

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SPEAKING TO THE ‘DARK SIDE OF HUMAN RIGHTS’

A. Becker

Department of Curriculum Studies
Faculty of Education
Stellenbosch University
Stellenbosch, South Africa
e-mail: annebecker@sun.ac.za

ABSTRACT

This article uses a postmodern lens to question assumptions inherent to three normative claims for the human rights project in the context of post-1994 South Africa. The claims are that human rights are part of humanity’s narrative of progress; that they are universal and inclusive; and that their subject is the liberal humanist subject. Kapur (2006) argues that these claims paradoxically point to the ‘dark side of human rights’. By plugging data into theory and theory into data (Jackson and Mazzei 2012). I argue that student-teachers engage with human rights in a discursive manner and structure relations between self and the Other in rational human rights spaces. I pose that by choosing responsibility *for* an Other,¹ South Africans can transcend rational spaces and structure relations between self and an Other in moral spaces. In moral spaces the conflict inherent to the contradictory nature of moral choices and the conflict between self-consciousness and renunciation present possibilities for continually re-structuring human rights and a humane world (cf. Fanon 1967).

Key words: human rights, responsibility, self and Other, moral progress, in(ex)clusivity, the subject of human rights.

INTRODUCTION

Bauman (1994, 243) contends that in a globalised world ‘morality and moral issues tend to be increasingly compressed into the idea of human rights’. During recent years these ‘compressed moral issues’ have led to close scrutiny of the moral (and political) premise of human rights. Kapur (2006) critiques three normative claims made for the human rights project and illustrates how these claims paradoxically point to the ‘dark side of human rights’. The normative claims on which the human rights project is assumed to be premised, Kapur (2006) poses, are that human rights are part of humanity’s narrative of progress; that they are universal and inclusive and that the subject of the human rights project is the liberal subject.

This article aims to question assumptions inherent to the three normative claims and the influence thereof on the relations between self and Other in the South African context through

a postmodern lens. Although this approach to morality is often equated with the demise of the ethical, Bauman (1994) argues that it creates possibilities of finding different ways of responding to moral problems such as human rights and social justice. The uncertainty characterising moral choices in a postmodern globalised era is not new (Bauman 1994). In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967, 202) Fanon poses: 'The starry sky that left Kant in awe has long revealed its secrets to us. And moral law has doubts about itself.' Arendt (2006) in the Postscript to *Eichmann in Jerusalem* ponders whether humans are capable of telling right from wrong. This becomes all the more complicated when individual judgment is at odds with hegemonic moral views (ibid.). Postmodern self-awareness has only made the uncertainty, anxiety and instability of moral choices clearer and provided possibilities of considering such choices differently (ibid.).

Bauman's (1994) conceptualisation of morality and responsibility *for* the Other is used to examine the assumed normative premise of human rights and student-teachers views on it. Bauman has made significant contributions to the sociology of morality, offering a 'hopeful sociological analysis of recent transformations in modernity and its potential emancipatory consequences for moral life' (Hookway 2017, 1). The critique of Bauman's theory concerns his inability to integrate individual morality with processes of socialisation and, as Hookway (2017) suggests, that his ethics of Otherness over-emphasises the Other at the expense of establishing the self as a self. The Other, Hookway (2017, 9) argues, is constructed as a 'universalised and abstracted figure'. Bauman's theory on postmodern ethics and responsibility *for* an Other does however present possibilities to think beyond narratives of moral decline (Hookway 2017) and assumptions inherent to the narrative of moral progress, the in(ex)clusions inherent to human rights and the positing of the liberal humanist 'human' as the subject of rights.

Narratives of moral decline have in common assumptions that moral behaviour can only be secured within a top-down approach. Moral behaviour is regulated by containing the moral self through authoritarian social structures such as tradition, religion or community. I argue, that Bauman's analysis of the shift from modernity's ordered, certain and rule-orientated view on moral action to a disordered, uncertain and self-based postmodernity, provides possibilities for rethinking morality and moral action (cf. Hookway 2017). Hookway (2017) suggests that 'a sociology of morality is needed which goes beyond Bauman's moral saint,' searching for a new language of self, incorporating being *for* an Other and cultures of authenticity.

