

# Teaching as Rooted Cosmopolitans: Towards Justice-Oriented Internationalization in Higher Education

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## Abstract

The concept of cosmopolitanism has been a subject of philosophical debates as to whether a commitment to it requires the shedding of particularist attachments (such as attachments to a national or group identity or their accompanying convictions), or if such particularist commitments might enhance a cosmopolitan orientation. This paper brings these debates to bear on the internationalization of higher education, particularly in relation to the work of academics who implement universities' internationalization strategies through teaching, and who aim to do so fairly and justly. Drawing on our individual reflections and shared conversations about our experiences, we propose that the philosophically informed concept of rooted cosmopolitanism can helpfully inform internationalization strategies.

**Keywords:** cosmopolitanism, internationalization of higher education, decoloniality, liberalism

## Introduction

The internationalization movement within higher education has often been framed as a tension between instrumental, economic motivations and civic, cosmopolitan ends, with the latter seen as a more 'honourable' justification for internationalization initiatives (Matthews & Sidhu, 2010; Pais and Costa, 2017; Sakhiyya, 2022). However, cosmopolitanism itself is a contested concept, as seen in the philosophical debates about whether a commitment to it requires the shedding of particularist attachments (such as attachments to a national or group identity or their accompanying convictions), or if such particularist commitments might enhance a cosmopolitan orientation.

This paper brings the questions of those debates to bear on the internationalization of higher education, particularly in relation to the work of academics who implement universities' internationalization strategies through teaching, and who aim to do so fairly and justly. To what extent are teachers' 'rooted' or particular commitments compatible with an overarching commitment to cosmopolitanism, or the view that humans can and should behave as world citizens? Need there be a tension, or can they commit to both? Can educators commit to specific deeply held convictions, established ways of being and doing, while simultaneously feeling care and concern for all stakeholders, and without 'othering' them?

In this paper, we use the word 'internationalization' to refer to the movement by which, since the 1990s, higher education institutions have aggressively pursued strategies aimed at aligning their structures and practices with the phenomenon of globalization. These have included transnational benchmarking of credentials and qualifications, promoting

transnational research collaborations, setting up campuses in other countries, establishing joint degree programs with overseas partner universities, increased faculty and student mobility, and revising curricula to be more international in content. Alongside this activity, numerous universities around the world have added the cultivation of 'globally minded' graduates as one of their stated educational aims (see Lilley, Barker and Harris, 2015), and the educating of students who are 'global' in orientation has become central to the internationalization movement.

Both of us are university lecturers with extensive experience of internationalization, with some similarities but each of a culturally specific character. The first author has more than twenty years' experience teaching at an elite private university in the Philippines. For almost a decade, she held administrative posts related to the internationalization efforts of her home university, first as a coordinator for outbound student mobility and then later as the university coordinator for internationalization, responsible for exploring different models of collaboration with potential university partners. In recent years, she has also been a lecturer for two study abroad programmes based in London. The second author, similarly, has more than twenty years of higher education-based teaching experience, but in elite, research-intensive universities in England. Meanwhile, a significant element of her professional role over the past ten years has concerned Masters and Doctoral programmes in Hong Kong, based on a 'fly-in, fly out' model of delivery until the Covid-19 pandemic put a halt to international travel. We share broadly similar commitments to good global citizenship, based in justice and fairness, while other particular deeply held convictions reflect our very different identities and power is unequally distributed between us.

Can we at least partially reconcile views that resonate between us under the umbrella of rooted cosmopolitanism, while recognising and respecting our distinctiveness? This has been the aim of our continuing conversations, and the aim of this paper. Drawing on our individual reflections and shared conversations about our experiences, we propose that the philosophically informed concept of rooted cosmopolitanism – first coined by Kwame Anthony Appiah (2007) but developed further with specific reference to education by Marianna Papastephanou (2016) – can helpfully inform internationalization strategies. 'Rooted cosmopolitanism' has had insufficient purchase, we maintain, on the realm of internationalisation, and we demonstrate both its potential and limitations for helping university teachers cultivate globally oriented civic identities among their students, while resisting the reproduction of hegemonic relationships. Following an explanation of the contested aims of internationalization and a theoretical explanation of rooted cosmopolitanism, we draw on our own classroom practice and experiences to consider both how our own rootedness as well as our students' shapes the way we impart cosmopolitan values to them. Fortuitously, we bring shared as well as distinctive understandings of the issues being debated, despite our contrasting personal and professional experiences, something established over a number of years through our developing academic friendship.

