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Against mastery: Epistemic decolonizing in the margins of the Business School

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Abstract

In this provocation, I argue that epistemic decolonizing is an opposition to the Master promulgator of knowledge, the Western/Eurocentric epistemic subject position. This *epistemic refusal of mastery* can only happen in the margins of the Business School, and as such, it is always an unfinished project whose incompleteness should be celebrated. To develop my argument, I proceed in three steps. First, I conceptualize the Business School as a *postcolony*, that is, a realm of extended epistemic domination rooted in the institution's colonial historical role. Second, I suggest an alternative understanding of the margins not only rooted in spatiality, location, or identity but as a specific *minoritarian epistemic position against mastery* within the postcolony. These margins are not stable and immutable but *relational,* constantly being made, re-made, transformed, and negotiated. They are the location for an affirmative, generative and imaginative ongoing sabotage of epistemic domination. Finally, I offer that epistemic decolonizing as a minoritarian engagement, is unavoidably incomplete, unfinished, and unfinishable as knowledge always already exists and is always already weaved from a multiplicity of entangled historical, cultural, political, and disciplinary threads.

Keywords

Business school, decolonizing, epistemic decolonizing, incompleteness, margins, mastery, minor theory, postcolony

> This is the oppressor's language, yet I need it to talk to you.
>
> Adrienne Rich (2016 [1989])
> *The Burning of Paper instead of Children.*

> A thought that is not minoritarian, marginal, fragmentary, and incomplete is always a thought of ethnocide.
>
> Abdelkabir Khatibi (2019)
> *Plural Maghreb: Writings on Postcolonialism.*

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First, the provocation: decolonizing knowledge in the Business School is an impossible project. But as all impossible things, it needs to be tried. In this essay, I offer an alternative, noninstitutional way to envisage epistemic decolonizing in that context. My provocation is grounded in a simple argument: epistemic decolonizing in the Business School is only possible in the margins, it is an oppositional standpoint, and it is always an incomplete project whose incompleteness we should all welcome. To make this argument, I first offer to redefine the Business School as a *postcolony* (Mbembe, 2001), that is, a realm of extended epistemic domination rooted in the colonial historical role of the institution. Then, I suggest an alternative understanding of the margins not only rooted in spatiality, location, or identity but also referred to a specific *epistemic condition* within the postcolony. I call that epistemic condition, a *minoritarian condition*. Against any form of hegemonic knowledge, minoritarians are located in the Business School's epistemic interstices, within the hidden folds of knowledge, where it is still possible to interrogate and unsettle. Epistemic decolonizing as a minoritarian move, is unavoidably messy, disorganized, and incomplete since there is no knowledge starting point. Knowledge always already exists and is always already weaved from a multiplicity of entangled historical, cultural, political, and disciplinary threads. I argue that because of the inherently entangled nature of knowledge, epistemic decolonizing escapes its own categorical entrapment and is always in excess of it, thus rendering it an incomplete project whose incompleteness and disorderliness should be celebrated.

The purpose of this essay is not to deplore the instrumentalization of a radical aspiration into practices that range mostly from silence to "strategic advancement" (Shain et al., 2021), nor is it to present a set of arguments against decolonizing itself (Táíwò, 2022) or to urge caution regarding its potential outcomes (Banerjee, 2022; Banerjee et al., 2020). Rather, it offers an alternative reflection on decolonizing that is noninstitutional, substantive, and subversive. It is not a counter-critique to the wide decolonizing scholarship available but more the opening of a parallel path, an organic, unruly position, rooted in a Fanonian view of decolonization as "a program of complete disorder" (Fanon, 1963: 36). My "provocation" is marginal in the sense that I will endeavor to unpack in this essay: it is a call for an oppositional, wayward, parallel move to the institutionalized decolonizing initiatives that proliferated in the wake of the so-called recent "racial reckoning" in the Global North.[1] The understanding of epistemic decolonizing defended in this essay is founded on a fugitive conception of knowledge, one that cannot be "mastered" or grasped and that is always already escaping a certain institutionalizing imperative. For that, this essay offers a speculative engagement with epistemic decolonizing that is rooted in an epistemological embrace of incompleteness and an ontology of indebtedness (Sankar, 2022). My debt toward those who have willingly or by force found themselves in minoritarian positions within the Business School and who have relentlessly opposed the institution through their writing, their teaching, and their other political engagements, is unpayable. It is by acknowledging that debt and embracing it as an abundant gift that I firmly position myself in opposition to the system that unremittently commodifies that debt and chains it to the laws of the market.