The shift from modernity to postmodernity and the search for a new moral language of self is of interest to South Africans. Apart from the fact that South Africa is imbedded in a

globalised liquid world (Bauman 2007), Serequeberhan (2005, 14) poses that for post-colonial South Africans to appropriate the 'to be', neo-colonial subjugation needs to be confronted. This entails 'a "knowing of one's self" explorative inventory aimed at appropriating that which is possible in the context of a specific history'. For Serequeberhan (2005) this is a political question but, I argue that this is also an ethical question. It concerns considerations regarding 'what kind of life we want to lead' in Africa and South Africa (cf. Appiah 2005, 230). This would include the continual interrogation of the 'dark side of human rights'. Moral responsibility (responsibility *for* an Other) can aid this interrogation as it speaks to the assumptions inherent to all three normative claims.

I pose the following questions: *What possibilities do responsibility for an Other offer the human rights project in the post 1994 South African context, and how will these influence conceptions of human rights literacies?* After contextualising the project, I draw on data from a NRF funded project *Human Rights Literacy: A quest for meaning* (Roux and Du Preez 2013) and theoretical perspectives in order to plug data into theory and theory into data (Jackson and Mazzei 2012). I conclude with some of the possibilities that responsibility *for* may offer post-1994 South Africa and conceptions of human rights literacies.

A brief description of diverse views on responsibility and morality (relevant to this context) follows.

MORALITY, RESPONSIBILITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

There are multiple ontological stances to human rights and therefore various views on the relation between human rights and morality (cf. Du Preez and Becker 2016). Multiple views furthermore exist as to *what* responsibility means and *who* the demand for responsibility speaks to. Responsibility *for* and *of* human rights is framed within vertical and horizontal² approaches to the realisation of human rights.

Within vertical approaches, proponents of the 'responsibility approach' to human rights argue that responsibility is the bridge between claims made by subjects of rights and the identification of those who should deliver on those claims (De Smet, Dirix, Diependaele and Sterckx 2014). Responsibility is also a key concept in the normative language of global politics (Beardsworth 2015). In global political discourse, responsibility is framed in two ways. One is moral responsibility, which is concerned with the alleviation of undue human suffering (ibid.). The other is political responsibility, which refers to the responsibility of state actors to tie conditions of internal sovereignty (independence from other states) to conditions of internal sovereignty (respect for human and civil rights) (ibid.). The nature of vertical relations is

determined by the identification of *who* should deliver on human rights claims and the extent to which state actors accept their moral and political responsibility to respect human and civil rights (Beardsworth 2015; De Smet et al. 2014).

Perry (2013, 775) introduces a horizontal approach to the responsibility debate when he argues that the 'fundamental imperative' of human rights is in article 1 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948): 'all human beings [should] act towards one another in the spirit of brotherhood'. This 'fundamental imperative' Perry (2013) argues, is the normative grounding of human rights and implies both a vertical and horizontal approach to responsibilities. The phrase 'all human beings' can be interpreted as pointing to both individual and collective responsibility. For Arendt (2003) assigning individual legal or moral responsibility for violations of human rights is not the answer. She poses that all members of humanity are collectively responsible for every violation of human rights (2003). The responsibility (collective and individual) of *all human beings* to act towards others in the spirit of brotherhood is reiterated by Sen (2001, 282) arguing that:

As people who live – in a broad sense – together, we cannot escape the thought that the terrible occurrences that we see around us are quintessentially our problems. They are our responsibility – whether or not they are also anyone else.

As the aim of this article is to question the influence of the assumptions inherent to the three normative claims on relations between self and Other, the focus will be on individual moral responsibility. I argue that responsibility *for* is not a duty or obligation but a response to the demand of an Other. The self chooses to be responsible *for*. The self may also choose *not* to be responsible *for* and this choice is equally free (or unfree).