## **The Internationalization of Higher Education: Neoliberal and Critical Approaches**

Researchers have largely agreed that, practically speaking, the internationalization movement is dominated by economic and neoliberal motivations (Camicia and Franklin, 2011; Coate and Rathnayake, 2013; also see Basaran and Olsson, 2017), focused on 'self-investment and enhanced profits' (Pais and Costa, 2017). For example, the rationale often

given for internationalizing curricula has been to train students to become 'global workers' by giving them the skill sets needed in the 'globalized economy'. Where attempts have been made to challenge this narrowly economic discourse, these have emphasized the potential civic benefits of international higher education, such as the cultivation of values and attitudes that support global citizenship (UNESCO, 2013), critical democracy (Pais and Costa, 2017), and civic cosmopolitanism (Matthews and Sidhu, 2010; Sakhiyya, 2022). To borrow Pais and Costa's (2017) framing, these attempts have ranged from 'soft' to 'critical' accounts. 'Softer' reimaginings might consider the neoliberal benefits of internationalization to be compatible with its potential civic benefits. 'Critical' discourses, on the other hand, tend to see them as largely incompatible and aim to replace the neoliberal framings of international higher education with civic ones (Pais and Costa, 2017).

However, neither 'soft' nor 'critical' critiques of the dominant discourses of international higher education appear to have had much impact on mainstream practices. Some researchers have attributed this to the overwhelming predominance of the current capitalist system itself (Pais and Costa, 2017; Sakhiyya, 2022). Others have highlighted practices in higher education institutions that nonetheless perpetuate or even exacerbate inequities and hegemonies (see Gardner-McTaggart, 2021; Matthews and Sidhu, 2010). One example of this is the focus on fostering student mobility pathways that either circulate within the Global North (i.e., from one Global North country to another) or are northward (i.e., from the Global South towards the Global North). Very few incidents of southward or 'intra-periphery' (Shields and Edwards, 2010) mobility have been reported in the literature.

Because of this, some researchers have called for the meaning of internationalization in higher education to be reimagined, drawing on explicitly anti-hegemonic perspectives, with the aim of influencing change to the sector's standard approaches. Writing from the South African context, for example, Heleta and Chasi (2023: 270) have argued for 'pluralistic and anti-hegemonic internationalisation', involving 'a critical and comparative process of the study of its world and its complexities, past and present inequalities and injustices, and possibilities for a more equitable and just future for all ...'. Implications for practice influenced by this argument include centring the Global South in every aspect of the curriculum, from reading lists to research ethics. Drawing on post-development studies literature, Beck (2021) goes further still, proposing that the entire internationalization project be replaced by 'post-internationalization'. She identifies this perspective as a 'transitional' discourse aiming 'to reorganize the global or international dimension of higher education' based on the notion of a 'a pluriverse, a world in which multiple words, multiple ways of being and knowing through our global connections can be included' (p. 145).

Emergent conceptualizations like those of Heleta and Chasi and Beck coalesce in a discourse of what might be called 'critical internationalization', one which seeks to reveal and rectify the hegemonic character of existing established understandings. This discourse has prompted initial suggestions, which include rethinking the goals of international higher education and changing the way that institutional internationalization initiatives are typically structured. As lecturers in higher education, we are personally sympathetic to these calls but more concerned still, as philosophers of education specifically, that a theoretically robust exploration of the implications of these considerations for classroom practice is conducted. This would draw on established ideas in political philosophy, including more recent reflections on rooted cosmopolitanism, which seem absent from calls we have encountered.

## **Rooted Cosmopolitanism**

The past few decades have seen important developments in cosmopolitan theory. Following the end of the Cold War and dissolution of the Soviet Union, various writers (e.g., Barber, 1992; Huntington, 1993) began to speculate that the next ideological source of global conflict would be the tension between liberal democracy and ethnic loyalties. In 1994, Martha Nussbaum's essay 'Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism' – in which she defined a cosmopolitan as 'the person whose primary allegiance is to the community of human beings in the entire world' – sparked vibrant philosophical debates around notions of 'cosmopolitanism', 'patriotism' and 'nationalism'. In the field of philosophy of education, similar intellectual tensions provoked discussions regarding the permissibility or desirability of patriotic education and cosmopolitan education (e.g., Archard, 1999; Callan, 1999; Brighouse, 2006; Hand, 2011; Haynes, 2013; McDonough and Cormier, 2013; Merry, 2013) respectively. Contestation, both in political philosophy and educational philosophy, tended in its early years to dichotomize cosmopolitanism on the one hand, and partiality towards one's country (whether this was labelled 'patriotism' or 'nationalism') on the other.

