

Transforming Transformation

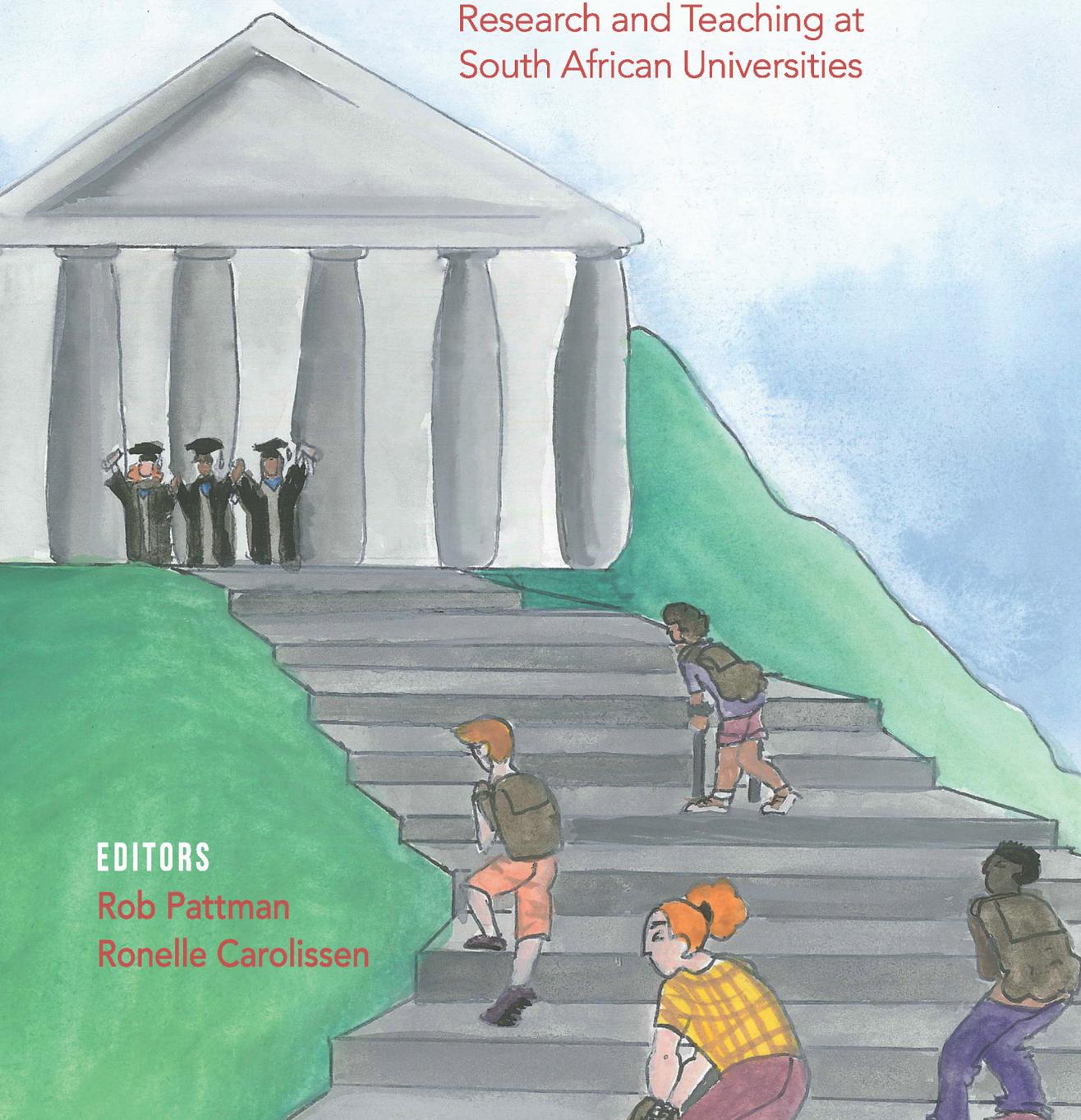
in

Research and Teaching at
South African Universities

EDITORS

Rob Pattman

Ronelle Carolissen





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Foreword

Towards a New Sociology of Higher Education: South African offerings

Crain Soudien

South Africa, after 1994 when it became a democracy, was one of those places to which you came if you were interested in the big global questions of social justice, social togetherness and social renewal. It had the iconic figures of Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu – living examples of the promise of a new age of inclusion. Amongst the many attractions which drew people were its universities. To them came, some again and again when the academic boycott was lifted in 1991, the world's leading intellectuals. From the lecture podiums of the country's universities, they would make some of their most important statements about the human condition, about knowledge production, about freedom and about the role of the modern university. In this company were scholars such as Ariel Dorfman, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Francis Fukuyama, Amartya Sen, Judith Butler, Wendy Brown, Jacques Derrida, Gayatri Spivak, Manuel Castells, Wole Soyinka, Ali Mazrui, Immanuel Wallerstein, Angela Davis, Benedict Anderson, Noam Chomsky and Edward Said. They came to look, discuss and even pronounce.

As might be expected, these scholars were also interested in what their South African counterparts were saying. Who were the interlocutors of this fabled place? Their assessments were mixed. Michael Burawoy (2010), one of the world's leading Marxist scholars and long-time visitor to the country, described the South African higher education system as the 'jewel of Africa'. He expressed a sense of amazement at the vitality of the system, remarking that the South African higher

education system's preoccupation with the questions of equality and of the future of humanity made it distinctive in global terms. At about the same time Sir Peter Scott, editor of the *Times Higher Education Supplement*, after reading the work done in the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) at the University of the Western Cape, observed that:

[p]erhaps we assume too readily that the development of higher education systems, and the internationalization of the academy, will be decisively shaped by the market agendas that dominate policy making in the old hegemonic 'core'. But the work of HERANA (a research project of CHET), suggests that it is to the global 'periphery' that we should turn to anticipate the future of higher education in all its frailty and potential. (Cloete, 2013:13)

Other assessments were less complimentary. Castells, another of the world's most important social theorists and who was drafted into President Thabo Mbeki's Think Tank called the Presidential International Advisory Council on Information Society and Development, was not impressed by what he saw. He was to make the comment, reported Cloete (2013:8-9), that "South Africans use the term transformation when they stop thinking and start making social conversation". Important Irish philosopher Helena Sheehan (2008), after extended and prolonged study of the approach to transformation in South Africa's universities, concluded unhappily that she could not "avoid a sense of massive disappointment and defeat after reading extensively and visiting many campuses across the country". She asked, "What had happened to the whole atmosphere of being challenged to re-conceptualize the world and change it. Where had it gone?"

Had it gone?

We ourselves, inside the country, have subjected ourselves to repeated scrutiny. We have looked at ourselves from the micro levels of our classrooms to the macro-character of our system. We have, since 1994, produced more than twenty national reports on our size, shape, admissions profiles, capacity to provide accommodation, leadership and governance, funding, research priorities, teaching and learning priorities, transformation and the broad mission we want to see the system adopting. Every single institution in the system has been examined, for various reasons, multiple times.

After all this, finding ourselves looked upon from afar and our own repeated attempts at introspection, we should know a great deal about ourselves and the system in which we work. Against this, it is important to ask: What can we say about ourselves? What do we think we have learnt? How do we describe what we are? How do we situate ourselves in relation to our peers elsewhere in

the world? Critically, what assessment can we make of ourselves in relation to that other world we ostensibly have left behind – the world of colonialism and apartheid? How have we come to wear our new post-apartheid clothes? What, even more urgently, does post-apartheid mean for us? And, what, the hubris of it notwithstanding, might we say to the rest of the world about universities, about knowledge systems, knowledge traditions and practices, and the role we as universities play in contemporary social environments which have become so incredibly complex?

The answer, frankly speaking, is that we have not said enough. We have not produced either in straight volume measures, but this must not worry us a great deal, or in impact terms the kind of work which is worthy of the privilege we enjoy of finding ourselves in one of the prime global spots of human possibility. There is not yet in our work the conceptual breakthroughs that one should expect of an intellectual community which is surrounded by human challenges that encompass, on the one hand, the vexing universals of poverty, inequality, racism, sexism, venality and self-interest, and, on the other, the multiple and localised specificities of difference which in their intersectionality produce daily anxieties about inclusion and exclusion. That we live in an incredible human laboratory has not yet become evident in the scholarship of South Africa. Our social sciences and humanities are largely derivative. We have not yet been able to offer our larger scholarly community the provocations, faddish as these sometimes are, that we have seen from visitors to our shores such as Said's monumental *Orientalism* thesis, Fukuyama's *End of History* announcement, Lewis Gordon's *Disciplinary Decadence* evaluation, Connell's *Southern Theory*, or Ngugi's *Decolonisation* idea. Instead, our work has manoeuvred in the shadows of all these contributions. We have, a few times in the last fifty years, given the world glimpses of what might be possible. These glimpses include the extraordinary foresight of Olive Schreiner throwing shards of brilliance, almost unparalleled in the world at the time, into the discussion of patriarchy, and little-known Cape Town scholar-activist Ben Kies introducing to the world the idea of non-racialism, the nonsense of race as a concept (see Stanley & Salter, 2014, and Soudien, in press). Neither of these two moments is able to disturb hegemonic thinking. Both are ridiculed, portrayed as pitiful curiosities. Even in the communities out of which they come, the question is posed of them – 'what planet are you from?' But, and here is the possibility for all of us, they emerge out of the fecund generativity of the time and space in which they find themselves. They both have blind-spots. Elements of the complexity elude them. They are, however, precocious individuals. They see and attempt to make sense of the complexity of the world in which they are located. How oppression works is what they set out to explain. The explanation moves from

the ostensive to the deeply analytic. They are in this sense Fanonian in their vision. Like Fanon, they read widely and took in what they needed to know, looked around themselves and pondered on their own experiences, and then, critically, ventured into theorising the world in which they lived. The analyses went beyond their own narratives. They began from where they were. In the belly of the beast. They ended up explaining modern contradiction in its wondrous complexity.

This collection of writing Pattman and Carolissen have assembled here offers us the opportunity of moving towards fulfilling our responsibility. Stimulated by the recent student rebellion in our universities, it is an attempt to describe, analyse and look forward with respect to the higher education context in which we find ourselves. The collection has transformation as its focus. This focus is organised around a number of key themes: the interrogation of the meaning of transformation, institutional characteristics of institutions, institutional cultures, access and inclusion, the curriculum, language and the relationship between the university and its wider educational environment. The contributions under these themes provide us with thick description. We have in them a powerful ethnography of the contemporary elite university in South Africa. This ethnography itself is an important contribution towards the task of fulfilling our responsibility. We have in it grounded descriptions of the subjects of the university. There are close descriptions and analyses of how subjectivity is developed within the spatial and symbolic order of a number of campuses. This subjectivity, the contributions show, is nuanced. It is both deliberative and performative. Students react to structures which steer them in particular ways, they take the initiative against and independently of the structures and social relationships around them. They are *of* the university and, always, able to 'do' themselves in their own ways and manners. 'Belonging' is seldom *not* a bitter-sweet experience. Feelings of alienation and othering are pervasive. But students are constantly thinking. 'Doing' themselves is a deliberative task they take on for themselves. They do so in constant encounters with formal curricula which both support and disaffirm them. In these encounters they use innovative new technologies to both speak back to power and create new discursive trajectories within the academy. Polyvocality is the order of the day. Voices are asymmetric, but the presence of alternative explanation is critical for sense-making. This alternative provides what one might think of as transitioning modalities for young people entering the *largeness* of the university from and with personal histories of material disadvantage.

