020) discuss time in institutionalised education: 'Content knowledge is carefully organised, and concepts are taught one at a time. First this, then that' (p.10). Students and teachers use the clock to organise their social activity, body and materiality, their always projected future-to-come. Murris and Kohan (2020) challenge this linear vision of time by considering how chronological time constitutes a hegemonic system of domination in service of the forms of discipline control and biopower that regulate bodies in institutions like school – as proposed by authors like Barad (2018), Foucault (1995), Deleuze (1990), Hardt and Negri (2001). The temporal dimension becomes tyrannical, functional and rigidly marked by the curriculum, which is no longer a learning tool but a regulatory (unquestionable) authority.

In this first section of our paper, we observe that coloniality manifests itself in the knowledge and meaning-making production (Patel, 2016), a trap in which rational understanding could fall. Our reading of Fanon invites a close examination of the various ways the decolonisation process finds expression. We note that the concept of agency is relevant in the discussion of agentive action aimed at a purpose. In that case, the analysis of passivity must be equally essential to understand and not dismiss its origins, motivations and effects on the singular individual and collectivity. Theorising passivity, Roth (2007) opened the way for the articulation between agency in a dialectical relationship with passivity where both could be resources for action.

In the following section, we explore two aspects of the decolonisation process: the role of the colonised intellectual and the theory-practice gap in a self and collective discovery process.

2. Decolonisation and schooling as a self and collective discovery process

For Fanon, the process of decolonisation starts as a progressive personal and collective awakening. In the same way, the schooling process opens the path for individual and collective discovery that needs to be problematised in a critical way.

2.1 Intellectualisation as Split Expertise

In this section, we draw attention to the role of the intellectual. Fanon warns us of how the dominant position's pervasiveness can be so ingrained to make it difficult to trace it, contaminating the same 'artefacts' (Wartofsky, 1979) that we use to think, as the language to the world's vision. Fanon is particularly critical of the colonised intellectuals, having engorged themselves in an external cultural matrix: their thinking forms derive from their participation in a society in which they do not belong. Their thinking forms are reflected in the intellectual's inability to dialogue, locked in a monolithic monologue of assimilated culture: 'This is very noticeable in the inaptitude of the native intellectual to carry on a two-sided discussion; for he cannot eliminate himself when confronted with an object or an idea' (p.49).

In particular, the vision is not linked to their own indigenous perspectives. This is the reason why we talk here of 'split expertise' in the sense of a distorted vision that leads to an incorrect reading of one's role and of the reality with which one relates:

> "The native intellectual had learnt from his masters that the individual ought to express himself fully. The colonialist bourgeoisie had hammered into the native's mind the idea of a society of individuals where each person shuts himself up in his subjectivity, and whose only wealth is individual thought." (p.47)

Fanon's analysis shows how the intellectual, who has assimilated the dominant culture, can defend a position which is not sustainable. According to Fanon, the imported values become illusions in the liberation from domination. In the action of demanding and obtaining freedom, the population sees the actual values:

> "The native intellectual accepted the cogency of these ideas, and deep down in his brain, you could always find a vigilant sentinel ready to defend the Greco-Latin pedestal. In the liberation struggle, when the intellectual natives come into touch again with their people, this artificial sentinel is turned into dust." (pp.46-47)

There are currently many international programs worldwide aimed at supporting developing countries through specific activities, for instance, literacy and numeracy. Fanon's argument spurs us to broach many questions about its foundations and application: how can a well-defended approach like that oriented to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), for example, be respectful of multi-perspectivism? How to be respectful of alternative value systems and contribute to inclusion and cultural diversity? How to include the richness of multiple human perspectives into the school and to bring back schooling to the variegate reality in which we live are important challenges we face today? These questions show the tensions on which we articulate our reflections and 'think throughs' in this article. For example, the documentary 'Schooling the World' (2016) proposes a disturbing look at the effects of modern education on the world's last sustainable indigenous cultures.