The dichotomy between cosmopolitanism and patriotism that underpinned these debates drew to a close as philosophical conceptions of cosmopolitanism reached a degree of conceptual consensus, converging mostly in various versions of Ghanaian-British-American philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah's (2007b) notion of 'rooted cosmopolitanism' (e.g., Tan, 2004; Brock, 2009; Papastephanou, 2016). Reflecting on his and his family's heritage, Appiah argues that a tenable form of cosmopolitanism 'must take seriously ... the value of particular human lives, the lives people have made for themselves, within the communities that lend significance to those lives' and thus argues for a cosmopolitanism that 'must reconcile a kind of universalism with the legitimacy of at least some forms of partiality' (Appiah, 2007a: 222–3).

Appiah's (2007a) first step in reconciling these is by critiquing the supposed opposition between the principle of moral equality (in the sense of equitable treatment) and people's associative duties (that is, obligations to specific people that arise out of some shared relationship or attribute, such as our duties to family members). He argues that, while liberal political philosophers argue that the former ought to be an attribute of states, it is wrong to insist the same in the case of individual people. Impartiality, he points out, may be a requirement for social justice, but 'social justice is not an attribute of individuals' (Appiah, 2007a: 228). We can all agree, he points out, that it is good to have social ties, and that our meaningful relationships with specific people and communities provide reasons for partiality. Amidst this, Appiah envisions cosmopolitanism as twofold: first, it is the acknowledgment that we also have obligations 'that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kin'; second, it is the attitude and task of 'taking an interest in the practices and beliefs' of people who are different from us, aiming to learn from them (Appiah, 2007a: xv). Cosmopolitanism for him, then, refers not only to a set of obligations, but also to the task of conversation between peoples and nations through which points of agreement and mutual learning can be found.

Although Brock (2009) does not use the phrase 'rooted cosmopolitanism', she similarly argues that), in many cases, one can continue to hold a national or patriotic identity – that is,

an identification with a particular community, place, or heritage – while simultaneously enacting one’s ethical responsibility to all members of the global community, including those with whom we have little in common. Being ethically responsible to all members of the global community does not require any feeling of belonging to such a community. Similarly, one’s feeling of belonging to a community does not necessarily mean that one will act in ways that neglect one’s responsibilities to all members of the global community. Formulated as such, cultural rootedness need not conflict with the ethical responsibility that is cosmopolitanism.

With respect to the potential conflict between cosmopolitan obligations and patriotic or national identity, Brock (2009) views cosmopolitanism as the corrective that defines limits to nationalism/patriotism. For her, nationalism – that is, identifying with a particular nation – is permissible but only insofar as one’s local obligations to that nation do not ‘[crowd] out responsibilities to distant others’ (Brock, 2009). However, reflecting on the experiences of colonised peoples, Marianna Papastephanou (2016) suggests that this boundary discourse offers only one side of the story being based, she maintains, on the hasty presumption that patriotism can be pernicious, and never cosmopolitanism. By way of example, Papastephanou presents the example of ‘expansionist colonialism’ as a form of pseudo-cosmopolitanism that throws open borders, then suppresses the patriotic resistance of colonised peoples against their oppression. Could it be argued that this aptly describes the forms of internationalization in higher education dominated by economic and neoliberal motivations we have singled out for criticism in the first section of the paper?

For Papastephanou (2016), ethical restrictions guided by the principle of justice must be imposed, not only on ‘particularist attachment’ but also on the ‘border crossing’ sometimes naively advocated by cosmopolitans (p. 140). As one of us has argued elsewhere (Azada-Palacios, 2024), particularist attachments can also be justice-oriented, and can indeed be the channel through which global justice is pursued. Take, for example, the actions taken by representatives of small island nations when harnessing their national identities to advocate for vulnerable populations in global climate change negotiations (Ourbak and Magnan, 2018). Thus, Papastephanou’s analysis, alongside other readings of cosmopolitanism ‘from below’, such as those from the Latin American decolonial tradition (e.g., Mignolo, 2018), allows a justice-oriented nationalism/patriotism to be understood as a corrective limit to the potential pathologies of cosmopolitanism, in the same way that a justice-oriented cosmopolitanism ought to function as the ethical limit of nationalism/patriotism.

Our specific interest in this paper is in the arguments that these more recent cosmopolitan thinkers of the past two decades have developed in political philosophy, which are currently under-applied to thinking about education and to debates about the internationalization of higher education that have burgeoned since those earlier scores seem to have been settled. To us, certain values and assumptions distinctive to specific socio-politically determined contexts, need not necessarily oppose cosmopolitanism. On the contrary, we maintain – as Appiah, Brock, Papastephanou and others have done – that it is possible for the two to be reconciled.