Before I dive into my arguments, allow me a personal detour. This article took me years to write. It results from personal struggles and reflections on these issues that have started a long time ago. You see, I am a "pure product" of the Business School. I have Bachelor, Master, and Doctorate degrees in Business Studies. I have been part of a Business School for the past 30 years, first as a student and then as a faculty. I have taught a great number of introductory and advanced courses in Management and Organization Studies at all levels and have been involved for years in the development of textbooks, handbooks, course syllabi, case studies, and other pedagogical materials. For years, I was a cog in the machine. I was a good soldier of global academia. I transmitted knowledge to the best of my abilities, always making sure I did the reproductive work that sustains and

maintains the Business School as the beating heart of the global capitalist order. I also happen to be an Arab woman who comes from and was educated in the Global South. I am perfectly 'assimilated'[2] but feel perpetually out of place in the Business School. I have been trained for a long time to not question the system, to adhere to it, and to nourish it. But I came to realize very quickly that I was an instrument of its hegemony and that through me, a particular epistemic order was reproduced.

The scaffold that holds the Business School together and that produces, legitimizes, and normalizes standard western-centric knowledge is what enables that epistemic order (Liu, 2022). For years, I was a perpetuator and a perpetrator of that epistemic order. The irony of it does not escape me: although I hail from the periphery, I was a producer of hegemonic Western-centric knowledge. In fact, my personal background usually exacerbated the need for me to be one. After years of effective complicity with a system whose injustice toward those who cannot "play it," was increasingly blatant to me, I started to interrogate the epistemological scaffolding on which most Business scholarship is built and quickly realized that I was far from being alone in opposing it. This piece is written as an homage to those who have been incessantly doing this work throughout the years and as a hopeful call for younger scholars to embrace it even more strongly.

The Business School as postcolony

The Business School occupies a privileged place in the world today as it is the main source of business knowledge production and dissemination, and the principal purveyor of arguments and justifications for the "oiling" of the global capitalist machine. An important literature on the historical function of the Business School (Cooke and Alcadipani, 2015; Djelic, 1998; Gantman et al., 2015; Srinivas, 2009; Üsdiken, 2004; Westwood et al., 2014) has shown the role it played to establish and further sediment previous colonial dynamics.

The Business School, as an institution, is a key player in the flourishing of the neoliberal ideological apparatus and, as such, is the site of tightly imbricated systems of power and epistemological domination (Parker, 2014; 2018); It actively (re)produces the racist and sexist articulations of the predatory extractive machine that historically supported colonialism and its exploitive logic (Abdallah, 2022; Dar et al., 2021; Nkomo, 2011). In other words, even if the colonial system that sustained and maintained the "efficient" functioning of capitalism over centuries has effectively almost disappeared, the coloniality of it, or the logic of extraction through inferiorization, is still alive and well (Jammulamadaka et al., 2021). Indeed, recent research has shown how people of color are more impacted by precarity and symbolic violence in academia (Bell et al., 2021; Bourabain, 2021; Settles et al., 2021). Far from receding, these processes of racial and gender hierarchizations are all the more present today despite the incessant calls by mainstream players—institutions and researchers—to transform the central stakeholder value-driven model and to shift the focus toward corporations' broader societal purpose (Manning, 2021; Scott, 2023). In fact, the moralizing undercurrents in the discourse that is currently being deployed around the need for Business Schools to be more "ethical" and "caring," are even more insidious and contribute to a greater dissonance between official institutional postures and violent lived experiences. Decolonizing initiatives often fall under that moralizing discourse by being defended as diversity and inclusion practices that are mostly cosmetic and rarely tackle structural issues such as access to resources (financial and intellectual), collusion with big business, and the historical complicity between Business Schools and corporate "benefactors," or the hegemonic status of English as the language of globalized academia.