Saavedra (2011) shows the tension that occurs when one's work does not necessarily subscribed to the Western paradigms in an attempt to develop border-thinking (Mignolo, 2013). An uncritical imitation of Western research paradigms within a scientific, intellectual activity (Chilisa, 2012, p.7) dictates how theoretical structures, research questions, methods, results, and dissemination ought to be. In contrast, Castañeda-Londoño (2019) reports her experiences of 'colonised being' by Western research paradigms:

> "Teacher-researchers in the Global South, like myself, are intending to develop new ways for us to build knowledge considering our peculiar contexts, with authors and perspectives that honour our origins, ideas, lived experiences, historical locations, emotions, and bodies." (p.86)

This has broad implications for the methodology of research. For example, the act of verbally sharing our own experiences with other people is pivotal, where knowing *with* others takes prevalence over knowing *about* others (Sousa-Santos, 2018, our italics), with a new role given to listening practices.

2.2 The theory-practice gap to unveiling distortions in society

Returning to Fanon's assessment of the crucial steps within decolonisation, he argues that the intellectual finds himself/herself torn between a dominant culture that manages and a local vision that remains unclear. The intellectual is lost in an abstract notion disconnected with the primordial need of the society – like the bread and the earth: 'And this obstinate point of view of the masses, which may seem shrunken and limited, is, in the end, the most worthwhile and the most efficient mode of procedure' (p.50). The colonised have to find the capacity to react to the colonisation, as a collective process:

> "The immobility to which the native is condemned can only be called in question if the native decides to put an end to the history of colonisation—the history of pillage— and to bring into existence the history of the nation—the history of decolonisation." (p.51)

Colonised intellectuals discover a method of reconstructing the origin in the process of progressive decolonisation:

> "This colonised intellectual, atomised by the colonialist culture, will also discover the consistency of village assemblies, the density of people's committees, the extraordinary fruitfulness of neighbourhood and cell meetings." (p.51)

Similarly, the students who have assimilated knowledge and are ready to face the professional world find themselves experts in a domain in-depth and wholly disconnected from the context surrounding them. The family of origin and the local culture give value to aspects not appreciated by the schooling process, leaving the students to fill the gap between the two cultures. The young adults can therefore find themselves in a position of inaction. For example, in the so-called NEET generation (Neither in Employment, in Education or in Training), the young adults are not searching for a job, not studying, resulting in their inability to take action. In the near future, many NEETS will be colonised immigrants. The issue of jobless graduates with no jobs in colonised African countries is extreme, has been for decades and the future looks bleak in this regard too. We contrast this to agentive educational practices of place-based pedagogy, where learning methods fill this intentional absence of a link with the territory, making the land, the uncultivated spaces recognised as learning spaces (Billmayer, From, Lindberg and Pettersson, 2020).

3. Transformative action in learning and teaching

With the constant invitation to active action, the topic of agency is underlined in Fanon's text, even if not explicitly mentioned. Discussing the importance of agency in the actuality, Stetsenko (2020) considers how the

> "cultural and critical theories, including cultural-historical activity theory, still have to reckon with the long-lasting legacy of passivity — and closely related assumptions of inequality — in accounting for human development and social functioning." (p.6)

The section below focuses on two points from our reading of Fanon's *The wretched of the earth*: the invitation to transformative and creative agentic action and how this active engagement has to be collective and multimodal.

3.1 An invitation to transformative and creative agentic action

The decolonisation process introduces an intense pressure on the local culture, which branches off to the culture's very roots, touching the community's past: colonialism is not satisfied with enclosing the people in its mesh, emptying the colonised brain of all form and content. 'By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it' (p.210). Also, in the example of Black culture, Fanon shows how it is imposed through European terminology – not national, but by an external influence.

In the absence of creativity, the colonised intellectual proves that s/he has assimilated the occupier's culture in the continuity of the well-defined stream of metropolitan creation. In a subsequent stage, the colonised is shaken and decides to remember. But the absence of connection to the society brings disconnections and a lack of true expression: 'The unconditional affirmation of African culture has succeeded the unconditional affirmation of European culture' (p.213). In the last stage, the colonised awakens when reconnected with the original society. Only when the colonised are listening to their society can they speak out about their truest value and become spokespersons for a shared vision of reality. This process is directed to creative action, on a straight path toward freedom. The alienation was endured by them passively and could be avoided by the connection with the community. Yet, compassion and deep sharing of the living condition is a process of personal and collective awareness and responsibility.