Understandings of morality and the influence thereof on relations between self and Other, are often related to notions of obligations and duties. Words like 'duties', 'responsibilities' and 'obligations' are the 'do-the-right-thing-words' (Appiah 2005, 230). Morality is then often described as what the self owes the Other (ibid.). Although individual moral choice is perceived to be free, p'Bitek (2005) poses that humans are not born free, they cannot be free and they are incapable of being free. He goes further and states: 'For only by being in chains can he (sic) be and remain human' (p'Bitek 2005, 73). The relationships and conditions which make us human, chain us and define our freedom (ibid.). The tension between self-consciousness and renunciation inherent to freedom and the chains that keep us human, Fanon (1967) however argues, creates the possibilities to construct new conditions towards a 'human' world. In a human world, Fanon (1967, 203) acknowledges only one right for the self: 'the right to demand human behaviour from the other'.

The face of an Other commands the self to make the choice to be responsible, Bauman (1994) argues. For Bauman (1994, 250) moral responsibility is 'the most personal and inalienable of human possessions, and the most precious of human rights'. Bauman (1994, 75) suggests: 'Responsibility conjures up the Face I face, but it also creates me as moral self'. The act of answering an Other creates the space in which the moral self is constantly being born and the space in which the self is not *with* an Other but *for* an Other. From this solitary act, communion and togetherness emerge. We are law-abiding thanks to society, but we *are* society thanks to being responsible *for* an Other. In demanding moral responsibility, the Other enables the self to confront the tension between self-consciousness and renunciation in an attempt to enable the conditions for a humane world (cf. Fanon 1967).

In *Postmodern Ethics*, Bauman (1994) argues that morality is 'incurably *aporetic*': the majority of moral choices humans make are between contradictory impulses. Moral phenomena, he argues are inherently 'non-rational'. Moral phenomena do not fit the means-end scheme and escape explanation in terms of utility and service. They can never be regular, repetitive, monotonous or predictable and cannot be contained in a rule-book (ibid.). Accordingly, for Bauman (1994), morality is not universalisable. This does not imply a relativist and ultimately nihilist view of morality. Rather, the moral self tends to be imprisoned by an assumed universal morality which presupposes that moral acts can be expressed in rules, duties and obligations and in such a manner, be given universal form (ibid.). Ultimately, this means that an articulated version of universal morality, stifles moral impulses and channels moral capacities into socially designed targets, tending to the destruction of the moral self. (ibid.). Before data and theory are 'plugged in', I provide a brief overview of the project.

CONTEXTUALISATION AND METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS

The NRF funded project *Human Rights Literacy: A quest for meaning* questioned students' understanding of human rights literacy (Roux and Du Preez 2013). The project consisted of two phases. Phase one, the national phase, was completed during 2013 and the second, international phase, commenced during 2015 (Roux and Becker 2016). The data used in this article are drawn from the first (national) phase of the project.

During the first phase three strategies were used to collect qualitative and quantitative data: a walk-about₂₀₁₃, a survey₂₀₁₃ and small focus group discussions₂₀₁₃ (Becker, De Wet and Parker 2014). Two consecutive small focus-group discussions (FDG₂₀₁₃) per year group were conducted on the six sites to validate the data and to review the literature, ontologies and epistemologies (Roux and Du Preez 2013). A total of 68 students were selected by means of

snow-ball sampling (Cresswell 2013). Only data from the first focus group discussions are used for the purpose of this article. During the first focus group discussions, one question was posed to student-teachers: *Do you think human rights exist?* Data emanating from the first phase (2013) small focus group discussions were referenced thus: FGD_{2013_S1Y4M1}, indicating Site 1 (S1), fourth year students (Y4), first meeting (M1). At some of the sites, two small focus group meetings per year group were held – these are referenced M1a or M1b (meeting 1 group a or meeting 1 group b) (Roux and Becker 2016). Student-teachers participating in the focus group discussions were between 18 and 28 years old and spoke six of the 11 official languages (Becker, De Wet and Parker 2014).

I use Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) approach to data and theory in which they use a process of plugging data into theory and theory into data in an attempt to provide possibilities for dense and multi-layered treatment of data in qualitative research. 'Plugging in' makes it possible to use multiple voices (such as voices of participants, theoretical voices, voices of other scholars, documents, and contextual interpretations) in a continuous process of making and unmaking theory and data (Mazzei and Jackson 2012). As the volume of data stemming from the focus group discussions made it impossible to use all the data, 'chunks' of data (Jackson and Mazzei 2012) were used. The chunks of data illustrate the entangled nature of the material and the discursive (Mazzei 2014). Student-teachers expressed their views on human rights, responsibilities and relations between self and Other in a common discourse and structured material relations in, what Bauman (1994) refers to as, cognitive spaces structured to include 'others like us'.