## **Rooted cosmopolitanism and internationalizing HE**

We draw on these recast notions of cosmopolitanism and nationalism/patriotism developed by these new cosmopolitan thinkers in relation to internationalizing higher education specifically. Appiah's (2007) seminal notion of rooted cosmopolitanism can be fleshed out further in insightful ways when applied to contemporary HE contexts in the light of the internationalization imperative. Here we conceptualize 'rooted cosmopolitans' as people who (a) identify both as a member of particular communities and as a member of the global community of all humans, and (b) recognize they have an ethical responsibility to all people, not just those with whom they very readily identify. We propose that this idea can be a helpful way for educators working in the internationalized university classroom to understand how they can undertake their role in ways that are both 'socially just' and consistent with wider value commitments.

In recent years, the university classroom has become an increasingly important site of internationalization practice. Apart from the criticisms of neoliberal internationalization enumerated above, various forces have led to a growing focus on 'internationalization at home'. These have included new concerns about institutional carbon footprints amidst the climate crisis, the development of educational technology during the Covid-19 pandemic, calls to decolonize the curriculum following the #RhodesMustFall and #BlackLivesMatter activist movements. Social and political unrest in different sites of outbound student mobility, and immigration restrictions that discourage inbound student mobility have further fuelled debate. Several universities around the world have begun to focus less exclusively on student mobility and instead explore more ways to foster students' global mindedness through educational practices located within their home institutions. The rapid expansion of online practice in universities during the Covid-19 pandemic has contributed to these initiatives.

Teachers are important players in the way that internationalization is enacted under these conditions. Teacher-led approaches to internationalization also provide an additional layer of protection from neoliberal capture. In the two parallel sections that follow, we each speak from our individual perspectives of being teachers in our respective contexts in higher education, drawing on our own particular and culturally specific commitments and experiences. We consider how, in each case, the concept of rooted cosmopolitanism might drive critical and civic internationalization practice. Does it translate consistently but distinctively to our respective contexts? This sets up the discussion of issues and themes we will explore in the fifth and final section in our argument.

***Rowena's experiences: 'Cosmopolitanism from below in a post-colonial setting'***

Most of my teaching experience has been at an elite university in the Philippines. Because the Philippine higher education context is different from the Western contexts most commonly written about in the literature, a brief description of the different forces that have shaped its internationalization trajectory is warranted here. Almost all my students in the Philippines are, like me, either Filipinos or have spent most of their lives in the same country. This does not mean, though, that they are insular or unaware of the rest of the world.

First, as a post-colonial country that experienced three hundred years of colonization under the Spanish crown and five decades of American colonization, Philippine culture – including the university curriculum – has strong European (specifically, Roman Catholic) and

American influences. In addition, almost all of my students' family lives have been personally affected in some way by outbound labour migration. The Philippines is one of the largest labour exporting countries in the world, because of government policy that, since the 1970s, uses labour export as a poverty alleviation strategy (Maca, 2018; also see Ball, 2006) and a source of remittances for propping up the country's weak economy.

Since the 1990s, many private colleges and universities (which compose the majority of higher education providers in the Philippines) have explicitly positioned themselves as servants of global capitalism (Ortiga, 2018), educating Filipinos for overseas labour (Ortiga, 2017). Although elite universities initially resisted this trend, traditionally dissuading their graduates from contributing to 'brain drain' (see Ortiga, 2018), the university internationalization movement allowed the Philippine higher education system to frame its export-oriented focus more positively, making it more palatable to elite universities. Since the start of the 21st century, elite Philippine universities have rehearsed many of the same economistic strategies for internationalization found in the Global North.

These have included designing student mobility programmes that tend to send students to centres of global economic or symbolic capital such as New York, Paris, Australia, Japan, or Singapore; and the promotion of foreign language learning programmes (the official languages of the Philippines are English and Filipino) that have mostly focused on languages of global import (e.g., Spanish, French and Mandarin) or regional (i.e., Asian) significance such as Japanese or Korean. In 2010, economic ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) committed to the development of a regional educational qualifications framework to facilitate labour exchange (see Fahmi, Balasingam and Laguardo 2019), further bolstering the internationalization agenda.