More awareness about origins and sources of perspectives avoids the singular and the collective to be trapped in an 'epistemic ignorance' about the role of power relationships in society and the structures of oppression. Such emerging fields of the epistemologies of ignorance (Sherman and Goguen, 2019) examine the complex phenomenon of ignorance, which aims to identify the different expressions that ignorance takes, examining how they are produced and sustained and what role they play in knowledge practices. So, the dominant group keeps the status quo by nurturing and entreating misinterpretation and voluntarily ignores a critical reading of reality. An invitation to reality is necessary, with a refocus on the individual and the local context in the richness of the actuality and the past. The personal (emotional, social, experiential) history of the teacher and the student could play a role as professional and epistemological resources. Indeed, teachers and students should not cut off their peculiarity but bring and valorise this unicity in the teaching and learning practices. It can be a personal background made up of emotional, social, experiential deviations, developed in the voluntary associations, informal settings, family structures etc. Indeed, the personal present and past experiences are not yet sufficiently recognised or critically validated as the precious allies in education they should be.

3.2 Collective and multimodal learning engagement

To action a process of decolonisation, Fanon invited transformation. The actions have to be done in the community and oriented towards building a collective future. In this process, the colonised could use the past experiences and history as resources, but introduced with a shared goal and not to contemplate the national struggle in passivity:

"Still, when you decide to speak of that unique thing in man's life that is represented by the fact of opening up new horizons, by bringing light to your own country, and by raising yourself and your people to their feet, then you must collaborate on the physical plane." (Fanon, 1961/2007, p.232)

This action has to be collective and multimodal: the body and the language as the subjective experience necessary in the very construction of politics' future. In the decolonised dynamic, the process is violent for the liberation from domination to be effective. So, politics becomes embedded in physical action:

"The problem is knowing the place these men intend to reserve for their people, the type of social relations they decide to establish, the conception they have of the future of humanity. It is this that counts; everything else is mystification, signifying nothing." (p.235)

To relate to the classroom Fanon's call for transformative decolonisation that is communal and embodied we turn to recent educational and psychological literature, prioritising the need to understand learning as an embodied, extended, and enacted modality. These sense-making processes involve the body-environment system's contextualised experience (Dourish, 2004). Wagner and Shahjahan (2015) discussed the need to centre the body as a locus of learning in the anti-oppressive classroom; they refer a

"classroom pedagogy that addresses the myriad ways in which racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of subjugation and oppression play out in educational institutions and broader society." (p.244)

Performance as a form of pedagogy acknowledges the significance of the body in the space – the classroom – to open up our understanding of the body as 'being in the world' (Perry and Medina, 2011), including multiple intelligences. This embodied engagement is an effective modality for engaging students cognitively and at an affective level in the learning. The focus shifts to scaffolding students to become partners in social change actions and not only functional players in the global marketplace (Smith, 2010). The importance of this perspective is paramount, but it is difficult to bring these perspectives into the daily classroom. Indeed, in the contemporary neoliberal context of higher education, embodied learning activities are challenging because they question the status-quo and unsettle social positions of the individual and the institutions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The paper brings Fanon's text *The wretched of the earth* (1961/2007) to bear on the current discussion of a pedagogy of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). In the first section about the identification of the actors in the schooling process linked with the colonisation process, three points are considered for acknowledging these dilemmas and moving on from there: the concept of authority in the teacher-student relationship; the knowledge source and the final goal of the educational process. In the second section, the discussion was about decolonisation and schooling as a process of self and collective discovery, examined through the 'split expertise' that unveils distortions in society. Finally, we discussed Fanon's invitation to agentive and creative action as well as collective and multimodal learning engagement. For the practical implications, to concretise DEI in the classroom, it means we also have

to revise the pedagogical scripts in a critical learning design or related pedagogies that better fit to this end, like the place-based pedagogies.

In general, regarding teaching and learning implications, co-teaching is stressed by Roth (2002) as a practice where teacher and students collaborate or connect their knowledge, skills and resources to carry out a design task. Together, they may learn to 'see' and interpret structural affordances and constraints in new ways in a mutual involvement, building a joint space of possible new understanding. Of course, many other elements influence the teacher-student relationship, like parents, institutions, etc. In a mutual collaboration, they progressively build the sense of their actions. Conversation between teacher and students becomes the place to carry out an explicit negotiation and redefinition of shared values, learning how to become a recognised member inside the relationship. Teachers and students are equally active in the process of sense-making of their role, the issues and the learning-teaching process in which they are involved, which imply mutual transformation. Teachers and researchers in their collaboration have to build a 'discursive space' in which they decide to participate or not. It is stressed that both partners' explicit commitment to seek mutual understanding but not necessarily agree, is essential. According to Matusov and Pease-Alvarez (2020), a vital feature of a collaboration anchored in a critical dialogue is its horizontal organisation, where teachers and students impact their learning reciprocally (Matusov, 2020).