In this essay, I rely on Achille Mbembe's qualification of *postcolony* to describe what appears to me as a very specific mode of coloniality at play in the Business School. In R.J.C. Young's

notable discussion of Mbembe's postcolony, he points to the particular emphasis that Mbembe puts on specific dysfunctional modes of domination and violence. According to Mbembe, the postcolony through its bureaucracy and institutions creates its own sense of the world, and thus, the conditions in which that sense is made: the postcolony "produce the limit of what is both possible and permissible to think" (Young, 2015: 144). This, Mbembe suggests, leads to a "zombification" both of the dominant and those whom they dominate. The postcolony is not *officially* a colonial space but it is the location of a lingering, insidious logic of enmeshment and internalized subjugation.

In the realm of the postcolony, "the banality of power," a somewhat arbitrary new form of legitimate domination is deployed under the guise of sovereignty. In other words, the postcolony is a space where institutional forms are "characterized by a distinctive style of political improvisation, by a tendency to excess and lack of proportion, as well as by distinctive ways identities are multiplied, transformed, and put into circulation." (Mbembe, 2001: 102). The postcolony is the location of what Mbembe terms "entanglements" between a variety of *post-colonial* subjects living a particular *postcolonial* condition (Yousfi, 2021b). The postcolony is therefore what Saïd (2013) called a place "In-Between Worlds," a polyphonic space of dissonance and (potential) dissidence. For Mbembe (1992), the postcolony is "chaotically pluralistic, yet it has nonetheless an internal coherence. It is a specific system of signs, a particular way of fabricating simulacra or re-forming stereotypes." (p. 3). This is particularly salient in Business Schools when it comes to "doing diversity" (Ahmed, 2007) or encouraging decolonizing initiatives. The simulacra can then take the shape of an increased "concern" with certain issues at certain moments in time which then slowly peter out. A particularly striking illustration of this tendency is the new system of signs (official statements, workshops, meetings, banners, tweets, etc.) that emerged after the murder of George Floyd in 2020. Few of the then-displayed sentiments of outrage and abhorrence about racism and its multidimensional manifestations are as vehemently expressed today.

I offer to consider the concept of postcolony to think of the Business School as a site of knowledge production, dissemination, and legitimation. This site operates within a colonial epistemological realm that constitutes and is constituted by a multiplicity of voices, interests, and logics that coexist with various degrees of violence but do not benefit from the same symbolic worth. Representationally, the Business School is a diverse space that flourishes on the rich cultural environment that its brochures resolutely display. Epistemologically, however, it is still painfully homogeneous. Two elements are worth noting in the Business School as postcolony: First, under the pretense of a level playing field in which knowledge is produced and disseminated by sovereign individuals with relatively equal access to resources, marginalized subject positions nevertheless always battle for legitimacy from either lack of social and symbolic capital, language ability, formal "Western-approved" research training or journal access. Despite the increasingly demonstrated interest in the Global South, the field of MOS is more inclined to consider it to be the location of exciting fieldwork for Global North academics in search of exotic thrills rather than a legitimate location of knowledge production (Abdelnour and Abu Moghli, 2021). Research published in academic journals established in the periphery hardly gets any attention, let alone citations, from the hegemonic knowledge production machine. Examples of a wide variety of epistemic exclusions of periphery scholarship are well described, and I do not need to further the point (Alcadipani et al., 2012; Banerjee, 2022; Barros and Alcadipani, 2023; Westwood et al., 2014). Second, there is a number of complicit "comprador elite" scholars who contribute to maintain the status quo by actively seeking approval and status. In their study of knowledge production in Argentina, Gantman and Parker (2006) show how that elite—heavily influenced by US managerial doctrine—contributes to the reproduction of that doctrine at the expense of indigenous knowledge development. They also discuss how those observations can be extended to most of the Global South as the academic and consultancy elites strongly benefits from that epistemic invisibilization.