The ethnographic value of the text is critical. This ethnography is underpinned by key conceptual ideas such as *power*, *social justice*, *inclusion* and *exclusion*.

These concepts are approached, moreover, in deliberately anti-essentialist ways. Power, social justice and inclusion and exclusion are presented and interpreted as socially constructed and not natural phenomena. The people inhabiting the spaces are engaged with in their full social complexity – their identities are never singular. They are caught in discriminatory locations where their ‘race’, gender, class and sexuality are often what activate their difficulties, but their interpreters, the contributors to this volume, insistently attempt to locate what is going on in its intersectional complexity. This is the power of the ethnography.

Needed now and building on this ethnography is a new theory or a new sociology of the university. We, fortunately, do not begin on an empty slate. We have access to Martin Trow’s (2007) useful sociological theory of higher education. This theory is constructed around eight sociological features which distinguish the modern university. These are *attitudes to access, functions of higher education, the curriculum, institutional characteristics, locus of power and decision-making, academic standards, access and selection and internal governance*. With these, Trow was able to develop a typology of the university. He identified three kinds of universities – elite, mass and universal. While his main objective was to describe institutions in their larger systemic ecology, he made available for our analysis a framework which allowed us to make sense of the university as a distinct organisational structure – distinct from its correlate structures in society, such as schools, religious institutions and families. In focusing on its functional purpose, he was able to locate it in relation to the wider society in which it found itself. The identification of curriculum, governance and access allowed one to see how they managed inclusion and exclusion.

What now needs to be done in a systematic way is to take the Trow model and to ask, firstly, how these ethnographic riches we have in Pattman and Carolissen’s work can be explored. This will allow us to locate our institutions in a comparative frame in which we can see them from a larger viewpoint. How are they similar or different to institutions elsewhere in the world? But there is an even greater opportunity here. What does the ethnographic record we have available here tell us beyond Trow? What, specifically, are Trow’s eight framing lenses on the sociology of the university obscuring from our sight? What does Trow not see? What is there in the distinctive experience of what we as South Africans have gone through in our universities over the last twenty-five years which might require a new way of getting at the distinctive sociologies of the universities? Are there dynamics which the Trow model does not cater for? It is with this that we begin to move towards a new sociology of the modern university.

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Chapter 1

Transforming Transformation in Research and Teaching at South African Universities: An introduction

Rob Pattman and Ronelle Carolissen

Transformation: A post-apartheid concept

Transformation is probably one of the most commonly used terms in the post-apartheid context. It is a concept that refers broadly, to ways in which unjust and discriminatory institutional structures and practices engineered to privilege dominant cultures during apartheid South Africa, had to be reshaped for a just and equitable society. Transformation therefore inherently assumes cornerstones of social justice. Concepts such as redistribution, equity, recognition, power, representation and voice are central to the idea of ‘transformation’.

Transformation of higher education institutions (HEIs), in practice, required multiple policy frameworks and legislation across sectors in South African society. Badat (2010) succinctly outlines the major policy instruments, supported by a democratic national constitution, that were to pave the path for institutional and structural change in South African higher education (HE). It is clear, for example, in the *Education White Paper 3* of 1997 that discrimination on the basis of “race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth” is considered to violate the constitution (DoE [Department of Education], 1997). Policy guidelines are usually broad and

their implementation depends on institutional and individual commitments to transformation on an everyday basis. The focus in this chapter and book will be on transformation in HE.

Raising concerns about ‘transformation’ in universities

In contemporary South Africa there are no racially designated universities, as there were under apartheid, though the constant references to universities informally, as *formerly* white, black, Indian or coloured or mixes of these, carries the implication that they are shaped and affected by the legacy of apartheid. Even though institutions are formally no longer referred to as historically white or black but rather historically advantaged (HAIs) or historically disadvantaged (HDIs), the legacy of apartheid looms large in institutions. This legacy is often reflected in significant events/reports that remind us of the pernicious and persistent forms of exclusion in higher education. During the last decade, the Reitz affair, the Soudien report, the #RhodesMustFall, Open Stellenbosch and #FeesMustFall student protest movements are some of the stark reminders of continuing inequality in South Africa in general, and HE specifically.

The Soudien Report

Researchers had consistently highlighted concerns about lack of transformation in higher education (Steyn & Van Zyl, 2001; Cross & Johnson, 2008). These concerns were minimally highlighted in the public domain. However, ongoing but muffled concerns about the slow pace of transformation in South African universities exploded publicly in 2007, when a video made by some white students at the University of the Free State (an HAI) was shared on social media. The video detailed a mock initiation ceremony in which black middle-aged cleaners were subjected to forms of degradation (which included being given food apparently mixed with urine). The video was made as an attack on this university’s attempt (after relative inaction and in response to government pressure) to introduce a few black students into what had been all-white residences. The video generated much public debate and raised questions as to why young people with no living memories of apartheid could act in such blatantly racist ways. The “Reitz affair”, as this event became known, is highlighted as a historical event post-1994 that questioned the implementation of democratic policies and non-racialism in HE.

An investigation on ‘social cohesion’ in universities in South Africa, authorised by the Minister of Education, in the light of this incident at the University of the Free State, noted that racism and sexism were ‘pervasive’ features of university

life (DoE, 2008). The report represented an indictment of the failure to recognise particularly racism and sexism as problems in universities. Following this report, commonly referred to as the Soudien report, universities were required to produce ‘transformation charters’ indicating what they were doing to promote and implement transformation. Apart from the “Reitz incident” and the Soudien report, others have also detailed the slow pace of transformation in higher education, in spite of exemplary policy (Cooper, 2015).

The Soudien investigation marked a significant moment too for conceptualising and researching transformation in universities. The current book again takes stock of ongoing experiences of exclusion among students in higher education across South Africa. It also affirms a critical focus of social cohesion, and highlights its concern to engage with the agency of students and staff. We view social cohesion as a contested concept, that it does not represent only shared processes and values that generate commonality in organisations. Critiques of the consensus view of social cohesion suggest that the thrust towards cohesion may re-insert dominance and promote assimilation while diluting contestation and difference (Harris, 2013). Some critical feminists view contestation and engagement as central to social cohesion in that contestation may lead to shared understanding in common contact zones (Ahmed, 2004), and create opportunities for criticality and change (Young, 1990). This book thus focuses on snapshots of everyday life in higher education institutions through the lenses of staff and students, with a specific focus on transformation.

In the same way that the Reitz affair asked of us to re-evaluate democracy and citizenship in South African HE, student protests of 2015 and 2016 had a similar impact. We will discuss the context and framing of this book, followed by a brief discussion of the chapters in this voluminous edited book.

Context and background of the book project

Two core factors stimulated the idea of a book. An ongoing sense of dissatisfaction by students and academics about the slow pace of transformation in HE institutions, coupled with recent student protests, served as impetus for this book project.

Recent student protests

In 2015 and 2016 the profile of transformation (or its absence) in universities in South Africa was raised dramatically in nationwide student protests. Primary student grievances included:

1. the continuing lack of accessibility of university education for many black and poor students in a country marked by enormous, still racialised, disparities in income and wealth; and
2. the ongoing everyday experiences of marginalisation on and off university campuses, again linked (especially in the later stages of the protest action) with multiple axes of difference such as class, race and gender. Experiences of marginalisation were now also specifically linked to institutional cultures associated with continued use of perceived colonial symbols, names, languages and academic texts.

Arising from their experiences of protest, students raised further questions about skewed and unequal power relationships among themselves. These included how power might operate in relation to gender and sexuality as well as race and social class. One of the core challenges was to understand how the movements and voices of women, gay and lesbian students might be constrained on and off campus. This questioning emphasised the continuing neglect of multiple forms of difference such as disability, sexual orientation and religion that are seldom appropriately implemented under the auspices of 'transformation'. These concerns about transformation were not new. What was new were the detailed ways in which multiple forms of oppression and marginalisation were being named publicly on a sustained basis as opposed to being confined to hidden research publications.

The book and its rationale

Prior to student protests, the idea of an edited book arose at the end of 2014 when a workshop brought together established academics and postgraduate students from nine universities in South Africa. These academics were interested in thinking creatively and critically about transformation in education in SA. Many in this audience had already made significant contributions to research and teaching in universities in opening up spaces for critical thinking and debate about transformation and difference. The workshop provided an opportunity for them to pursue conversations, and the structure of the book, as outlined in the section headings, derived, in part, from themes and concerns that emerged in these conversations. In 2015 and 2016, workshop participants, as well as other academics who had not participated in the workshop, were invited to write chapters for this volume which, in the context of the student protests, seemed particularly pertinent.

The rationale of this book was to argue for and present examples of research and pedagogical initiatives that contributed to more inclusive and participatory

ways of conceptualising and practising transformation. Even though Badat (2010) correctly highlights successes of numerous policy initiatives implemented by HE managers, this book focuses on the everyday experiences of staff and students at different levels of the coalface of 'transformation'. The question that therefore frames this book is "How do we define, operationalise and apply 'transformation' through innovative research and pedagogical practices?" In other words, it was important to understand how experiences and subjectivities are shaped in HE contexts where there is still a disjuncture between policy and practice.

Much of the discussion at the workshop is represented in the book chapters that follow. Core themes about transformation that emerged in the discussion included the role of demographic representation *only* in transformation, the importance of qualitative and participatory research in transformation initiatives, engaging with race without reifying race, researching material and symbolic spaces on campuses, engaging with "Othering" on campus, researching transformative pedagogical practices, language and transformation, and schooling and transformation.

Critiquing ideas about transformation as only a matter of demographics and as primarily a managerial concern

During the workshop, as in the book, the nature of transformation and its definition were questioned. Equating transformation simply with 'improving' demographic profiles defined in terms of numbers of black, white, coloured and Indian students and staff, was questioned. This is an established debate in the field of difference and transformation in South Africa (Erasmus, 2010). Other researchers argue that monitoring statistics is important, especially in historically white universities, as non-monitoring with few checks on statistical representation, create platforms for white appointments and student selections regaining dominance.