The data are plugged into Bauman's conceptualisation of postmodern moral action and specifically, responsibility *for* an Other (cf. Jackson and Mazzei 2012). Plugging in requires three steps: putting philosophical and theoretical concepts to work (in this case Bauman's notion of responsibility *for*), determining analytical questions possible within a theoretical concept (questioning assumptions of moral progress, inclusion and the subject of rights) and working data chunks towards a suppleness of meaning.

DO HUMAN RIGHTS ENABLE OR PROMOTE MORAL PROGRESS?

The time-space narrative of normative progress is related to the fact that memory is structured in linear and vertical terms in modernity (Bauman 1994). In terms of morality, before (pre-), means lower, outdated or inferior while post- refers to a superior future, defined by the victory over the defeated Inhuman (ibid.). In a discursive political realm, the post-1994 epoch is narrated as the moral victory over inhuman and immoral colonial and apartheid periods.

Student-teachers described this with comments like: 'Yes, since before 1994 the people know that there was that thing of discrimination against each other during apartheid and since 1994 till now we have the rights to do anything you like' (FGD_{2013_S1Y1M1a}). 'From 1994 we changed. We want to be better' (FGD_{2013_S1Y1M1}).

These comments are not rooted in the lived materialist experiences of many South Africans or students: the recent #MustFall protests attest to that. Data from the NRF funded project *Human Rights Literacy: A quest for meaning* (Roux 2012), point to the inability of the *South African Bill of Rights* (1996) to make South Africa a moral place. The explorations in South African contexts of in(ex)clusions, racism, gender othering, classism, multi-religious and -cultural relations in curriculum and education, stemming from this data, all point to persistent patterns of exclusions and violations (Roux and Becker 2016; Becker and Du Preez 2016; De Wet, Rothmann and Simmonds 2016; Rothmann and Simmonds 2015; Becker, De Wet and Van Vollenhoven 2015; Becker, De Wet and Parker 2014). It thus seems that these student-teachers position their views in a discursive realm which in the words of Dlamini (2010, 12) is driven by assumptions that the nation is 'living democratically ever after' post-1994.

Student-teachers furthermore described how normative progress and human rights are sustained by responsibilities. They perceived an intimate link between rights and responsibilities. They argued that rights bring responsibilities and moral progress.

Participant 3M: Human rights caused responsibilities (FGD_{2013_S5Y1M1}).

Participant 1F: We forget that with rights come responsibilities ... So the people will know better. I live in this country, I start from this. I have this right and these responsibilities (FGD_{2013_S5Y1M1}).

Participant 1M: ... I have a right to, but also have a responsibility I have to take (FGD_{2013_S2Y1M1}).

There seemed to be little ambiguity or contradiction in student-teachers' acceptance of the link between rights and responsibilities. They regard 'taking' responsibility as a consensual, collective, rational choice and action. For Bauman (1994), however, choosing to 'take responsibility' within such a context is no choice at all; as he argues, many 'I's' can only make a 'we' if all are identical. Choosing from a collective, consensual morality only means 'being in the right' by following rules (cf. Bauman 1994). There is no indication that these student-teachers experienced tension between self-consciousness and renunciation inherent to freedom when they 'take' responsibility (cf. Fanon 1967).

In the South African educational context, the link between rights and responsibilities running through the data from all six sites might reflect the emphasis given to it in basic