In the realm of the postcolony, therefore, epistemic decolonizing cannot be conceived as a simple process of stripping the old and starting anew. As Mbmebe's concept teaches us, nothing is completely past in the postcolony because *everything is in a perpetual present of lingering coloniality*. Epistemic decolonizing thus cannot be considered as a specific moment in time that would have a beginning and an end or as an event that would trigger a linear transformational process. It is an always already ongoing process of perpetual becoming that cannot happen at the center but *elsewhere*, in the folds, on the edges. These edges are often called the margins. Let us examine them more closely.

The epistemic margins of the postcolony

The argument that drives this essay is that epistemic decolonizing only happens in the margins of the postcolony, and those margins are defined by a specific epistemic condition that I call a *minoritarian condition*. I will further develop this idea here by first discussing how these margins are defined and how minor theory can help to understand their epistemic formation.

Historically, the margins form a contested terrain. For Bell Hooks (1989), the margins are a space of radical openness, a political location that is also a place of expression and of struggle where theorizing is done esthetically, phenomenologically, and in critical praxis. She defines the margins as a space "outside" the main body; a place those in struggle can enter but not live in. Interestingly, "language is also a place of struggle" is a leitmotiv in her 1989 piece as a way to remind the reader that the epistemic realm also has to be constantly interrogated by those on whom that language has been imposed. Language is indeed a place of struggle for those of us for whom English is foreign. And English is the imperial language of the Business School. More than just symbolically, language has material oppressive effects in that it carries a whole epistemological universe that determines the confines of thought (Murphy and Zhu, 2012). If English is not your language, then you will have to appropriate that epistemological universe nonetheless to produce legitimate knowledge, you will have to learn to comply with the codes of that language and the epistemic realm of imperiality that accompanies it, something Boussebaa and Tienari (2021) call *Englishization* of the global field of management.

The margins of MOS have been discussed from multiple perspectives: from a geopolitical/epistemic location (Ibarra-Colado, 2006) to a "crowded space" that can also be heavily co-opted by the mainstream (Sliwa et al., 2007), to a location of epistemic erasure and struggle in the Global South (Pal et al., 2023). It is not easy to define or enclose the epistemic margins of the Business School as postcolony. However, those located in them have an intuitive understanding of what these margins are. They are described as spaces of resistance, exploration, struggle, but mainly spaces of intellectual creativity (Vijay et al., 2021). In MOS, the margins are often seen as locations of discomfort, spaces of questioning, locations of experimentation in which alternatives are conceptualized (Dorion, 2021), new languages are invented (Cunliffe, 2002), new modes of writing experimented (Pullen et al., 2020).

I argue for an understanding of the margins that is not only rooted in spatiality, location, or identity, but one that refers to a specific epistemic condition within the postcolony. The margins exist as realms in opposition to what is established and institutionalized. The margins are anti-institutional in that they stem from a specific epistemic position that I define as "against mastery" to borrow from Julietta Singh's (2017) brilliant theoretical engagement. In that book, Singh challenges what she considers the core dimension of any political, cultural, and intellectual enterprise: achieving mastery. Mastery over oneself, over others, and over a realm of knowledge. For Singh (2017), there is "an intimate link between the mastery enacted through colonization and other forms of mastery that we often believe today to be totally harmless, worthwhile, even virtuous" (p.