Transformation, it was argued, has to be more than just race demographics. Focusing only on race defined in terms of numbers of students and staff according to apartheid race categories may lead to the fetishisation of race in a way that puts a premium on co-existence of races, rather than integration, and idealises 'diversity' as an end in itself. Furthermore, if diversity is only understood in terms of numbers of black, coloured and Indian compared to white students, we lose sight of variables other than race, such as gender, class, sexuality, disability, age and academic status, and the ways in which these may interact and influence staff and students' experiences. The idealisation of racial

diversity as an end in itself may, ironically, reinforce implicit assumptions about whiteness as the norm in racially mixed universities, with black students coming to be associated with diversity to the extent, even, of being named 'diversity' candidates (Kiguwa, 2014; Kessi & Cornell, 2015).

Transforming transformation by making our backyards sites of qualitative and participatory research

The authors in this book contribute to ways of thinking about transformation which raise questions about how 'diversity' is imagined, practised and lived by (mainly) students in their everyday lives on and off campus, questions which were, indeed, raised in the Soudien report and by the student protests in 2015 and 2016.

Researching university life, as constructed and experienced by different and diverse students and staff, means making our backyards (our universities), as our contributors have done, sites of qualitative research. Such research alerts us to the significance of variables such as race, gender, class, sexuality, disability and age and their intersections, as they are produced, negotiated, skirted around, hidden (and de-constructed) in particular spaces and contexts in (and around) universities.

The experiential and theoretical processes through which knowledge is produced in this kind of research are as significant as the knowledge itself. For such research raises questions about *how* to make everyday social and cultural practices in the university topics of inquiry, and *how* to explore and engage with race, gender and sexuality without contributing to the reification of these as essential characteristics which already explain and prescribe their identifications, interests, associations and experiences. It also raises questions about how to invert power relations in research with students (and especially students who may experience forms of marginalisation at school or university) and engage with them as authorities and critical citizens.

Some of the contributors, for example, Shose Kessi in *The fall of Rhodes: a photovoice investigation into institutional culture and resistance at UCT* and Ronelle Carolissen in *Negotiating belonging through language, place and education: an auto-ethnography* draw on narrative and feminist theory which argues that as researchers we should start from the position of those who have traditionally been excluded from knowledge production (Olson & Hirsch, 1995; Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013) and are able to offer insight into relations and dynamics of power about which those in more powerful and less marginalised positions may be unaware.

But there is no raw experience which people simply describe. Experiences are always interpreted and constructed in particular ways which reinforce certain kinds of identifications and positions. This is reflected in some of the research contributions to this book which seek to engage with university students and school learners who participated in their research as authorities about their lives on and off campus, while at the same time paying close attention to the research itself as a particular social encounter that produced certain kinds of relations which made certain forms of self-presentation and dialogue possible. (See, for example, Adam Cooper's *Standard disruption: transformation and language use in places of learning* and Megan Robertson and Rob Pattman's *Feeling at home or not at home: negotiating gender, sexuality and race in residences in an historically white university in South Africa*.)

In what has come to be called Youth Participatory Action Research, a case has been made for developing a 'transformational' pedagogy through research with young people that encourages them to reflect upon, 're-vision and denaturalise the realities of the social worlds they inhabit and construct (Cammarota & Fine, 2008). Such transformative practices subvert conventional academic divides between teaching and research. This is exemplified in the pedagogic initiatives addressed in Section 6 of this volume which encourage critical and reflexive research, and in research-based contributions in other sections which engage with processes of knowledge production.

Engaging with race in transformation initiatives without contributing to its reification

Apartheid was predicated on both racialism and racism (racialism referring to the idea that people are born into different races or species, that these determine identifications and that governance should develop institutions which promote these presumed differences, and racism referring to the hierarchical ordering of racially defined groups (MacDonald, 2006).

This, as discussed by participants in our workshop, carries important implications for thinking critically about race and promoting transformation through research (and teaching) in the post-apartheid context. It raises questions about possibilities of researching race and its intersectionalities' impact on people's lives in the post-apartheid era, without reifying race and contributing to apartheid forms of categorisation of people. The presumed biological categories of race are a major concern articulated by Paul Gilroy in his keynote address at a conference on the 'Burden of Race' held at Wits University in 2003.

In response to these, some participants in our workshop from historically white universities, with racially mixed and skewed student populations, expressed concerns about the informal racialisation of places on campus, echoing numerous researchers' observations that formal de-segregation does not necessarily lead to integration between students from different social backgrounds marked by race and social class (Schrieff et al., 2005; Jansen, 2009; Tredoux et al., 2017). Informed by these transformation concerns, numerous academics have introduced various kinds of structured learning activities aimed at encouraging students across lines of race, class and gender to interact, engage with and learn from each other. The idea that contact *with* structured engagement facilitates integration was also reflected in South African pedagogical projects (Leibowitz et al., 2012).

How to facilitate forms of integration and interaction between students from diverse backgrounds in terms of race, class, gender and sexuality through teaching and research was discussed in our workshop, and addressed in chapters in the volume, notably in the section on *Transformative pedagogies and curricula*.

But some participants at the workshop expressed concerns about how the ideal of a non-racialist and non-racist university was sometimes invoked in ways which denied the reality of racialised inequalities and how these were experienced by students at university and at home. They were concerned about how these ideals could be discursively manipulated to present universities as institutions which, in the post-apartheid era, already embody and practise such lofty ideals, and to denigrate critics who draw particular attention to the marginalisation of black men and women students on and off campus.

'Race', it was argued, may have no biological basis but that does not mean we should treat 'race' simply as an erroneous linguistic category with the implication that it would not exist if people would only stop thinking racially. Research on 'race' in universities (and other institutions) needs to explore the materiality of race or how a human construction becomes a material reality through the racialisation of certain places and activities on and off campus, and how these in turn influence and constrain movements, associations and identifications.

Rather than 'wishing race away', many of the contributors in this book employ race categories which were used under apartheid. But whereas race categories were understood by the apartheid ideologues as descriptors of different biological species and were deployed in ways which institutionalised and

legitimated material differences and inequalities, the authors in this book raise questions about these very categories. Rather than naturalising and taking these for granted, they explore the significance which these still hold, both as sources of identification, and as dimensions of power and inequality in the everyday lives of students on and off campus.

Furthermore, as discussed in the workshop and as illustrated in the chapters in this book, our contributors engage not only with race as a material reality but also gender, class, sexuality, disability, and how they are negotiated and constructed and intersect and impact on students' lives.

For example, race, class, gender, sexuality and various intersections, are animated in chapters which raise questions relating to:

1. disjunctions between the expectations of universities and the social and cultural capital of black or coloured students and lecturers, notably from poor, but also from more affluent backgrounds (Chapters 2, 8, 13 and 24);
2. unequal schooling, and how this circumscribes the class and racial profile of (successful) university students (Chapters 26 and 27 in Section 8);
3. student accounts of belonging and not belonging in residences (Chapters 10, 11 and 12 in Section 3); and
4. narratives of rape and sexual harassment (Chapters 14 and 15 in Section 4) pedagogic initiatives (Chapters 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 in Section 5).

What emerged from our discussions in the workshop was the importance of taking a multi-pronged approach to thinking about transformation in universities which draws on theories of non-racialism but also critical feminist, social justice and post-colonial theories which engage with the continuing significance of race and its intersectionalities in structuring everyday experiences and life chances.

Re-thinking transformation and raising particular transformation concerns

Although the idea for this book was conceived at a workshop at the end of 2014, the deadline for contributions was delayed precisely in order to include ones which situated concerns about transformation in the context of the student protests. There are strong resonances between concerns raised about transformation (for more than a decade) in universities in this book and in the student protest movements during 2015 and 2016.

These concerns are framed by general commitments to locating ‘transformation’ in a post-apartheid, post-colonial context. For some, transformation has been characterised by feelings of betrayal of unmet promises, and for others, by fears of receding privileges and complex emotions involving anger, fear, mourning, to name a few. It is in this cauldron of debates and emotions on transformation that the role of a public university in contemporary South Africa is called into question.

While the university, in an increasingly global neoliberal context, is becoming more corporatised, focusing energies on knowledge production as commodity and students as “clients”, universities do have an important role to produce skilled workers for the economy. This, globally, is not the only role of universities. Many researchers emphasise the important role of universities to enhance the public good (Walker & Mclean, 2013; Mbembe, 2016). We suggest that part of thinking about the public good in universities requires us to think deeply about how to:

1. transform transformation from a managerial process only to one which is informed by everyday experiences of students and staff from different and diverse backgrounds;
2. broaden the lens of transformation from a focus on race only to include other and intersecting variables such as social class, gender, sexuality, disability, age and their intersections;
3. transform universities into sites of research in the context of transformation;
4. transform pedagogy in ways which engage with and are responsive to students as knowledge producers;
5. engage critically with white and male privilege and promote relationships, friendships and interests which cross lines of race, gender, sexuality, disability and social class; and
6. ‘de-colonise’ the curriculum without reifying and homogenising Africa.

These questions are addressed by chapters in this volume and remain central not only to transformation, but indeed to what the role of the South African university is, both within the African and global context. Our contributors from different universities in South Africa are motivated by concerns to open up possibilities for dialogue and discussion around creative ways of thinking about and doing transformation, through particular research and pedagogical practices. The chapters are theoretically diverse, yet united in their focus on the theme of transforming transformation in South African universities. The book

is divided into eight sections that represent the core themes that unite chapters and we provide short introductions to each section as well as a description of each chapter in the next part of this introduction.

Section and chapter summaries in this volume

Section 1: Transformation, its scope and limitations

Introduction

The chapters in this section pose questions about the meaning of transformation in universities and draw attention to material and cultural factors in the post-apartheid era which may mitigate against possibilities of universities becoming non-racial and culturally diverse institutions accessible and amenable to potential students across lines of race, class, gender and sexuality.

Chapters 2-4

In Chapter 2, *Transformation as freedom: confronting 'unfreedoms' in students' lives*, Merridy Wilson-Strydom argues that while the notable increases in participation and the changing demographic profile of students are causes for celebration, these changes do not on their own signify transformation. Indeed, in the absence of meaningful opportunities for students to be successful in their studies and to live well as students, universities may be implicated in creating new forms of injustice whilst seeking to overcome old forms, often in the name of transformation. These new forms of injustice and inequality, she argues, motivated and were highlighted by the student protests in 2015 and 2016 which stressed the importance of developing a concept of transformation which engages meaningfully with the realities of the lives of students (and staff) and notably those from historically disadvantaged backgrounds in terms of race and social class. Drawing on Amartya Sen (1993) and Nussbaum's (2011) capabilities approach, she argues for ways of conceptualising transformation in universities in South Africa which are not 'indifferent to the lives that people can actually live', but places people at the centre of development and social justice. This means linking transformation in universities with freedom and its expansion among students and staff.

In Chapter 3, *Is university transformation about assimilation into slightly tweaked traditions?*, Kopano Ratele develops a critique of understandings of 'transformation' which associate this with the assimilation of black students

into what, he argues, is an already established white, patriarchal, capitalist regime within universities. He draws, here, on Steve Biko and the concerns he expressed in the context of student politics in the late 1960s and early 1970s about how forms of racial integration might reproduce ‘the superior-inferior white-black stratification that makes the white a perpetual teacher and the black a perpetual pupil (and a poor one at that)’. He argues that to equate transformation with diversity and diversity with integration in universities across lines of race or gender or sexuality is to contribute towards new inequities.