At the same time, colleges and universities in the Philippines have also always been sites of both coloniality and anti-colonial resistance. Having originated as an instrument of Spanish colonial domination in the 17th century (Santiago, 1991), the Philippine higher education system has been criticised for perpetuating harmful and/or hegemonic colonial logics (see Rodriguez, 2022; Tupas and Metila, 2023; Abuso, 2022). It has also, however, long been a site of anti-colonial nationalist resistance (Schumacher, 1975) and decolonial praxis. This decolonial discourse has typically involved a criticism of Western political, economic, and epistemic domination (e.g., Bello, 2004; Bello, 2005), and arguments for the greater indigenization of academic disciplines, resulting in expansive bodies of literature in the arts, humanities, philosophy, and the social sciences (see De Joya, 2013; Guillermo, 2009; Canilao-Paredes and Babaran-Diaz, 2013).

Advocates of internationalization in Philippine universities, then, including the government agency for higher education, have framed internationalization not only economically but also from an anti-colonial nationalist perspective (Eder, 2020). Despite worries that internationalization may threaten national security and sovereignty or erode indigenous cultural identities, university internationalization is nonetheless portrayed as a path that promotes national development through quality enhancement (Eder, 2023), consistent with earlier decades' public discourses that described outbound migrant workers as 'bagong bayani [*new heroes*]'. This constitutes a different kind of soft civic counter-discourse to the Western cosmopolitan-oriented one described above. In the Philippine discourse, internationalization is seen as an irreversible global trend that can be strategically

'co-opted' by the country's higher education system to potentially support rather than threaten the interests of the sovereign nation and its citizens (Eder, 2023: 28).

These are the forces that have influenced my own teaching and internationalization practice across the past decade and a half. In the next paragraphs, I describe the changes that I made to my syllabus for an undergraduate module on modern political philosophy that I taught for almost ten years, amidst the constraints of an institutionally mandated curriculum but also the academic freedom afforded to me as a university instructor, which allowed me to make these alterations. These changes show how my practice was shaped across time by a cosmopolitanism that grew in its 'rootedness'. Borrowing the phrase from Kurasawa (2004), I describe these classroom-based attempts at cosmopolitanism as a form of 'cosmopolitanism from below'.

The first version of my syllabus followed the structure of one that might typically be found in a Global North university, beginning chronologically with the modern social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau, moving onto an exploration of utilitarianism, then Rawls' theory of justice, and ending with an exploration of the liberal/communitarian debate. Despite the fact that the history even of canonical philosophy has never been exclusively 'Western', philosophy in the Global North has, beginning with the modern age, been very Eurocentric. Driven by a desire to clearly show the relevance of these Eurocentric philosophies to the Philippine context, I purposefully built-in classroom discussions that showed how the American colonial influence on Philippine politics had caused many of these American and European principles to emerge in Philippine politics, such as through the text of the Philippine Constitution. While motivated largely by anti-colonial nationalist sentiments, this decision can also be understood as an example of the type of cosmopolitan education advocated by Nussbaum (1994), which aims to portray 'all human beings more like our fellow city dwellers'. In drawing the similarities between the Philippine political context and American and European ones, I aimed at this stage of syllabus development to help students recognize the 'common aims, aspirations, and values' across these different contexts (Nussbaum 1994).

Through this period, I remained unsettled about the Eurocentrism that framed the mandated philosophy curriculum. I considered the possibility of taking an even more anti-colonial nationalist approach to teaching political philosophy, focusing primarily on Philippine political writings (see Richardson, 2013) rather than Western ones. I felt constrained, however, by the curricular expectation that students be oriented with the philosophical 'canon', and I did not immediately make radical changes to my reading list despite my misgivings.

My own increased exposure to writings from across the Global South, however, opened up for me the possibility of adopting an approach that could simultaneously be decolonial and cosmopolitan. I experimented with this first by expanding the site of application of modern Western political philosophy not only to Philippine history and politics but to the Global South more broadly. I began to introduce critiques of the Eurocentric narratives of the canonical political philosophers that we explored, by also including discussions, for example, of James Tully's and Barbara Arnull's Indigenous critiques of Locke, and Jamaican philosopher Charles W. Mills' critique of Rawls. Over time, I began to introduce more political thinkers who wrote from contexts other than the Global North (e.g.,



Fanon, 1952/2008; Dussel, 2013; Dladla, 2017; Rodriguez, 2021) or philosophers writing from various oppositional contexts (e.g., feminist philosophers, thinkers from the American Black radical tradition, or philosophers writing from Indigenous perspectives in settler colonial settings), not only as contrapuntal critiques of the Western political canon, but as traditions of political thought in their own right.