9). She refuses to define mastery in her book to avoid reproducing the system on which mastery of a subject is based: the positing of a definition, the enclosure of meaning. In Latin, *comprendere* (to understand) also means encompass, circumscribe, bound, and encircle. In other words, establish a form of mastery over something. To be in the margins of the Business School does not depend on a particular location or identity but is enacted through a *principle of nonmastery*. It is a refusal of and an opposition to the *Master promulgator of knowledge*, the Western/Eurocentric epistemic subject position. This is why margins cannot only be located geographically in the Global South but are, nonspatially, everywhere people either choose or are deemed to be outside of the realm of mastery or what can also be called legitimacy. In other words, the margins are both imposed and chosen by epistemic subjects in struggle. If the margins are outside, then they are outside the legitimate epistemic enclosure of the postcolony.[3] This being said, Spivak (1993) warned us in her book *Outside in the teaching machine* that the disruptive nature of the margins imposes a constant interrogation of their potential institutionalization. We need to be particularly careful of "the cooptive history of marginality" (Spivak, 1993: 61) by avoiding any essentialization of the margins as specific geographic or identity-based spaces or as homogeneous fields. Let us not forget that the margins are also fragmented, hierarchical spaces if they are not critically interrogated. The undiscerning celebration of "marginality" as a position serves the maintenance of the status quo and the position of "native informants as keeper of esoteric 'ethnic' or subaltern knowledge" (Kapoor, 2004: 630). Worse, the margins can sometimes be used as a pretense of minoritarian subject positions in global academia to advocate for mainstream, neocolonial initiatives within the Global South. In recent years, we can think of right-wing, privileged scholars based in the Global South strategically using their "marginal" status in global academia while defending particularly reactionary initiatives in their own universities.[4] The epistemic margins I am focusing on in this essay however are found outside of enclosed/legitimate knowledge, they are not necessarily attached to specific locations and cannot be liberally claimed as subject positions. They are defined as *fundamentally oppositional in relation to the master promulgator of knowledge*, or the settler of its legitimacy. The margins are therefore not stable and immutable but *relational*, constantly being made, re-made, transformed, and negotiated.

The work of critical geographer Cindi Katz (1996) on Minor theory is helpful to theorize the margins as particular epistemic conditions against mastery. Following Deleuze and Guattari's engagement with "minor literature," she attempts to reconfigure the production of knowledge by exploring the politics of producing interstitial theory. If the Major is the unmarked, transparent, dominant subject of enunciation of knowledge, the Minor "expresses a particular and undermining relationship to mastery" (Katz, 1996: 492). The margins are therefore realms of minority that disturb a Major architecture of orthodoxies, assumptions, and rules that impose certain modes of expression, thinking, and doing. Margins are created out of minoritarian moves *within* the Major. They are not spatially separated from the central location of knowledge but work interstitially, within its folds, to set up "an imbricated or interstitial politics; a way of negotiating and reworking a space of betweenness to produce something new" (Katz, 1996: 496).

In MOS, the margins take shape in that space of betweenness through the invention of new modes of being and creating and knowing that move against the established mastery of the field. The margins of MOS are communities of resistance that must "make do" with the brutal reality of academia but in that quotidian inventiveness of alternatives and modes of survival, these communities create a "profound edge, a central location for the production of a counter hegemonic discourse that is not just found in words but in habits of being and the way one lives" (hooks, 1989: 20). Remarkable recent studies in MOS illustrate the analytic lucidity that a minoritarian condition entails and explore a variety of "marginal" topics such as Queer theory (Rumens et al., 2019), caste systems (Chrispal et al., 2021; Dixit, 2023), feminist speculative science-fiction (Dorion and

Ouahab, 2022) or Muslim women's resistance through art (Kumar and Kamble, 2022). Indeed, minoritarians incessantly thwart the production of social norms by the majority through their constant questioning and refusal. By consciously refusing mastery, or by embracing marginality, minoritarian research strives to change theory and practice simultaneously (Katz, 1996, 2017). Yet, it is important to not minimize the violence associated with minoritarian engagements. The consequences of an epistemic minoritarian move against the mainstream can be violently repressed and dismissed. The brutal public (via LinkedIn) shaming and contempt demonstrated in 2021 by an established (Major, white, male) professor toward a minoritarian epistemic engagement by Mandalaki and Perezts (2022) is a perfect illustration of that. However, despite its precarity, the minoritarian condition gives thinking strength, a life-affirming force in a regime of epistemic injustice. The minoritarian dynamic is one of epistemic struggle but done collectively, it is a means for epistemic agency (Muzanenhamo and Chowdhury, 2021).