In Chapter 4, *‘This revolution has women, lesbians and gays, queers and trans bodies. Remember that!’*, Finn Reygan argues for ways of conceptualising diversity which do not contribute to its reification but open up possibilities for engaging with multiple forms of difference, including sexual and gender diversity, and that this engagement should cross divides between higher education and schooling at primary and high school levels. For schools are bridges towards higher education and formative institutions for engaging with and thinking about various kinds of difference. This is elaborated further in the chapters that engage with *Schooling and transformation* in the last section in this volume.

Section 2: Researching material and symbolic spaces on campus

Introduction

Under apartheid, race was given material substance through the formalisation by law of practices of segregation, which not only separated people according to specific race categories but rendered them unequal in terms of material resources. These inequalities were attributed by the apartheid regime to race, as if race prefigured the material practices that produced racialised divisions. What kinds of subjectivities do spatial arrangements in higher education produce in contemporary South Africa, and how do students from different and diverse backgrounds negotiate these? These are addressed in the following contributions which do not attribute identities to racial, gendered or sexual essentialisms but explore how various kinds of identifications are made on and off campus and why students may be emotionally invested in these. They draw attention to the symbolic and material ways in which race may continue to be etched into particular spaces, narratives of place and identity (Taylor, 2010).

Chapters 5-7

In Chapter 5, *Location and dislocation: spatiality and transformation in higher education*, Kerryn Dixon and Hilary Janks reflect on the unstated and often unconscious ways in which power relations are produced institutionally through the arrangement of spaces, in this case universities in South Africa, and how these pose ‘transformation’ concerns. Spatial designs matter, the authors argue, because they constitute the people who inhabit them. Furthermore, spaces are experienced relationally, so that how, for example, university spaces are experienced by students is influenced by their experiences of spatial configurations and relationships at home (as illustrated in this volume in Shabangu and Currie’s *Out of sight: beyond these walls, inside this machine*). The authors address these questions with particular reference to spatial arrangements in Wits School of Education, their own, formerly white faculty and university. They argue that student protests in 2015 and 2016 and the forms these took with, for example, the occupation of strategic buildings and spaces, demonstrated the centrality of the politics of space in framing transformation concerns.

The racialisation of spaces on campus is a theme which Michelle Duncan addresses with particular regard to eating, drinking and socialising areas in the ‘Neelsie’, the student union building at Stellenbosch. In Chapter 6, ‘*Why did you choose to sit here?*’ *Interviews with people in same-race friendship groups at Stellenbosch University*, Duncan reflects on the tendency for students in such groups to attribute socialising patterns to common interests and tastes. She raises, as transformation concerns, questions about how to promote opportunities for the formation of ‘diverse’ friendship groups in a context in which cultures and tastes (Dolby, 2001) may operate in exclusionary (and inclusionary) ways in relation to race and gender.

While differences in cultural tastes were invoked by some students in Michelle Duncan’s study to explain the informal racialisation of leisure spaces in ways which presented this as inevitable (at least in the short term), in Section 6 on *Transformative pedagogies and curricula*, Pieter Odendaal reflects, in contrast, on how cultural differences are transformed and experienced as sources of attraction, fun, creativity in a student-inspired participatory, multilingual poetry initiative at Stellenbosch. In *Performing transformation: exploring the contribution of the InZync poetry sessions to sociocultural transformation in Stellenbosch*, Odendaal elaborates on the celebration of ‘difference’ through poetry and music in this initiative, and the opportunity this provides for engaging with and learning from others across lines of race and gender, in normally racialised spaces.

In Chapter 7, *The writing on the toilet wall: researching graffiti conversations in women student toilets at Stellenbosch University*, Naledi Yaziyio focuses on forms of engagement between various groups ushered in by the opening up of previously white spaces, and more specifically the formerly white university and its toilets. Like Michelle Duncan, she reflects on the racialisation of spaces in the Neelsie student union at Stellenbosch, but argues that in such a context the toilet provides a space (by virtue of being both private and public) for cross-racial forms of communication about race and other themes such as religion and sexuality which may radically depart from institutional discourses about celebrating ‘diversity’ and take politically incorrect forms. Reporting on her research on toilet graffiti she finds that ‘threads’ of a single conversation sometimes span an entire wall, and most of the ‘conversations’ that run on the longest articulate politically incorrect topics or statements, most commonly connected with religion, sex and race. This is an indication, she suggests, of the willingness of participants to engage in otherwise suppressed conversations.

Section 3: At home or not at home: raising concerns about forms of Othering on and off campus

Introduction

A number of contributions draw attention to the ‘invisible’ and everyday ways power operates on and off campus to exclude or marginalise certain students by virtue of race, gender, class and sexuality or combinations of these. ‘Home’ features as a key theme in some of the contributions set in formerly white universities and was invoked in literal and metaphorical ways as an implicit norm in relation to which such students are made to feel ‘not at home’ and rendered Other through particular kinds of cultural and educational practices in various spaces, institutional and non-institutional.

Othering is a theme that features in different sections. For example, in the section on *Transformative pedagogies and curricula*, Christi van der Westhuizen (Chapter 18), introduces a curriculum intervention which engages critically with particular institutionalised forms of Othering on campus. Othering and marginalisation take different forms and are experienced differently in relation to race, gender, sexuality and disability, as we see in the sections in this volume, on *Engaging with disability as a transformation concern in higher education* and *Doing gender and heterosex on campus*.

Chapters 8-13

In part I of Chapter 8, *Out of sight: beyond these walls, inside this machine*, Mohammad Shabangu and Ianne Currie compose a fictional narrative entitled *The Bus Home* about the journey home from a rich and imposing formerly white university for a first generation black student they call Zwelethu. The story starts with the University and its rambling associations for Zwelethu with 19th-century English poets and philosophers, with being 'old and important' and having high walls, and her relief as she catches a bus to take her home. The story then focuses on how she engages with people and presents herself on the way home. The authors reflect on their interests in their story in part II in the chapter, and why they begin a conversation about transformation with this story. In part III, they provide a kind of postscript from a vantage point two years after writing parts I and II, and two years after the student protests of 2016. Their focus in part III is on how the situation in HE 'has unfolded' since they told and reflected on *The Bus Home* story, and the implications of these changes 'for what we thought we knew' then. They reflect, too, on transformative ways of writing.

"Who feels at home in a university environment and who feels that they don't belong?", asks Shose Kessi in Chapter 9, *The fall of Rhodes: a photovoice investigation into institutional culture and resistance at UCT*. From 2013 to 2015, Kessi initiated a series of Photovoice projects with black students at the University of Cape Town to collect narratives of their everyday experiences of the institution. In this chapter Kessi focuses on photos and accompanying narratives taken and written by students at different periods in the protests in 2015, before and after the 'fall' of the Rhodes statue, which reflect on different kinds of transformation concerns emerging through the experiences of protest.

'Home' features in the titles of the three following contributions, all of which engage with students living in residences, notably students who self-identify as gay or lesbian and black women and men, and how they negotiate these institutional markers of home.

In Chapter 10, *A 'Home for All'? How gay, lesbian and bisexual students experience being 'at home' in university residence life*, Chipu Munyuki, Louise Vincent and Emmanuel Mayeza demonstrate how gay, lesbian and bisexual students living in residences at Rhodes University are routinely denied many of the essential comforts associated with being 'at home' that heterosexual students have the privilege of taking for granted. In this chapter, we hear how students negotiate relationships and spaces where they can be open about their sexuality, and

how, ironically, they feel least at home in their institutional homes precisely because these are spaces which render gays and lesbians invisible. This chapter illuminates the marginalising effects of a hetero-normative culture, turning this into a transformation concern.

Whether to 'pass as normal' and avoid incurring stigma, as the students in this study chose to do in their residences, or whether to 'come out' and in what context and with whom, is a dilemma which faces disabled students with publicly invisible disabilities, as discussed in the chapters in a later section on *Engaging with disability as a transformation concern in higher education*.

In Chapter 11, *Feeling at home or not at home: negotiating gender, sexuality and race in residences in an historically white university in South Africa*, Megan Robertson and Rob Pattman explore students' accounts of residence life in Stellenbosch, another formerly white university. They do so by drawing on focus group discussions with different and 'diverse' students (according to race, gender and generational ties with the university). Themes of belonging and/or marginalisation were prominent and introduced by student participants, thus signalling the significance these held for them. These themes were usually connected with accounts of what constituted social order in the residences, which were gendered, sexualised and racialised in different ways in the focus groups. The authors raise questions in this chapter about how gender, sexuality and race intersect in the construction of normative expectations, and what Judith Butler (2004) refers to as 'normative violence'.

In Chapter 12, *'Everything and the kitchen sink': being 'at home' in South African universities*, Jill Bradbury and Jude Clark engage with questions of belonging and alienation in relation to residences and ambivalent student identifications. They begin with a vignette about a conflict that arose between South African women students and African American women exchange students in a residence at the University of KwaZulu-Natal a decade ago. Although the event was interpreted at the time as "simply a clash of cultures", they argue – from their vantage point in the light of the student protests in 2015 – that this provides insights about "how university spaces are experienced, who defines the parameters of intellectual and social life, who feels 'at home' and who feels estranged, and why".

How gender and race intersect as sources of identification and exclusion is highlighted in Chapter 13, Sabrina Licardo's *'We have no faces': the intersectional positionality of black South African women in STEM fields*. In this chapter, she explores themes of belonging and alienation as articulated in biographical

narrative interviews she conducted with black South African women students studying at the University of Witwatersrand, an historically white university. These students were on a scholarship programme aimed at providing support (financial, intellectual and social) for first-generation African women students from relatively poor backgrounds to study and graduate in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines. She reports on the ways these women navigated institutional spaces which, in terms of numbers and symbolic associations, historically framed and formed 'the home' of white men. Like Mohammad Shabangu and Ianne Currie's *Out of sight: beyond these walls, inside this machine*, this chapter provides insights on the juxtaposition of home and university for many (first-generation) black students. While these young women (and their families) held high expectations about the university as an institution which would enable access to cultural and material resources, they felt estranged at the university, misrecognised and not 'at home'.

Section 4: Doing gender and heterosex on campus

Introduction

As argued in the previous section, there are parallels between racial, gendered and sexualised forms of marginalisation on and off campus and, further, that these interact and intersect with each other. We also suggested that the kind of research that raises such concerns rejects binary models of power which take for granted, reify and naturalise race and gender and sexuality, and work, instead, with the assumption that categories such as black and white, female and male are relationally constructed, negotiated and performed through everyday forms of interaction. This is not to reject the materiality of race and gender in social contexts where people's life chances, subjects they take, relationships they establish, residences they attend, spaces where they feel at home or not at home on and off campus, are crucially affected by whether they are African, coloured, Indian or white, or male or female or trans or gay, lesbian or straight. Rather, it is to reject common discourses and understandings that naturalise and biologise these categories and the power relations that mediate these.