education. During 2011 the Department of Basic Education published *Building a culture of responsibility and humanity in our schools. A guide for teachers* (DBE 2011a) and the *Bill of responsibilities for the youth of South Africa* (DBE 2011b). The preamble in both these documents states: 'I accept the call to responsibility that comes with the many rights and freedoms that I have been privileged to inherit from the sacrifice and suffering of those who came before me ... I accept that with every right comes a set of responsibilities.' (DBE 2011a, 8). Apart from the fact that the preamble implies a narrative of moral progress, these documents propose a link between rights and specific responsibilities. Tables of responsibilities (rules/code of conduct) are linked to every right i.e. *The right to education* (right): *attend school regularly, work hard, respect your teachers, adhere to the school's code of conduct* (responsibilities) (DBE 2011b). Tables of rights and responsibilities are furthermore prevalent in textbook chapters on human rights for teacher education (cf. Jordaan 2014). Student-teachers from sites 1, 3 and 6 recited the responsibilities related to rights especially in regard to the right to education: 'I have the responsibility to attend every day' (FGD_{2013_S3Y1M1}); 'When they taught you that you have a right to education and the responsibility to learn' (FGD_{2013_S6Y1M1}).

For student-teachers the aim of responsibilities is to keep the human rights project in 'line' by controlling behaviour. Responsibilities regulate moral behaviour in a top-down approach:

Participant 1F: Like you have a right, and then there is a line drawn, that is your responsibility (FGD_{2013_S3Y1M1}).

Self and Other, according to student-teachers, will suffer the consequences if they do not choose to do the 'right thing'. During a discussion with fourth year student-teachers at site 1 (FGD_{2013_S1Y4M1}), responsibility and the consequences of not behaving responsibly were explained as follows:

Participant 1M: OK. I will make an example. You are in a classroom there are rules how to behave. You do not behave and the teacher takes you out of the class then. If she takes you out of the class your rights to education are violated in that respect. So your responsibility in terms of that. What did you do to be taken out of the class? Why did the teacher take you out of the class? Just to add to what he said let's look at this in terms of the law there will be consequences so some of my rights will be removed from me because of what I have done ...

Participant 3M: Yes, and the way you behave is also violating human rights. If I behave in a good way I will hold my rights. If I behave badly, I will lose my human rights. Sometimes you blame other people instead of looking at yourself – the way you behave.

Participant 2F: So if you behave responsibly your rights will be upheld. If you are irresponsible your rights will be affected.

The certainty and consensus reflected by the remarks from student-teachers suggest no contradictory impulses regarding moral choices. It indicates a commitment to structuring a world characterised by rules, clarity, stability and certainty. In spaces where 'the world is rock solid and prompts no doubts as long as habitual, routine actions will do' (Bauman 2001, 57), moral security and progress are guaranteed. Being *with* the Other in spaces where 'others like us' understand the rules also structure a sense of belonging: belonging to a group who does 'the right thing'. Those who do not act responsibly, or who mis-understand the rules, are cast out. They become right-less.

Participant 1M and 2F described the consequences of not doing the right thing by using the hypothetical and discursive *you*. They agree on the judgment served to the hypothetical *you*: *you* will be right-less. The hypothetical *you* are unrelated to their lived reality. It is only when participant 1M relates his example to 'the law' that he uses *I* and *me*. Participant 3M described his view on the consequences of not doing the right thing personally: 'If I behave in a good way I will hold my rights. If I behave badly, I will lose my human rights'. Participants 1M and 2F do not seem to think that they can ever be the hypothetical *you*, not doing-the-right-thing. The hypothetical *I* will never be right-less; not because human rights are inalienable, but because the hypothetical *I* will do-the-right-thing by sticking to the rules and doing her duty. In a discursive realm, doing-the-right-thing, sustains the assumed narrative of moral progress.

ARE HUMAN RIGHTS INCLUSIVE?

The human rights project has since the Enlightenment, comfortably accommodated claims of universality and inclusion with exclusion and subjugation (Kapur 2006). The historical development of the humanist model, shaped in the ideal of Europe as the *One* with universalising powers, self-reflexive reason and a hegemonic cultural model, saturated human rights from its inception (cf. Braidotti 2013). The original human of humanism, (white, male and propertied) is still implicitly and explicitly posited as categorical and qualitative standard, opposing the sexualised, racialized and naturalised other (Braidotti 2013). Throughout human history, as soon as the Other attempts to enter the spaces reserved for the 'human' in human rights, a crisis ensues.

Social space, Bauman (1994) argues, is a complex interaction of three distinct processes namely: cognitive, aesthetic and moral. All three processes are characterised by proximity/distance and closeness/openness. Cognitive and moral spaces are relevant to the context of this article. Cognitive spaces are constructed 'out of sedimented, selected and processed memory of past encounters, communications, exchanges, joint ventures or battles' (Bauman 1994, 146).