By making these choices, I found myself taking an approach that was both rooted and cosmopolitan. My teaching was rooted in my own and my students' Philippine identities, but was also expanding that identity, by making it cosmopolitan in Appiah's (2005) sense of the term. Appiah advocates for a 'cosmopolitan experience' that emerges not from theoretical agreements about abstract universal principles, but rather, through 'narrative imagination': our mutual understanding of and responses to particular stories, 'even strange stories' that can link us even to 'strange others' (Appiah 2005: 257). In my classes, I was helping my students recognize that the particular national stories that we had learned about in our history classes had resonances with the national stories of other people in other places as well, thereby linking our national political struggles with others'. In that sense, I was still framing us as 'citizens of the world', but the decolonial lens I used helped us to recognize that this world was characterized by inequality and histories of domination and illuminated for us the ways that our political practices and beliefs could either perpetuate or challenge these injustices.

The phrase 'internationalization of the curriculum' can, at first glance, seem meaningless in post-colonial higher education contexts, in which curricula – often developed in 'strange' Western contexts and imposed through policy transfer – are frequently assumed to be foreign imports. However, across my experience of internationalizing my syllabus for a political philosophy class, I found myself adopting an approach that could be simultaneously cosmopolitan and decolonial (see Camicia and Bayon, 2012), incorporating an anti-colonial critique without being parochial. The syllabi that have resulted from this approach have also shown how the canon of political philosophy, and what counts as 'philosophy' more broadly, can be challenged even within the confines of a classroom (see Dotson, 2012; Graness, 2015; Waithe, 2015).

### ***Janet's experiences: 'Cosmopolitanism from above and post-coloniality'***

By contrast, the UK higher education context is often written about in the literature; readers may refer to that if an account of the different forces that have shaped its internationalization trajectory is needed (e.g. Lomer et al, 2023; Geddie, 2015; Caruana, 2009) and the topic continues to be investigated intensively. Take for example, the UK-based Centre for Global Higher Education which has researched higher education and public good in seven countries including England since 2016 (Marginson and Yang, 2023). Challenges faced in the UK currently (mirrored elsewhere) have been attributed in the literature to geo-political shifts and more restrictive visa regulations that increase the financial strains experienced by universities as already vulnerable public institutions (Mittelmeier and Yang, 2022).

Like Rowena, my teaching experience has been situated in (three) elite universities in England, initially as a teacher educator working on a one-year vocational Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme.

Back then, a decade ago, most of my students were home students and, like me, white and British. School teaching is not a major focus of this paper, however we note how teachers from ethnic minority backgrounds continue to be under-represented in the profession in England and across different stages of progression, including pre-service formation. For more on this point, see Sharp and Aston (2024).

Latterly, however, my role has shifted to one focused on supporting doctoral researchers, many of whom have 'international' identities. More recently, I have supported Hong Kong Chinese, part time postgraduate researchers to achieve doctoral degrees. I am one of the latest in a long line of tutors on the programme since it was introduced in Hong Kong, a former British colony, in 1997, at the point of the 'handover'. It is an early example of the fly-in, fly out model of internationalised higher education. Practice-orientated in their academic interests, these working professionals have chosen to pursue a degree from a British university at a distance. As in the Philippines, the motivations of those undertaking the programme tend to be instrumental and economic, with one or two exceptions.

My university has a proud reputation in the field of Comparative and International Research in Education, with tutors attuned from the outset to the potential perils of cultural essentialism and stereotyping. Representation of Confucian Heritage Cultural (CHC) on all aspects of the curriculum should be no surprise, given the distinguished intellectual contributions my colleagues have made personally to those debates, although I am pleased that they have practised what they preached (e.g., Tikly, 2023; Trahar, 2024; Trahar and Montgomery, 2023; Crossley, 2022). Moreover, we have encouraged our doctoral researchers based in the Global South to see their projects as a valuable contribution to decolonising the field of education (Montgomery, 2019).

Unlike Rowena, the forces shaping my practice in the Global North are shaped by centuries of colonizing, 'masters' in the scenario she has just described, who have imposed the language of English and accompanying cultural norms on others, including their educational ambitions. People like me still determine agendas for internationalization in HE, from an unequal position of strength and power and rooted in particular value commitments.

Can 'rooted cosmopolitanism' help me to navigate the conception of justice I bring to internationalising my practice ethically so to speak 'from above'? The specific understanding of justice as fairness to which I am committed is strongly influenced by political liberalism, centred on the notion that citizens are free and equal persons who choose to cooperate for their mutual advantage, even though they hold different 'comprehensive' worldviews. However, as critical theorists point out (Cripps, 2024), for many generations the flourishing of people like me has perpetuated systematic disadvantage of people like Rowena, through the forces of colonialization.