The chapters raise as transformation concerns normative ways of doing gender and sexuality on campus which articulate with chapters in other sections, notably Robertson and Pattman's chapter in Section 3 and Hemson et al. and Clowes' chapters in Section 6.

The contributions in this section engage with gender-based violence, and focus on versions of gender and sexuality as they are experienced, understood

and performed in the everyday lives of particular students on campus. The conceptual shift in thinking about gender as a verb rather than an adjective, as something we do rather than as an essential quality we possess, is captured in the section title, 'Doing gender and heterosex on campus'.

Chapters 14-15

In Chapter 14, *Constructing heterosex: examining male university students' depictions of (hetero)sexuality in their talk of rape in South Africa*, Brittany Everitt-Penhole and Floretta Boonzaier report on the findings of focus group discussions they conducted with men students at University of Cape Town on the topic of why men rape in South Africa. While most participants expressed opposition to rape, "many of these same participants utilised discourses which blamed women for being raped and normalised male sexual aggression". The authors draw attention to the ways their focus group participants construct and connect being a man with heteronormativity and asserting themselves in relation to women. Their research and analysis carries important implications for developing transformation initiatives which address "rape culture" as a problem not just outside but also inside campus, connected with normative ways of "doing gender".

In Chapter 15, *'Doing gender' on campus: students' experiences of normative practices of heterosex in South African higher educational contexts and some critical reflections on dominant responses*, Tamara Shefer provides a critical review of literature of young people's sexual practices in higher education mainly in southern Africa. She argues for the importance of transforming gender research (in higher education) so that it does justice to the complexity and diversity of the "lived experiences" of women and men students. Research which fails to do this, she argues, tends to reduce gender power dynamics to stereotypical oppositions and generalisations, and may carry patronising and moralistic implications, infantilising young women and reproducing hetero-normative assumptions.

Section 5: Engaging with disability as a transformation concern in higher education

Introduction

Transformation in South Africa has been linked, as we have argued, mainly with race and redressing race-based inequalities, and it is only more recently that gender and sexuality, and more recently still, that "disability" has been raised

(by protest movements in 2016) as a transformation concern in HE. Why is this significant? What forms of marginalisation do “disabled” students experience in South African HE? What sorts of developments have been made in the last 20 years or so, relating to “disabled” students in higher education? These are questions which are addressed in the chapters in this section.

Chapters 16-17

In Chapter 16, *Disability and higher education in South Africa: political responses and embodied experiences*, Emma McKinney, Heidi Lourens and Leslie Swartz provide a broad overview of developments regarding disabled students within South African tertiary institutions over the last two decades and draw on research on the everyday lives of disabled students conducted by two of the authors, Heidi Lourens (2015) and Emma McKinney (2013), as well as other relevant studies.

While Chapter 16 provides a broader context in which to situate developments with disabled students in higher education in South Africa, in Chapter 17, *‘Silence is violence’: claiming voice for disability in higher education transformation*, Rose Richards, Bongani Mapumulo and Leslie Swartz explore embodied questions of how access and the lack of it are experienced by students. They highlight the heterogeneity of forms of disability and how these produce different concerns for students and how to present themselves and negotiate their disabilities. These relate, in part, to whether their disability is visible or not, and if it is not, whether to ‘come out’ in order to obtain support and help, at the risk, however, of being marginalised. Empathetic and participatory research, which seeks to engage with students with particular disabilities and their experiences of university life and culture in South Africa, is not common. The above contributions exemplify this kind of research, the authors critically reflecting on their own experiences of disability to highlight the importance of including, as transformation concerns, the experiences of marginalisation of disabled students.

As in Ronelle Carolissen’s *Negotiating belonging through language, place and education: an auto-ethnography*, Chapter 24 in this volume, their ‘auto-ethnographic tales’ highlight personal and cultural tensions and concerns which are not often articulated in public spaces and which provide insights of experiences of marginalisation from those on various margins. In this context, auto-ethnographic research of the kind in which they engage may itself be understood as a ‘transformative’ practice.

Section 6: Transformative pedagogies and curricula

Introduction

The chapters in this volume situate calls for ‘transformation’ in universities in the context of a post-colonial society in which the legacy of apartheid still prevails, even though the official prescription of different forms of education according to the apartheid racial categories has long been abandoned. In this sense, then, we support concerns raised in the student protest movements to link ‘transformation’ with ‘de-colonisation’. However, under the rhetoric of ‘de-colonisation’, claims are sometimes made about essential African values and cultures which, it is proposed, should feature more prominently in the curricula offered by African universities. As Stephanie Rudwick argues in *Rhodes had to fall, but King George still stands: two South African universities compared* in Section 7 in this volume, the term ‘Africanisation’ is ‘notoriously difficult to define’, and often deployed in ‘essentialist’ ways which fix and homogenise ‘African culture’.

Rather than arguing for universities to become more ‘African’ in this sense, as if there is a consensus about what counts as African cultural values, the chapters in this book aim to generate knowledge which is ‘relevant’ and engage with specific contexts and concerns, whether local or international, which relate to the interests of students as young women and men, across lines of race, class, gender, sexuality and differently abled, growing up in post-apartheid South Africa.

In higher education, the boundaries between teaching and research are usually quite sharply drawn in practice. These boundaries may become blurred, as the chapters in this section illustrate. Some of the contributions disrupt the boundaries between pedagogy and research by engaging in participatory discussions which encourage students to reflect on and research their everyday lives on and off campus. The chapters in this section contain reflections on particular pedagogical practices, such as student initiatives as well as staff curricular activities, which seek to promote critical thinking and encourage voices from the margins. The contributions engage with ‘diversity’, not by projecting this onto students from marginalised backgrounds (and reinforcing their marginalisation), but in ways which create opportunities for cross-racial, gendered and sexual empathy and dialogue.

Chapters 18-22

In Chapter 18, *To do difference differently: intervening at the intersection of institutional culture and the curriculum*, Christi van der Westhuizen reflects on a course she facilitates which is offered to first-year students at the University of Pretoria as an example of curriculum transformation. This is an intervention which seeks to expose the normative assumptions that create institutional culture, especially where these pertain to racial, gendered, sexualised and other forms of Othering.

'Transformation', in teaching (and research) as we see in Clowes and Hemson, Ngidi, Xulu-Gama and Magudulela's pedagogical initiatives, in this section, may involve de-naturalising and reconfiguring race and gender categories. This means taking these not as descriptors of relatively homogeneous identities which exist independently of each other, but as relational constructions which are produced historically and in the here and now through everyday social practices in and outside the university.

In Chapter 19, *'Gender equality is a human problem': teaching men and masculinities in a South African undergraduate classroom*, Lindsay Clowes reflects on an introductory course to gender studies which she teaches and the problems posed by men students, many of whom fail to understand the relevance to them of doing gender studies. Popular associations of gender studies with women tend to reflect and reproduce patriarchal understandings of men as the norm and women as the (gendered) Other, as if men are not gendered. In addressing this fallacy and engaging with the relevance of gender studies to men as well as women students, she draws, in her course, on contemporary feminist theory and critical masculinity studies which raise questions about the vulnerabilities of boys and men in patriarchal societies. Her course then generates opportunities for women and men to engage with each other on questions of gender and the complexity of gender power relations by re-conceptualising gender as a relational category involving women and men. This is important, she argues, in the context of high levels of violence perpetrated against women, children and other men.

In Chapter 20, *Gender, violence and the first-year curriculum*, Crispin Hemson, Ndumiso Daluxolo Ngidi, Nomkhosi Xulu-Gama and Nokuthula Magudulela report on how two groups of men and women students made presentations on gender-based violence at a foundational module within Durban University of Technology. Like Lindsay Clowes above, they argue that such curricular spaces are important for opening up cross-gendered discussions about gender-based

violence, and for positioning students as producers and transmitters of knowledge, as well as disrupting boundaries of research, teaching and community engagement.

Two of the contributors to this section, Pieter Odendaal and Vanessa Mpatlanyane, both students at the time, write about student-led transformative pedagogical initiatives, looking to forms of student activism for models of good pedagogical practice.

In Chapter 21, *Performing transformation: exploring the contribution of the InZync poetry sessions to sociocultural transformation in Stellenbosch*, Pieter Odendaal reflects on the contribution of a student initiative at Stellenbosch University, in which he has been closely involved, in bridging a symbolic and material gap between the university and Kayamandi, a black township within walking distance of one of the most affluent universities in Africa. Concerns about the gap between Kayamandi and its local university, marked by their contrasting wealth and resources and also by the lack of young people from Kayamandi studying at the university (only 6 in 2015), motivated the student initiative elaborated in this chapter. This was an attempt (started in 2011 and still continuing today) to connect intercultural communities in Kayamandi and Stellenbosch University through the medium of performance poetry, usually held at a venue in Kayamandi. In this chapter, the author provides a “thick description of the InZync poetry sessions”, how the participants experience these and the contribution of these to processes of transformation. He reflects on his own experiences in organising and participating in the poetry sessions, and the recasting of his own personal and social identity in the light of this.

In Chapter 22, *Transforming the intellectual: Open Stellenbosch and the use of social media*, Vanessa Mpatlanyane draws on post-colonial theories to argue that the student activist can be understood as an (“organic”) intellectual who disrupts ‘traditional’ didactic boundaries between teacher and students. She focuses on the participatory forms student activism took in the protest movement, Open Stellenbosch, and how these were facilitated by social media.

An example of one such pedagogical initiative which Mpatlanyane cites which subverted academic hierarchies at Stellenbosch University and positioned black students as educators, was the production of the *Luister* (Afrikaans for “listen”) video in 2015. This was posted on YouTube¹ and featured extracts from interviews with black students about their everyday experiences of

1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF3rTBQTQk4>

marginalisation on and off campus. Such experiences of black students (and staff) at historically white universities, globally, are not unique (Tabensky & Matthews, 2015; Mirza, 2009; Yosso, 2009). At Stellenbosch, students included feeling at a loss in lectures because the lecturers' code switched from English to Afrikaans (Siyengo, 2015), being racially profiled by campus security, and being stared at in unwelcoming or threatening ways or physically abused if they ventured into particular spaces or social clubs on and off campus at night. The *Luister* video provided yet another poignant window into the microdynamics of transformation issues and concerns which feature in national transformation agendas but are scantily, if at all, addressed in coherent ways.

Section 7: The politics of language and transformation

Introduction

The role of language in facilitating or hindering transformation received considerable attention in the student protests of 2015 and 2016, notably in formerly Afrikaans universities where Afrikaans was being used (in conjunction with English) as a medium of academic instruction. Proficiency in Afrikaans is racialised with black African students least likely to be proficient and most likely, therefore, to feel excluded in lectures and classes where the lecturer uses Afrikaans (even when code switching with English), as well as in other institutional events and contexts such as residence meetings. But the status of Afrikaans as a language of academic instruction has also been defended, ironically, by drawing on transformation discourses which extol the virtues of 'multiculturalism' and more specifically 'multilingualism'.