Through this knowledge, spaces consisting of 'others like us' and 'others not like us' are structured.

The historical infringement of the Other in spaces reserved for self has three possible consequences: the Other is the enemy and is fought and expelled, the Other is the temporary guest (keeping to the rules) or the Other wants to be the neighbour. In the last instance the Other has to behave like the neighbour, before being considered as the-neighbour-to-be (Bauman 1994). Sticking to rules, codes of conduct and responsibilities, prevent dis-ruption, and mis-understanding between self and the neighbour (cf. Bauman 1994).

For student-teachers, doing-the-right-thing could result in the tentative inclusion of the Other in spaces reserved for the subject of human rights. By acting responsible, the self invites or allows the Other to be included in the outer skirts of the human rights circle: 'This is the problem ... the cause of that is that sometimes people focus more on their rights and forget about others ... the responsibilities' (FGD_{2013_S1Y4M1}); '... the right of allowing somebody else, firstly, to letting that person also have an education, like it's your right to education' (FGD_{2013_S5Y1M1}).

Allowing the Other to be in(ex)cluded in the South African human rights project is complicated by what seems to be distrust in the ability of human rights to structure moral relations, as indicated by these comments from site 5:

- Participant 1F: I don't think somehow human rights can make them to change and make them treat other people different (FGD_{2013_S5Y4M1}).
- Participant 1F: Why would I adhere to respecting the right of somebody else? You understand. Why would I not violate the rights of those, because I can see around this is what is happening ...? (FGD_{2013_S5Y1M1}).

In the larger socio-historic context of South Africa, the first excerpt might indicate distrust related to trans-generational knowledge of the Other stemming from South Africa's colonial and apartheid history (Becker 2015). Data indicate that student-teachers prefer to stick to 'others like us' and are afraid of 'others not like us' (Roux and Becker 2016). As two student-teacher from site 1 and 4 explained: 'We don't know how they live and how they carry themselves' (FGD_{2013_S1Y1M1b}), (Roux and Becker 2016) and '[human rights are] ... to protect you from other people' (FGD_{2013_S4Y4M1b}).

The comment of participant 1F is however premised on her personal experience: 'I can see around this is what is happening', and not necessarily on transgenerational distrust. This speaks to the consequences inherent to historical othering and material conditions which human rights are unable to address. The question: *Why would I adhere to respecting the right of*

somebody else? indicates the conflict between self-consciousness and renunciation. The participant questions the assumption that she owes the Other and the assumptions regarding human rights as an inclusive moral concept. While Bauman argues that the face of an Other demands choosing responsibility *for* an Other it remains an equally (un)free choice. The conflict inherent to choosing between contradictory impulses, however, presents the possibilities for acknowledging cultures of self-authenticity and the structuring of a moral language of self (Hookway 2017). It presents possibilities for post-colonial South Africans to confront 'knowing of one's self' (Serequeberhan 2005), and the Other without the over-emphasis of the ethics of otherness.

When the Other keeps to the rules and is allowed into the outer circle of the human rights project, the Other becomes part of 'others-like-us'. In being *with* 'others like us' a rational or cognitive human rights community is structured. A rational community consists of 'rational' agents who, as representatives of the community, speak a common discourse (Biesta 2004). This is evident from the discursive nature in which student-teachers present their views on human rights. Through such discursive processes the voice and presence of the Other is nullified and the rational community re-produces and maintains categories of 'the Other' through the human rights project (Biesta 2004).

For student-teachers, the Other is an abstracted figure. The Other is framed in a rational and discursive realm: *somebody else, them*. For Bauman (1994) being responsible *for* is not concerned with the inclusion of an Other in rational or cognitive spaces reserved for 'others like us'. When the self includes an Other by choosing responsibility, the self cannot 'know' an Other. Derrida (1978, 159) defines the Other as the Stranger, who, when she is 'reduced to a *real* moment of *my* life' experiences violence. We cannot know the Other, we should recognise the Other as something outside of the self and respect her for what she is: other (ibid.). The Other becomes an included Other not in rational or cognitive spaces but when, as Fanon (1967, 203) proposes, we: 'simply try to touch the other, feel the other, discover each other'.