It is as such from the point of view of those minoritarians that I situate my reflections and that I suggest that any type of decolonizing is still possible. The minoritarian condition implies an extraction from domination to think about domination, it "tears at the confines of major theory; pushing its limits to provoke 'a line of escape,' a rupture—a tension out of which something else might happen" (Katz, 1996: 489). To be minoritarian does not imply a resigned inferiority but an active *potentiality* of de-subjugation, the open possibility of liberation and reinvention. Epistemic decolonizing is thus necessarily a minoritarian move that "reworks the Major from within" (Katz, 1996: 491) to disturb its assumptions and unseat its mastery. In the words of Mahmood Mamdani,

> For those of us who are inmates of the modern university, prisoners in an ongoing colonizing project, at least in a metaphorical sense, I suggest we think of our task as one of subverting the project from within, through a series of acts which sift through the historical legacy, discarding some parts, and adapting others to a new-found purpose. (Mamdani, 2019: 51)

Epistemic decolonizing is a minoritarian engagement that is embodied, situated, and messy, and that takes place within the folds and interstices of the Major, constantly reworking it, interrogating it, and refusing it, in a nonlinear and necessarily incomplete way.

Epistemic decolonizing as incompleteness

Epistemic decolonizing has been around for a very long time in the humanities and social sciences and has been happening everywhere on the globe. The work of scholars like the Alatas family (father and son) in/on Malaysia and Southeast Asia, the foundational writing of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, the philosophical work of Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, and Claude Ake on Africa, the vast scholarship from Latin America, or more recent radical theoretical engagements such as *Asia as Method* by Taiwanese scholar KH Chen (2010) have all radically reimagined knowledge and unsettled the colonial legacies that presided on its legitimate definition and they have done so from a variety of geographical locations and disciplinary grounds. In Business Schools, epistemic decolonizing has taken the form of multiple minoritarian engagements that de-center hegemonic knowledge by subverting it and by producing radical variations on existent theories; in other words, epistemic decolonizing calls for displacing these theories, making them travel (Said, 2013) not only to and from the Global North to the Global South but within the Global South.[5] Epistemic decolonizing as a minoritarian move that interrogates and unsettles established legitimate and unquestioned knowledge relies on constant reconfigurations of that knowledge, reinventions, and vibrant epistemic *fahlawa* (Yousfi, 2021a). It relies on "imagining otherwise" (Olufemi, 2021) and implies the necessity of thinking contrapuntally (Said, 2013) *with* and *against* the postcolony, of disrupting it from

the inside. Notable recent minoritarian logics underly the work of Burchiellaro's (2021) "queering" of control practices in organizations, of Khan's (2017) interrogation of qualitative research practices from a Muslim perspective or the radical rethinking of agency through the new concept of body/flesh in Harding et al. (2022). It can also be found in the concept of "lice work" developed by Benali and Ren (2019) in their study of volunteer tourism, in Seremani and Clegg's (2016) mobilization of the epistemological tradition of *Ubuntu* as an "epistemological third space" to produce novel knowledge on organizations, or in the interrogation of the concept of meritocracy in Business Schools in Vijay and Nair (2022). Epistemic decolonizing therefore functions through a *foraging mode* (Vijay, 2023); It is not a declared path, but it takes the form of an ongoing search. As a posture, it is in opposition to the Master (western/white/male) traditional central subject of knowledge. Or rather, it refuses the epistemic position of deference into which we have all been impelled to abide by.

Reflecting back on the impact of her book *Can the Subaltern Speak?* two decades after its first publication, Gayatri Spivak (2010), returned to the early years of her career and reaffirmed that her intellectual work had always been about unseating "the historical sun of theory, the subject of Europe" (p. 241). Over the years, she has done so relentlessly, with "critical intimacy" (Paulson, 2018), and she has done so through what she calls an "affirmative sabotage of modernity and universalism" (Spivak, 2018: 168). This affirmative, generative, imaginative, *ongoing sabotage* is the closest I have to a definition of epistemic decolonizing. That process, which is never fully completed, must remain unfinishable.