While the protests in these universities were (in part) motivated by concerns to replace Afrikaans with English as the language of academic instruction and formal communication, the University of KwaZulu-Natal has introduced African languages as a compulsory subject for students as part of transformation strategy.

These various positions and their articulations with the politics of language and transformation are addressed in the chapters in this section.

Chapters 23-25

Kees van der Waal and Monica du Toit in Chapter 23, *Whiteness, Afrikaans language politics and higher education transformation at Stellenbosch University*, examine some of the key discourses, policy interventions and protest action

relating to the intersection of language rights and rights to higher education at Stellenbosch University prior to the protests in 2015. The authors draw on an ethnographic and interview study they conducted in 2013 in which they explore the views of alumni, staff, management and students, relating to contestations around Afrikaans and transformation. Transformation at Stellenbosch University, they argue, is not just about the conservation of Afrikaans in the face of the English wave associated with new learners, but is related to deep-seated power issues and inequalities in society, connected with race and social class.

In Chapter 24, *Negotiating belonging through language, place and education: an auto-ethnography*, Ronelle Carolissen tracks her own personal and political history with language across primary, secondary and higher education and in her work as an academic at Stellenbosch University. She does so through auto-ethnography, which she describes as a difficult form of writing, precisely because it is so personal and requires her to draw deeply on her intellectual and psychological resources. But it can also yield powerful accounts which personalise the political. Her chapter demonstrates the potential power of auto-ethnography as a method that generates stories that challenge dominant and taken-for-granted narratives and practices (in this case relating to language) as invoked in education in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa.

The role of language in facilitating or hindering transformation has also been raised in relation to ideas about 'Africanising' the curriculum through, for example, introducing compulsory courses in African languages. This is addressed by Stephanie Rudwick in Chapter 25, *Rhodes had to fall, but King George still stands: two South African universities compared*. Writing against the backdrop of the recent student protest actions, she explores meanings of 'Africanisation' in the higher education system and more specifically compares two universities as sites where certain institutional identities are constructed and propagated. The discursive construction of the 'truly South African' and 'Primary University of African scholarship' at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) is juxtaposed with the propagated 'Afropolitan' vision of the University of Cape Town (UCT). In this comparative context, this chapter also examines the language policies of these two institutions in lieu of their approach to Africanisation. On the one hand, essentialist Africanisation discourse, language policy rules by decree and autocratic managerial practices have led many UKZN staff members to resign from the institution. On the other hand, an arguably hybrid but tokenistic approach to transformation like the one seemingly in place at UCT continuously alienates 'black' students and staff and calls for further 'de-colonisation'.

Section 8: Schooling and transformation

Introduction

As with universities, public schools in the post-apartheid context are labelled with racialised epitaphs, albeit *formerly* white, Indian, coloured and black township schools even though schools differ widely in terms of racial integration. Differentiation was introduced into schools on the basis of socio-economic contexts of schools. Quintile 1 schools are the poorest with quintile 5 schools being the wealthiest public schools. Quintile 1 to 3 schools receive greater state funding whereas quintile 4 and 5 schools receive less funding but charge fees to continue to build on legacies of excellent infrastructure and high school fees to employ additional staff. Quintile 5 schools are typically situated in suburban, previously white group areas, whereas quintile 1 schools are typically situated in rural or poor, predominantly black communities (Kane-Berman, 2018). In some cases, increasing numbers of black learners in formerly white schools have precipitated ‘white flight’ to exclusively independent schools and some formerly white schools have become predominantly black (Kane-Berman, 2018). In spite of high fees in previously white schools, many black parents make extraordinary sacrifices to afford to send their children to these more expensive schools (Hunter, 2015). It is clear though, that because choice of school is determined by parents’ ability to afford schooling and white household income is five times that of black households’ income (Statistics South Africa, 2017), more expensive, formerly white schooling facilities and independent schools are likely to attract white students in disproportionate numbers to black students, and black students will disproportionately be represented in poorer schools. It is also evident that top achievers in quintile 4 and 5 schools are still predominantly white. Grade 9 pupils from quintile 1 and 2 schools are performing at least three years behind quintile 5 Grade 9 pupils (Spaull, 2013).

This schooling context and disparities of opportunity and achievement crucially affect which learners apply to and are accepted in universities. If they do apply and are accepted, questions also remain about their experience at universities at cultural and intellectual levels and whether they stay or drop out. Indeed, the under-representation and relatively high dropout rates of black students, especially those from township and rural backgrounds, in more affluent formerly white universities was a key concern which motivated the #FeesMustFall campaign.

While this book critically focuses on higher education institutions in South Africa, the chapters in this section raise questions about the potential of universities in the post-apartheid era as agents of transformation, given profound inequalities in schooling in provision of material and cultural resources and social capital. The chapters raise questions about how universities may support learners and teachers in relatively under-resourced schools as part of a transformation initiative. We considered it an important section in this book as schooling is often neglected in discussions on transformation in higher education. It is an important part of the education debate as schools are significant spaces for articulation routes and pipelines into higher education.

Chapters 26-27

In Chapter 26, *Standard disruption: transformation and language use in places of learning*, Adam Cooper focuses on a relatively poor, under-resourced high school attended predominantly by coloured children from poor backgrounds, and how the school belittles the linguistic codes, cultural norms and the very identities, therefore, which its learners forge. Like Carolissen, in *Negotiating belonging through language, place and education: an auto-ethnography*, in Section 8 he argues that such children internalise a sense of inferiority at school in which the version of Afrikaans they use in their everyday lives is constantly undermined by the teachers who value and draw on what they construe as a superior and more academic version of Afrikaans. Cooper contrasts these children's pedagogical experiences in schools with their participation in a local hip-hop crew in which they "used language naturally, mixing and matching as they did in other settings of their lives" which "facilitated critical engagement with the environment in which they lived". He concludes by developing the implications of his study for language use in classrooms and lecture halls in South African universities in ways that affirm and value the cultural resources which students from different and diverse backgrounds bring.

In Chapter 27, *Transformation as a matter of state rather than degree: thinking beyond desegregation*, Chana Teeger draws on her own fieldwork in two former Model C schools (schools that were designated for whites during apartheid but desegregated during the transition to democracy) to highlight how post-apartheid schools that have racially desegregated continue to reproduce racial hierarchies. She reflects on the implications of her research for thinking about transformation, and especially the limitations of transformation discourses which equate transformation only with improving access for historically disadvantaged students to schools and higher education institutions. She also

reflects on what her research on Model C schools (and the racial and social class dynamics which operate in these) implies for developing teacher education programmes in universities in South Africa.

This book represents a detailed, yet incomplete, account of the disproportionate psychosocial, material and psychological challenges that marginalised staff and students face in higher education institutions. It most of all aspires to a future marked by critical engagement and a thrust to build new connections and supports marked by compassion, humility and criticality that resist essentialising homogeneity and normativity. Most of all it aims to build forms of social cohesion that affirm difference and resist attempts at assimilation and dominant normativity. We hope that this book creates an opportunity for debate, engagement, hope and repair of a higher education context that often leaves students and staff feeling misrecognised, yet also hopeful and determined to effect humanity and justice.

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1

SECTION

Transformation, its Scope
and Limitations

Chapter 2

Transformation as Freedom: Confronting 'unfreedoms' in students' lives

Merridy Wilson-Strydom

Introduction

Justice cannot be indifferent to the lives that people can actually lead. (Sen, 2009:18)

The meaning and use of the term 'transformation' in the South African higher education context is hotly contested and, depending on who is using the term, the conceptualisation can be more or less expansive, with implications then for policy and practice. In a submission to the 2nd National Higher Education Summit held in Durban in late 2015, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) positioned the concept of transformation as 'profound and radical change' (DHET, 2015a:3), but exactly what constitutes this profound and radical change remains elusive. It was also agreed by stakeholders at the Summit that "the term transformation must continue to be interrogated and discussed at deeper levels" (DHET, 2015c:2) and this chapter – like the rest of the book – seeks to contribute to these discussions, in particular by drawing on and applying the work of development economist and philosopher Amartya Sen.

Although contested, it has been widely accepted that at least a component of transformation is the changing demographics of the student body. Expanding access to students who had previously been excluded from higher education has been an integral part of higher education policy and practice since the early 1990s, and remains central in the 2013 *White Paper on Post-School Education and*

Training (DHET, 2013; MoE [Ministry of Education], 1997:3). The importance of widening access to higher education as an essential aspect of transformation as well as for the realisation of the broader social aims of our democratic society has thus been widely recognised (NPS [National Planning Commission], 2011). However, this chapter argues that where universities widen access in an attempt to overcome historical injustices without creating meaningful opportunities for students to be successful in their studies and to live well as students, new forms of injustice are created. New forms of injustice can thus be created in the name of transformation. While the notable increases in participation and the changing demographic profile of students should be acknowledged and celebrated, these changes do not on their own signify transformation, and certainly not the ‘profound and radical transformation’ that is required to build a just higher education system in the country. This is particularly so given that large numbers of students who enter university never complete their qualifications, and many leave with debt and the stigma of failure. Further, growing numbers of students live a life of poverty characterised by precarious access to basic living requirements and resources needed for learning. Making this unjust situation even more concerning is the fact that persistent race and class dimensions of student performance and well-being mirror, and perpetuate, the injustices and inequalities of the past (CHE [Council on Higher Education], 2015) despite South Africa being almost 24 years into democracy.

The urgency of disrupting this unequal and unjust trajectory has been powerfully highlighted by the ongoing student and out-sourced staff protests that have rocked South African higher education since late 2015. These protests have also stressed that higher education needs a much deeper understanding of the realities of the lives of students (and staff, although the focus here is students), and that promoting the right to access university (and the resultant changing student demographics) is not enough to signal transformation, because “[I]n the absence of action, rights are mere words on paper” (Nussbaum, 2011:65). Similarly, as Sen reminds us in the opening quotation, “[J]ustice cannot be indifferent to the lives that people can actually lead” (Sen, 2009:18). Thus, normatively located within the human development approach, which places people and their well-being at the centre of development and social justice, this chapter argues that we ought to think about university transformation as freedom. In his influential book, *Development as Freedom*, Sen (1999) argues that expanding freedom is both the primary end and the principal means of development, and thus, that development is about the removal of various forms of unfreedoms that limit choice and opportunity. This chapter makes a similar argument, but in the context of transformation within South African universities.