And these disadvantages continue. While the language of instruction is English, I have picked up only a few basic words of common greeting and politeness in Cantonese, despite multiple visits while my students follow a curriculum that remains heavily Anglo-centric. Similar degrees of very high quality are offered locally, providing superior access to library space, in-person research events, focused on 'local' scholarship presented directly by those scholars who created it. Yet, in the end, 'international' programmes in institutions like mine are money-making enterprises, as we have argued from the outset, capitalising on the

prestige attached to a degree from 'world-leading' universities 'off-shore' where cost, career, and caring responsibilities preclude that opportunity in person.

Other disadvantages accrue when pursuing a degree under UK HE regulations and required to fit the norms of UKRI (UK Research and Innovation), studying part-time, and at a distance, even in the relatively benign circumstances I have described. We may accommodate language other than English in the appendices, but in the main text limitations to understanding through nuances lost in translation are only the start of the wider issues of unequal distribution of power and othering experienced by those who are constantly code-switching. Out of sight, in a different time zone, at a distance, this group are de-centred when issues of inclusion in doctoral provision are considered, although in this respect the Covid-19 pandemic and on-line learning was a radical leveller.

I cannot simply collude with existing power structures, although acting alone feels impractical and unrealistic. I have travelled to Hong Kong regularly, when others wouldn't because of the physical demands of a long-haul travel regime and disruption to family life, and at a cost to other aspects of my academic work, including all-important research outputs, which are disrupted. Chris Higgins (2011) has pointed to the danger in being 'self-less' as a teacher and has cautioned that people who do not attend to self, end up being martyrs to the cause, burned out. However, attending to structural disadvantage and reparations is complex and labour-intensive work. It requires reflection on how to balance retained allegiances, local obligations, obligations to self-care as well as responsibilities to distant others' (Brock, 2009). One's entire academic practice must be justice-oriented, restorative, undertaken as an ally, not a 'saviour' or a 'virtue signaller'.

I am struck by the absence of academic references to which I have access when describing my experience, relative to Rowena. What I do is largely motivated by practical commitment to anti-racist practice informed by professional training as a youth work practitioner, teacher, and latterly educational leader/ administrator. These generate the ethical responsibility I feel towards students regardless of whether, or not, they are people with whom I feel anything in common (Brock, 2009).

However, unless I am rooted in a particular understanding of a critical conscience, including a historical dimension, to what ideals do I appeal as a would-be ethical (global) citizen able to appreciate how others have been made invisible, voiceless (Fraser, 1996; Mills, 2005)? As Cripps (2024) argues, 'genuine commitment to the project of political liberalism – ensuring and supporting cooperation between free and equal citizens – can entail introducing a historically-informed dimension' to education that is just. My own academic practice, including my research agenda, is shifting as this penny drops.

Now, I am learning from schoolteachers as they move into scholarship influenced by Afrocentrism, and philosophers writing from underrepresented perspectives in settler colonial settings using Indigenous traditions of political thought. I use what power I have to invite new scholars whose experience of being human is absent from the texts that currently shape the field to contribute to Special Issues and edited collections. That is not to say that I have stopped valuing the ideas that other white scholars are developing, rather that I consciously seek out work from paths less well travelled and copy-edit colleagues' academic English to level things up. What could I even begin to contribute to a Chinese educational journal; not

only would language be a barrier but the academic culture, norms and expectations, are distinctive? A model of internationalization pursued by me, individually, premised on the cooperation of free and equal citizens for mutual advantage, does little to address the injustice experienced by people like Rowena on whose disadvantage so-called liberal western democracies have systematically built – and on whom, unfortunately, they continue to rely (Fraser, 1996; Mills, 2005). But it's a start.

### **Bringing our experiences together in cosmopolitan conversation**

We began this paper with the following questions. In their goal of implementing universities' internationalization strategies justly and fairly, can particular commitments in which teachers are 'rooted' be compatible with an overarching commitment to cosmopolitanism, or the view that humans can and should behave as world citizens? Need there be a tension, or can they commit to both? Can educators commit to specific deeply held convictions, established ways of being and doing, while simultaneously feeling care and concern for all stakeholders, and without 'othering' them?

Our experiences demonstrate that there is no choice in whether, or not, a teacher's particularist identity impacts on their teaching of students (or indeed other aspects of their academic practice, although teaching is the specific focus of this paper). Teaching is an embodied, inescapably relational practice, regardless of specific context (Griffiths, 2013). This makes teaching inherently ethical. It is played out in specific social-cultural contexts which change over the course of a career for reasons "beyond the control of any teacher" (Griffiths, 2013: 221). Academics may live relatively privileged lives, but in this sense their practice is no different. Recognising the ethical significance of both identity and responsibility matters because when we teach within the academy, we situate ourselves in relation to our students; it is important, then, to remember that we do not somehow occupy a position from nowhere.