In the end, our recognition of tensions and dilemmas between the schooling process and colonisation through Fanon's text is linked, implicitly and not always consciously, with our personal and professional, individual and collective experiences of epistemic injustice – sometimes difficult to discern within ethical or political injustice (Radoilska, 2020). Two species of epistemic injustice are discussed by Fricker (2007): testimonial injustice arises when 'prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word' (p.1), while hermeneutical injustice occurs at a prior stage when 'a gap in collective interpretative resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences' (p.1). In recent years, a fruitful encounter has occurred between epistemic injustice and decolonisation (Sherman and Goguen, 2019). For example, Walker (2020) provides examples of how decolonial conceptual frames might contribute to more epistemic justice in higher education. As another example, we can cite the instance that recognises disability and formally acknowledges the category but overlooks needs and real change, thus effecting 'inclusive marginalisation' (Grue, 2019).

The focus on epistemic injustice proposed by Fricker, advocating for an open-minded, reflective, self-corrective epistemic stance and the reflections on Fanon's work could join in a critical commitment to an inclusive and democratic society. Despite values such as inclusion, engagement, democracy, equity are traditionally associated with the Nordic model of education (Klette, 2018) a decolonised understanding of these values is central for both the Global North and the Global South. Both are currently striving to address problems about inequality in education, such as increasing drop-out rates and other difficulties. The Covid-19 pandemic accentuated the necessity of interdisciplinary and critical reflections about the schooling process, pointing to the discussion about the role of power relationships in society and the structures of oppression.

In a free decolonised mind and territory, true collaboration is possible, in mutual respect of value, history, and knowledge, in a multicultural curriculum based on the ideas of tolerance and respect (Lopes and Macedo, 2011) and oriented to an 'ethical-critical global pedagogy' to foster and promote not only skills but, most importantly, also values and actions. A pedagogy of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) implies accepting divergent and 'diffractive' perspectives. A common visual of diffraction is the image of the diamond with different light. This concept enables us to illuminate how power relations are entangled within non-human bodies. It contributes to highlight further the becoming process of change:

> "diffractive methods illuminate the fluid and ever-evolving process of world-making in which phenomena are constituted through their material entanglements. In contrast, reflective methods produce static representations of a reality that is assumed to be pre-existing and stable" (Hill, 2017, p.3)

Considering Fanon's insistence on the materiality of liberation, posthumanist theory gives us important tools, but we are still, in many classrooms, only beginning to conceive of changed relations. In this paper, the dilemma and tensions raised are limited to the teacher-student relationship. This focus could contain the political dangers of deradicalising or generalising Fanon's key ideas. In part, we avoided these dangers affirming our willingness to forge interdisciplinary connections between the current literature of educational sciences, professional practices in teacher education, and the Fanon's political and racial message, experiencing a critical reading across theoretical perspectives and narrative levels. Reading Fanon awakens a real enthusiasm in us as newcomers in decolonised theory. However, we are aware of easy enthusiasm, of what Fanon warns against in Black Skin, White Mask, considering that easy enthusiasm ignites words and is not oriented to actions. Through the tensions evoked in the first and second part of the paper we wish to open up a path of discussion, inviting and sensitising teachers, educators, and practitioners not directly involved in decolonising discussions or not yet seeing connections with their educational work and practices. Its application to education could also be extended to blended and online teaching and learning modalities, for example, critically shaping the reflections of the international concern about the potential impact of closed schools on student achievement due to Covid-19 (Azevedo et al., 2020).

Finally, aware of the limit of this article's 'think through', we invite and will engage in further readings on Fanon's works and decolonising viewpoints as part of a project of elaborating critical perspectives in education and psychology to express student and teacher agency fully. As Fanon concludes, the real urgent issue is to always recognise humanity in and of the other.

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