As Biesta (2004, 317) explains, 'when I speak to the stranger, when I expose myself to the stranger, when I want to speak in the community of those who have nothing in common, then I have to find my *own* voice, then it is *me* who has to speak'. Acting and speaking in a community of those with nothing in common defy the rules and the codes of conduct protecting 'others like us'. It requires both self-consciousness, renunciation (cf. Fanon 1967) and a search to know the self (Serequeberhan 2005). Choosing to act and speak 'in my own voice' not only marks the continual birth of the moral self and the subject(s) of human rights, but the beginning of togetherness and communion with an Other. If the self, through self-consciousness and

renunciation, defies the notion of the liberal humanist Human in opposition to the sexualised, racialized, colonial, economic or political Other, and chooses to speak and act in responsibility *for* the different other, new possibilities for inclusion in the human rights project emerge.

WHO ARE THE SUBJECT(S) OF HUMAN RIGHTS?

At the heart of the human rights project, Kapur (2006) argues, lies the liberal humanist subject and in(ex)clusions and the narrative of progress are intimately tied to the preservation of this subject. The invitation to the Other to be included in the human rights project can therefore never be unqualified. When the self therefore chooses responsibility *for* an Other, different from the self, it puts the self, outside the protection of rules and duties in a state of in(ex)clusion. The moral self is now haunted by the suspicion that she can never be moral enough (Bauman 1994.). This anxiety characterises responsibility *for* an Other. A student-teacher from site 4 questions his responsibility *for* an Other as follows:

Participant 2M: ... but it is my responsibility to treat you fairly and to consider your rights as well. Everything is about me, me, me but I think, what can I do? How can I treat you fairly so that we are equal and ... (FGD₂₀₁₃_S4Y4M1a).

This excerpt indicates a questioning of the moral rules of engagement with the Other and a conflict between self-consciousness and renunciation. This is the awakening of the moral self but it is not the awakening of 'I am I'. It is the awakening of 'I am *for*': (Bauman 1994, 78).

The risks, loneliness, anxiety and uncertainty which characterise the choice *for* an Other, when leaving rationality and the security of rules behind, were debated by student-teachers from site 1 (FGD₂₀₁₃_S1Y4M1):

Researcher: For example: Mr Mandela. He acted out of compassion. He broke the law. He went to prison. Was he a responsible person?

Silence

Participant 3M: It makes sense.

Participant 3M: You can look at it that way. It does make sense but then you have to be sure it's the right thing. Obviously if it is not Then

Participant 2F: It does make sense but then what about your rights?

Participant 1M: If I stand up for others and break some laws, if I defend other people's rights then maybe they take me out of school, I am in jail ...

Participant 3M: It's a sacrifice ...

Participant 2F: But they won't have my back. You have to look at both sides.

Participant 3M: On this case something happened here on our campus. Once a guy here, he was from the SRC. He was fighting for other students who had no financial aid in the residence. So they tried to burn the car but that guy was caught alone and sent out of school. You see ... He will come here next year to finish his degree.

He had only three modules left. You see ... But what happened to those students he was fighting for? They are still here. After what he did they got what they wanted but he So in your perspective what did Mandela get? He spent 27 years in jail. Alone. Alone. Some people [South Africans] they don't care about that. They are doing good. There is nothing wrong with their lives. You see When you come across those situations you need to think critically.

Participant 2F: Yes.

Participant 3M: Think twice.

Participant 1M: You have to think twice because he was not released from prison ...

Participant 2F: Yes, because in time of trouble when you are fighting for someone else they won't be with you if you are in jail.

Participant 3M: You are right. They will run.

Participant 1M: They will run away from you but you were trying to help them.

Participant 2F: It is very hard. That situation you need to think.

Participant 3M: Yes, before you act you have to think.