Taken as an ethical imperative, 'rooted cosmopolitanism' has two interconnected dimensions. Firstly, it demands an awareness of our and our students' rootedness, that is, the positions we occupy within complex global histories, local politics, and a system of internationalization that perpetuates imbalances of power. For Rowena, this has been her position as an academic *from* and often *in* the Global South, navigating the complicated colonial history that impinges on her students through the curriculum and the distinctive intellectual histories that have shaped the courses that she teaches. For Janet, this has involved reflections on the meaning of her identity in a Hong Kong context, and of the liberal values and convictions she holds as someone who bears this identity. For both of us the awareness of our positionality has led to a productive discomfort.

The second dimension of rooted cosmopolitanism is an ethical commitment to fair and just world citizenship. Rowena has sought to enact this by confronting the epistemic injustice present in the philosophical canon and trying to 'right' this by drawing on a wider range of textual sources from around the world, within the institutional constraints of curricular expectations. For Janet, this has meant 'walking the talk' of the liberal values to which she is committed personally in her teaching practice and administrative responsibilities as well as opening up new directions in her scholarship, as she has increasingly aimed to adopt comparative and international perspectives in her research. Our experiences have confirmed

for both of us that the classroom can be a space where the neoliberal focus of internationalization strategies can be resisted, even as we search for spaces where we might have the power to enact larger institutional forms of resistance.

We noted above that Appiah (2007b) views cosmopolitanism not only as an ethical obligation and commitment, but also as the task of conversation between different people and groups, through which mutual learning and points of agreement can both arise. The conversation between the two authors has led us to become aware of differences in the philosophical language we use to describe these ethical commitments: Rowena calls her efforts 'decolonial', drawing on the rich intellectual tradition of Latin American decolonial thought and postcolonial critiques from the Global South, whereas Janet characterizes her efforts as 'liberal', shaped by Anglo-European developments of liberal ideas. This difference is itself reflective of the culturally distinctive ways that we interpret our rooted cosmopolitanism, and also reflects divergent philosophical presumptions. Decoloniality takes historical disparities of power as its point of departure. Liberalism postulates the freedom and equality of persons.

When put into practice, we find, decoloniality and liberalism can mutually correct each other in a way that is similar to the mutual correction between nationalism/patriotism and cosmopolitanism that Papastephanou (2021) describes. As mentioned above, particularist attachments can prevent the potential pathologies of cosmopolitanism, and cosmopolitan commitments can prevent the potential pathologies of nationalism/patriotism. Similarly, a decolonial lens can prevent liberal convictions from ignoring historical inequalities, whereas liberal aspirations can push decolonial critiques towards constructive practices of repair (cf. Táíwò, 2021). Moreover, our conversations with each other have shown that these philosophical differences can at least be partly reconciled in the similarities of our practice, the convergences of our scholarship, and our common ethical commitment to justice and fairness.

## **Conclusion**

Clearly, we cannot hope to redress the absence of notions of rooted cosmopolitanism in very well established debates around internationalization in higher education, but we do hope to prompt new conversations given its potential value and significance, through articles that target 'Western' audiences such as this, and also through other channels around the world in which both of us are engaged. Internationalization policies in higher education ultimately affect teaching practice. Given the largely neoliberal motivations of the internationalisation agenda, internationalized teaching practice threatens to reproduce or magnify unjust relationships of domination created by wider global colonial and capitalist systems. Potentially the classroom is one of the spaces where these tendencies can be resisted. As we have shown, the concept of rooted cosmopolitanism provides a rich theoretical ground for critically reflecting on internationalized teaching practices.

In this regard, rooted cosmopolitanism has the potential, not only to inform classroom practice but institutional strategies as well. In this paper we have only attended to the ethical obligations of individuals, putting to one side questions about the institutional level requirements. However, as universities become increasingly globalized, an ethical

imperative may be asserted that they develop strategies that not only accommodate but actively include the identities of the students they recruit.

Added to this is the demand that universities located within the jurisdiction of former colonial powers acknowledge injustices that have been committed in the past and make reparations (see Bhabha et al, 2021 and Svrluga, 2023), even as the meaning and manner of reparation remains contested. Such approaches may make it possible, not only to prevent internationalization from perpetuating injustices, but also to make the internationalization agenda itself a channel for greater global justice.

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