The empirical basis of the argument is drawn from rich qualitative data focused on students' lives and their everyday experiences as students. Following a short introduction to the project through which the data is being collected, and an overview of the methodology used, the chapter moves on to provide an outline of Sen's theory of development as freedom, showing how the approach could be applied when thinking about higher education transformation. In particular, I draw on Sen's notion of instrumental freedoms, which I unpack and conceptualise for a university context, and show how these freedoms are operationalised within one specific research project. The last part of the chapter presents an analysis of students' everyday experiences, in terms of Sen's five instrumental freedoms, by discussing in some detail the story of Viola (pseudonym) as an illustrative case. This analysis demonstrates how these five instrumental freedoms have the potential to create (or undermine when freedoms are not in place) conditions for meaningful transformation, based on more than numbers and demographics, so fostering student agency and well-being and creating more just and democratic university spaces.

The project

Democracy has to be judged not just by the institutions that formally exist but by the extent to which different voices from diverse sections of the people can actually be heard. (Sen, 2009:xiii)

The project discussed here is centred on creating platforms for the voices of students from marginalised backgrounds to be heard. Funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF),¹ this four-year longitudinal study commenced in early 2014, with a group of 40 first-year students, selected from a larger group of students who expressed an interest in participating. All the selected students attended township high schools and entered the University of the Free State (UFS) Bloemfontein campus from variably defined marginalised contexts – including in the home, school and broader community. Both male and female students are included, eight of the nine South African provinces are represented, and the students were studying courses offered across five different Faculties. The research focuses on understanding these students' lives and well-being together with the institutional conditions that enable or constrain students' well-being, agency and ultimately their success.

The project employed a range of qualitative methods. Each year four or five participatory workshops were held, and research methods included focus

1 Grant number: 87922.

groups (led by the students themselves), river of life drawings and other visual methods (Bagnoli, 2012; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012; Spencer, 2010), as well as presentations of, and discussions and reflections on emerging research findings. We produced an e-book publication entitled *Raising our voices: Student reflections on undergraduate study* where students had the opportunity to share their experiences and tell their own stories about being a student at this juncture in a previously white Afrikaans university. Through working together on this book project, students had the opportunity to tell their own stories, learnt important writing skills, and had a publication by the time they completed their undergraduate degrees. In addition to these largely student-driven participatory research activities, I have also conducted a series of in-depth interviews with the students. These interviews have focused on understanding students' lives longitudinally (prior to university and in each year of their studies) and their interaction with the broader institutional environment. The interview data has been (and continues to be) analysed both thematically across the full dataset as well as longitudinally – tracking individual students' narratives over the four years of the project, so as to understand students' lives over time and deeply rooted in their own contexts, some shared and some unique (Holland, Thomson & Henderson, 2006; Saldana, 2003). This large (and growing) dataset provides a rich and nuanced basis for better understanding students' lives and what the everyday realities of being a student mean for how we think about university transformation. Central to this understanding of students' lives is a conceptualisation of freedom and justice.

Freedom and justice within university spaces

In assessing our lives, we have reason to be interested not only in the kind of lives we manage to lead, but also in the freedom that we actually have to choose between different styles and ways of living. (Sen, 2009:227)

In the preface to *Development at Freedom* Sen sets out the central premise underpinning his argument that fostering freedoms should be seen as both the ends and means of development. What would a similar conceptualisation mean for university transformation? Consider the following quotation – with the replacement of 'development' with 'transformation'. An argument for this conceptualisation of transformation as freedom is set out in the remaining sections of this chapter.

Expansion of freedom is viewed, in this approach, both as the primary end and as the principal means of development [university transformation]. Development [Transformation] consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned

agency. The removal of substantial unfreedoms, it is argued here, is *constitutive* of development [transformation]. However, for a fuller understanding of the connection between development [transformation] and freedom we have to go beyond that basic recognition (crucial as it is). The intrinsic importance of human freedom, in general, as the pre-eminent objective of development [transformation] is strongly supplemented by the instrumental effectiveness of freedoms of particular kinds to promote freedoms of other kinds. (Sen, 1999:xii, emphasis in original)

Sen was proposing these ideas in response to the common reduction of the meaning of 'development' to economic growth, measured using Gross Domestic Product or some variant thereof, which he regarded as a limited conception of quality of life. While income is one of the means of development, it is not in and of itself of value. In making this case, Sen refers back to Aristotle's famous statement made in *Nichomachean Ethics*, that 'wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking; for it is merely useful and for the sake of something else' (Sen, 1999:14). Instead, Sen emphasises the central normative importance of understanding how people's lives are actually going in practice, rather than using income as a proxy for quality of life. We might make a similar argument with respect to student lives. Rather than counting the number of black students who now enrol at or graduate from universities and using that as a yardstick of transformation, how might our analysis differ if we focus instead on students' quality of life or their well-being, and their agency in determining the type of life they value living.

In *The Idea of Justice*, ten years after the publication of *Development as Freedom*, Sen (2009) develops these ideas further in the direction of a theory of justice. A central component of Sen's later argument is that when considered in its broadest sense, a theory of justice ought to "clarify how we can proceed to address questions of enhancing justice and removing injustice, rather than to offer resolutions of questions about the nature of perfect justice" (Sen, 2009:xi) as is the dominant focus within political philosophy (such as in the work of Rawls or Dworkin for example). In contrast to this dominant transcendental institutionalism that seeks to characterise a perfectly just society and then theorise what types of ideal institutions would make this possible, Sen argues for a comparative, realisation-focused approach to justice, an approach that is grounded in actual contexts and seeks to unpack "how the institutions actually work out and how things can be improved" (Sen, 2009:268). Once again, we could make a similar argument in the context of university transformation. Might we be focusing too much attention on trying to identify what the ideal transformed university ought to be, without taking sufficient account of the actual realities and plural injustices students experience on a daily basis, and

which could be remedied even though the ‘transformed university’ remains a somewhat elusive and certainly a contested goal? As Sen notes early in *The Idea of Justice*:

[W]hat moves us, reasonably enough, is not the realisation that the world falls short of being completely just – which few of us expect – but that there are clearly remediable injustices around us which we want to eliminate. (Sen, 2009:vii)

In his theorising, Sen argues for the centrality of substantive freedoms (also called capabilities) in realising both development and justice, for two reasons, namely the evaluative and effectiveness reasons. From an evaluative point of view, our assessment of progress towards development or justice (or transformation) ought to be done in terms of whether people’s freedoms to live lives they have reason to value has been advanced (for which income or university access might be a factor, but not the end point). From the effectiveness standpoint, the achievement of meaningful development depends on the free agency of people. We are thus interested in both the opportunities available for the enrichment of human life or well-being (however defined for a specific person or group) and the processes that allow freedom of actions and decisions. As such, both well-being and agency are brought into focus. So central are these two concepts in the broader capability approach that Deneulin (2014) identifies them as key words within the normative language that makes up the approach. In one of his earliest expositions of the capability approach – the Dewey Lectures in 1984 – Sen began with the following statement: “The main aim of these lectures is to explore a moral approach that sees persons from two different perspectives: wellbeing and agency ... each aspect also yields a corresponding notion of freedom” (Sen, 1985:169). The following sections set out this conceptualisation of well-being and agency, which constitute substantive freedom.

Well-being is to be differentiated from being well-off, which implies some sense of opulence or a focus on what someone has. Instead, the capabilities concept of well-being or opportunity freedom is grounded in the notion of functionings, that is, what a given person is able to be and do in their lives, or how they are able to function. In Sen’s words:

The primary feature of wellbeing can be seen in terms of how a person can ‘function’. I shall refer to various doings and beings that come into this assessment as *functionings*. These could be activities (like eating or reading or seeing), or states of existence or being, e.g. being well nourished, being free from malaria, not being ashamed by the poverty of one’s clothing or food. (Sen, 1985:197-198, emphasis in the original)

This distinction between what someone *has* and how someone *can function* is important, and of particular relevance in the university context. Equality of resources (what someone has) does not necessarily imply equality of functioning (what someone can be and do) because people are different, and different people are differently able to convert resources into functionings (Sen, 1999). The person, or agent (see below), is thus explicitly located within social arrangements that can either enable or constrain the extent to which they can make use of the resources at their disposal. For example, consider two students who each qualify for and receive a NSFAS loan. The one student lives on campus in residence and is able to use the funding specifically for her university activities. The other student must make use of unreliable public transport to and from her family's shack in a nearby informal settlement, and also helps to pay for her sibling's school fees. These two students have been provided with equal financial resources (NSFAS loan), but have very different functionings and overall quality of life. Arguably, one of the problems with our current approaches to transformation and student funding is that in both policy and practice, we tend to assume that if we provide all students who qualify with the required funding that they will be equally able to convert that funding into the functioning of being a successful student. One way in which the limitations of this equality of resources focused approach has recently been recognised is with respect to what has been termed 'the missing middle' – those students whose families earn too much to qualify for a NSFAS loan, but too little to qualify for a bank loan, and so find it extremely difficult to fund university education despite appearing to be better off than many of their peers (DHET, 2015b).

While the opportunity aspect of freedom corresponds to a person's capabilities and well-being, the process aspect of freedom takes us in the direction of agency, where:

Agency here is taken to mean that each person is a dignified and responsible human being who shapes her or his own life in the light of goals that matter, rather than simply being shaped or instructed how to think. (Walker & Unterhalter, 2007:5)

In Sen's terms, agency refers to a person's ability to "act and bring about change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of her own values and objectives, whether or not we assess them in terms of some external criteria as well" (Sen, 1999:19). A person who is able to 'act and bring about change' can be contrasted with someone who is passive, forced or coerced (Alkire, 2010:24). Agency is critical for democratic practices and informed debate which, Sen argues, is a constitutive process of democracy and justice (Sen, 1999, 2009).

Using his broader notion of freedom to bring agency (process freedoms) into conversation with well-being (opportunity freedoms) is thus fundamental to Sen's ideas about justice and his broader moral approach. This is because, by bringing agency to the fore, Sen also emphasises his view of individual and collective responsibility, accountability and social commitment as integral within this normative approach. Although an individual's well-being and agency are closely related, they are not the same thing and may work against each other where a person acts against their own well-being in order to advance justice for others. For example, a student from a well-off family who does not need to concern himself with how his fees are paid, textbooks purchased or food provided can exercise his agency to join a protest movement in recognition of the fact that many of his fellow students are not in the same privileged position as he is. This student may risk punishment from the university which would diminish his well-being, but exercises his agency and takes up his responsibility to others by deciding to act in the direction of change. As Sen (1999:11) reminds us, "[T]here is indeed a strong rationale for recognising the positive role of free and sustainable agency – and even of constructive impatience".

In sum, positioning university transformation as freedom implies that we conceptualise transformation as the process of enlarging the substantive freedoms of the university community to live lives they have reason to value. Freedom is here understood to include both well-being (opportunities and actual achievements) as well as agency (process freedoms). A transformed university, from this point of view, is thus a university that creates the conditions for plural freedoms of people to be and do what they value.

Seeing development [transformation] in terms of the substantive freedoms of people [students] has far-reaching implications for our understanding of the process of development [transformation] and also for the ways and means of promoting it.