Student-teachers had a clear understanding of the virtually unbearable burden of responsibility *for* an Other – of the expectations related to Bauman's 'moral saint' (Hookway 2017, 1). The anxiety and uncertainty that result from acting outside the right-thing-to-do, acting outside the safety of duties, rules and laws are evident from their discussion. They expressed concern for the sacrifices such a choice might demand. They understood that the act of choosing responsibility *for* is non-reciprocal (cf. Bauman 1994). The power of choosing responsibility *for* lies in the freeing of the self from a collective morality, universalised as rules, duties and codes of conduct. It lies in a search for the authentic moral self(ves). The birth of moral self(ves) constitutes multiple subject(s) of human rights. There cannot be a 'we' in choosing responsibility *for*. Multiple moral subject(s) of human rights, in their difference, in diverse contexts and situations, have to continuously re-choose responsibility *for* an Other and speak in their own voice(s) to in(ex)clusions and the narrative of progress.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The assumption inherent to the claim that human rights enables a narrative of moral progress is premised on the view that humanity is moving towards a humane inclusive world. The irony, that no victory over inhumanity seems to have made the world, or South Africa, a safer, more moral place, does not seem to detract from this narrative (cf. Bauman 1994). The subject of human rights has since the Enlightenment been premised on the liberal human of humanism. In(ex)clusions in the human rights project have historically circled around the protection of this subject within rational human rights spaces. For the different other to become the subject of rights and to be included in the human rights project, the other must become 'like us'. In keeping

to the rules and by doing-the-right-thing, the Other can be included in rational human rights spaces. When the Other falters, she pays the consequences; she becomes right-less.

Transcending rational human rights spaces requires answering the demand of an Other. In answering and choosing responsibility *for*, South Africans, as the moral subject(s) of human rights, could create opportunities to interrupt the rhythm of time and change the content of society with regard to assumptions regarding the assumed subject(s) of rights and in(ex)clusions. This would, however, require South Africans to move beyond what is assumed to be owed to the Other in terms of duties and responsibilities. South Africans need to construct an authentic language of moral self(ves). This language should speak to personal responsiveness and responsibility (cf. Biesta 2004).

Education is pivotal in this regard. In contrast to rational communities in which learning is understood as an acquisition of knowledge *about* human rights, juxtaposed against sedimented transgenerational distrust of the Other, communities with nothing in common understand learning as responding in responsibility to the voice and the face of the stranger (Biesta 2004). By creating pedagogical conditions in which teachers and children can be responsive and responsible for an Other, they can speak, in their own voices to the 'dark side of human rights' (cf. Biesta 2004; Kapur 2006).

In light of the growing critique on the (in)ability of human rights education to speak to the 'dark side of human rights', I propose teaching and learning towards human rights literacy(ies). Human rights literacy(ies) include cognitive skills and literacy(ies) regarding social and moral practices. Through teaching-learning towards human rights literacies, rational discursive human rights spaces in educational contexts can be disrupted and transcended. When moral spaces between self and an Other are structured in responsiveness and responsibility, the moral premise of human rights becomes a bottom-up and situated result of the conflict inherent to choosing a self-conscious moral voice and the renunciation of the 'dark side of human rights'.

Although being Bauman's 'moral saint' may be an impossible task, we could learn from his theory on postmodern morality. Conceding that moral choices are 'non-rational' and always between contradictory impulses, South Africans could use the conflict inherent in choosing responsibility *for* to 'come to know self' and an Other as subject(s) of rights within what Serequeberhan (2005, 14) calls the 'infinity of traces' left by colonialism and apartheid. By embracing the individual and collective conflict, anxiety and insecurity which a search for self might bring, South Africans may find a balance between self-consciousness and renunciation and re-construct a humane world (cf. Fanon).

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NOTES

1. In reference to Booth (1999) I use the Other and an Other alternatively to indicate the nature of the relation between self and Other. The Other refers to a relation of distance. An Other refers to a relation of proximity in which self faces an Other and responds accordingly.
2. For a detailed explanation of the realisation of human rights and human rights values in vertical (state and citizens) and horizontal (self and other) relations, see Becker, De Wet and Van Vollenhoven (2015). With regard to understandings related to dignity, equality and freedom, the data indicate that student-teachers seem to understand human rights either as legal interests within a vertical relationship, or in terms of values such as caring, *Ubuntu*, or respect indicative of a relationship between self and other (horizontal relations) (Becker, De Wet and Van Vollenhoven 2015, 1)

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