Conclusion

For Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o', decolonizing is "not an event that happens once and for all at a given time and place, but an ongoing process of 'seeing ourselves clearly'" (Mbembe, 2015: 15). In line with that, epistemic decolonizing is then a processual rearrangement of knowledge that operates through a poetic, relational, heteroclite, imperfect, minor mode of constant becoming and transformation. It is, a position of principle, against any form of mastery or completion. Against the capitalist, racist, sexist, self-centered system that decides on completeness; that decides on what should be known. What distinguishes it is its minor relationship to established theoretical traditions and its refusal of fixed end points. Epistemic decolonizing can only be envisaged as an always incomplete endeavor and an unfinishable task.

In their illuminating book *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*,[6] Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2013) consider the undercommons as the location where work gets subverted, where the knowledge object is always questioned, transformed, and where "the downlow low-down maroon community of the university" (p. 26) can be found. Minoritarians are the undercommons of the Business School. They are those who work in and at the margins to destabilize epistemic domination, to unsettle its legitimate subject(s), and to refuse any type of mastery incessantly and relentlessly. I envisage that work of decolonizing as a happening, an endless riot, a disturbance of the (established) colonial peace, an "ongoing rehearsal" (Harney and Moten, 2013).

In my personal entanglements with these issues in the last decade, I came to realize that if one does not want to operate as a perpetuator or a perpetrator within an oppressive epistemic realm, then the only way to be is a *trespasser*. An intruder who plays with the boundaries of what is deemed "the center," an encroacher upon the legitimately drawn epistemic enclosure. It is only through multiple forms of minoritarian imaginative engagements that anything can (and will) be decolonized. Epistemic decolonizing in the postcolony can only be seized, grabbed, captured, endlessly, every day by those who barely manage to exist within it, knowing well that there is no end

in sight and resolutely believing in the incompleteness of knowledge and its irreducibility to the laws of the market.

As a consequence, to imagine epistemic decolonizing only as a radical rupture with existing knowledge is at best naïve and at worst irresponsible. Epistemic decolonizing is not a case of "sawing the branch on which one is seated" (Boulbina, 2019) but more a case of reimagining the tree. To embrace the cracks or fissures of the postcolony is the only liberatory way forward. In their most recent book *All Incomplete*, Harney and Moten (2021) offer that "to be undercommon is to live incomplete in the service of a shared incompletion" (p. 122). Decolonizing work within minoritarian marginal spaces in the Business School is always incomplete. Let us revel in that incompleteness and cherish it for it is the only way for us to stay alive.

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Notes

1. In this essay, I use categories such as Global South, Global North, Periphery, and Third World for convenience despite being aware of the need to interrogate their epistemological origin and use within a Western-centric normative regime.
2. Interestingly, in the three survival strategies for coping with academia described by Muzanenhamo and Chowdhury (2021), *compromising*, *collusion*, and *radicalism*, I have reluctantly espoused the first two for most of my career with a strong move toward the third in the last decade.
3. It is important to note here that I do not wish to minimize the structural inequalities in the margins or the periphery. Being in the periphery also often means being exploited, devalued, and appropriated. My argument here is primarily developed within the epistemic realm (which is not devoid of structural inequalities, but that discussion is not the purpose of this essay).
4. I thank one of the reviewers of this article for their insights on this topic.
5. Here and in line with my general argument, I am again wary of using Global South as a unified category which in my view restricts and encloses the vastness of the social, cultural, political, and epistemological horizons that form it. There are enclaves of oppression and locations of epistemological domination historically situated within the "Third World" but also and increasingly within the Global North.
6. It is worth noting from a minoritarian perspective that both Harney & Moten's books are published by *Minor Compositions*, a militant and autonomous press. The books can be accessed freely online.

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