(Sen, 1999:33)

It is to the ways and means (processes) of promoting transformation as freedom that we now turn.

Instrumental freedoms for university transformation

The previous section set out an account of why the notion of substantive freedoms ought to be integral to how we think about development and university transformation. Central to Sen's argument is that freedom ought to be seen as both the ends and means of development, and is thus important for

both evaluative and effectiveness reasons (Sen, 1999:18). With respect to the effectiveness role of freedom as a means for development (or transformation) Sen identified five types of instrumental freedoms, namely: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security. These five freedoms are summarised in Table 2.1 below, drawing on Sen (1999:38-40), with an interpretation provided for what these might mean in the context of university transformation, and an explanation of how each type of freedom was operationalised in this specific research project. However, before looking in detail at the instrumental freedoms and their application within universities, it is important to lay out a few additional points regarding this approach. Much of the text of *Development as Freedom* is devoted to mapping out the empirical basis for the argument that these instrumental freedoms underpin development processes defined as capabilities enhancement and improved well-being. In the interests of space, and because Sen was writing about development and not transformation *per se*, I am not going to summarise Sen's empirical basis here (please see Sen, 1999, for the detailed empirical justifications). Instead, my focus is on presenting a new empirical account showing how the five instrumental freedoms provide an entry point for work in the direction of transformation.

While each of the five instrumental freedoms is important in and of itself, it is the intersections and complementarity that is particularly relevant for ensuring the realisation of better lives or substantive freedoms. As is shown in Viola's story in the coming section, it is 'the empirical linkages that tie the distinct types of freedom together, strengthening their joint importance' (Sen, 1999:10). Since instrumental freedoms work to promote substantive freedoms, instrumental freedoms are integral to the process of doing development or transformation. This has important policy implications and provides an entry point for interventions that seek to promote change. 'Public [and institutional] policy to foster human capabilities and substantive freedoms in general can work *through* the promotion of these distinct but interrelated instrumental freedoms' (Sen, 1999:10, emphasis added). As was argued above, we do not need to know the nature of the perfectly just society, or the perfectly transformed university, to be in a position to identify points of manifest injustice against which we can, and ought to, act. Thus, this chapter seeks to show that even though there is no final agreement about what a transformed university ought to look like, we can nonetheless identify points of action that take us closer to that elusive end point. Sen's five instrumental freedoms, applied in the specific context of universities, provide an entry point for doing just this.

Table 2.1 Sen's five instrumental freedoms and an application to the university context

Five instrumental freedoms	Sen's definition (1999:38-40) (paraphrased)	Application in university context (derived from literature, empirical evidence, and immersion within a university)	Operationalisation within the research project
Political freedoms	<p>Opportunities that people have to determine who should govern, on which principles, possibility to scrutinise and criticise authorities, freedom of expression and other civil rights. Political freedoms include the political entitlements associated with democracies in the broadest sense.</p>	<p>Opportunities that students have to determine who should govern and manage, on which principles, possibility to scrutinise and criticise institutional authorities, freedom of expression and dissent together with civil rights in the university space. Broad political entitlements consistent with a democratic institution ought to be in place across all strata of the university, including the curriculum.</p>	<p>While participating students were not able to determine who the lead researcher was or what the central research questions were, since this is tied to the project funding, democratic processes underpinned all the work done by the group. Students participated voluntarily, elected group leaders as needed, and had the space to scrutinise, criticise, and deliberate the research findings, as well as identify additional emerging research questions.</p>
Economic facilities	<p>Opportunities to make use of economic resources for consumption, production or exchange. This also includes access to finance and the securing of economic entitlements.</p>	<p>Opportunities to access funding support in the form of bursaries, loans or scholarships, and to make use of this economic resource for consumption, production and exchange in the university environment. This includes economic entitlements that ought to guarantee funding for those who meet university requirements but do not have the economic means needed.</p>	<p>As a research project there was little space to promote the freedom of economic facilities. In a very limited way the project sought to contribute to students' economic facilities by annually providing each student with a voucher of R500 for the academic book store on campus. Several students reported that this was their main source of funding for stationery and other learning resources such as textbooks on occasion (although, the prohibitively high cost of books means that R500 does not go very far).</p>
Social opportunities	<p>The arrangements a given society makes for education, health care and other services that influence the individual's substantive freedom to live better and to achieve well-being. Social opportunities are important for individual well-being, but also for creating conditions for people to be equipped to participate in social, economic, political, and cultural domains of life.</p>	<p>The arrangements a given university makes for services that influence students' substantive freedom to live better as students and to achieve well-being. Social opportunities in the university environment incorporate all forms of student support services such as housing, health care, academic support, and arrangements for meaningful and equitable participation in a range of social, political and cultural opportunities on campus.</p>	<p>Through the project the participating students had opportunities to develop research and writing skills, develop voice, and to interact across traditional residence or faculty boundaries. For students who lived off campus, the project created important social opportunities for friendship and peer relationships that were of personal as well as academic benefit.</p>

Five instrumental freedoms	Sen's definition (1999:38-40) (paraphrased)	Application in university context (derived from literature, empirical evidence, and immersion within a university)	Operationalisation within the research project
Transparency guarantees	<p>In social interactions people deal with each other on the basis of some presumption of what they are being offered and what they can expect to get – i.e. the social basis of trust. This refers to openness and freedom to interact under guarantees of disclosure and lucidity.</p>	<p>In social interactions, all university actors (students, academics, support staff, university management and leadership) deal with each other on the basis of trust. Students ought to fully understand what the university will offer and provide them and by what process, and must know what their responsibilities as students are. Institutional policy and practice should be clearly articulated and appropriate avenues created for discussion and debate regarding policy and practice as needed.</p>	<p>The project purpose was discussed in detail with the participating students and the building of trust between the students and with the researcher was a critical aspect of the participatory methods used. This was guided by research ethics, as well as informed consent in an effort to ensure transparency guarantees at the project level.</p>
Protective securities	<p>The provision of a safety net to prevent those who are vulnerable from being subjected to abject misery. This includes fixed institutional arrangements such as unemployment benefits, income supplements, and social grants, as well as ad hoc arrangements for emergency situations such as times of famine.</p>	<p>The provision of a safety net to prevent those who are vulnerable from being subjected to abject misery. This includes fixed and secure institutional arrangements that ensure security of housing and food, as well security from corrosive disadvantages (such as perpetual fear of financial exclusion).</p>	<p>It was difficult to operationalise this freedom in the limited context of a specific research project. Nonetheless, through the project, students were assisted to better understand and access existing institutional safety nets such as financial support for outstanding debt and support for students who could not afford food. In a specific instance of extreme food and housing insecurity, direct provision of food was also done through the project.</p>

Freedoms and unfreedoms in students' lives: Viola's story

Table 2.1 sets out Sen's five instrumental freedoms and showed what these could mean in the particular context of a university. Although the empirical analysis of the extensive data collected in the project to date has shown the importance of all five freedoms in students' lives and for their well-being, economic facilities and protective security are particularly powerful – often by their absence – in the current South African higher education context. Arguably, creating the conditions for ensuring all five instrumental freedoms for all students would take South African universities a long way towards more equal and democratic spaces. Indeed, many of the issues raised by students in the recent and ongoing protest action are a result of these freedoms not being fostered for many students. Where these instrumental freedoms are not accessible (or only partially accessible), we may refer to the situation as one of “unfreedom” (Sen, 1999). Transformation then would consist of removing unfreedoms and promoting both the instrumental and intrinsic substantive freedoms (well-being and agency) for the diverse student population.

In this section of the chapter I turn to the story of Viola to illustrate the complex interrelations between these five instrumental freedoms (often expressed as unfreedoms) in the everyday life of a typical student. Viola's story has been selected for detailed presentation as her experiences provide a useful window on the lives of the 40 students in the project. While Viola's story is in some ways unique – as are all personal stories – her story also encompasses particular details and experiences evident in the other participants' stories. As such, this is a valuable case for illustrating how instrumental (un)freedoms play out.

At the time of writing, Viola was a 21-year-old student studying Law (LLB) in the extended programme at the UFS. She was in her third of five years of study, and had passed all of her subjects in her first two years. This was despite numerous unfreedoms and daily struggles as described below. Although she qualified in terms of the means test, Viola did not receive NSFAS funding in her first or second years, but did have a NSFAS bursary from her third year.

Viola grew up in KwaMashu, KwaZulu-Natal. She had a somewhat troubled childhood, but was fortunate to attend the renowned Inanda Seminary² independent girls' boarding school located in Inanda Township just outside of Durban for her high school years. As a result the quality of Viola's school education placed her at an advantage compared with many of her peers from similar backgrounds but who attended poorly functioning high schools.

2 <http://inanda.org/>

Attending Inanda Seminary was pivotal in Viola's life and created important opportunities and freedoms for further learning. But it was not without difficulties, in particular her family's ongoing struggle to meet school fee payments. Several times in her high school career Viola had to pack her things and leave school due to unpaid fees, and could only return when her family – usually her aunt – had managed to find sufficient money to meet the minimum payment. Like many students from poor backgrounds, Viola's story is one in which the inter-related unfreedoms of lack of economic facilities and little protective security together create a life of precariousness. Not only did Viola experience the harsh realities of these unfreedoms during her school years, she was also immediately confronted with the lack of protective security when she arrived in Bloemfontein to begin her studies with no place to stay:

I think maybe that it would help that if you don't have a place to stay the first day in varsity they could, like, have a place for you where you could pay, like, 50 bucks to stay there for, like, that day or to put your stuff because we are moving around with our stuff. We went to the security people and we had to stay there by security 24 hours and then she [security guard] went to KPA [Kovsie Private Accommodation], she came to fetch me, we took our stuff, we stood there by KPA the whole day, it was dark, it was getting dark, we didn't have any place to stay, we were here in the Free State, it was terrible that day. The other security guy said, no I know a place where people stay when they don't have a place to stay. When we get there we find out that no it's not actually a place to stay, it's a day res. And then we were standing there in the dark. And then these other boys they took us, they were trying to call their flatmates and then I was, like, I'm not going there. Because you don't know, you can't just go into people's flats.

Although Viola and her friend were eventually accommodated temporarily and at a late hour by KPA for that first night, she recounts this story with a sense of nervousness at what might have happened. During her first year, Viola then rented a room through KPA. However, her family could not always make the rent payments in time and she was regularly threatened with eviction. At the end of the first year, Viola was left with outstanding debt with KPA (as well as with her fees). She has not been able to pay her KPA debt and, as such, this housing option remains closed to her. The extract below, summarised from a piece Viola wrote for inclusion in the project e-book in which she reflects on her experiences of her first 18 months at university, shows the complex inter-relatedness of instrumental freedoms – in this instance, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees and protective security.

The financial barriers had an impact in my social and academic life in that I lacked self-esteem and could have performed much better academically if there were no financial problems. The year [first year] ended and I went back home not knowing my results and thinking that I am never coming back again with outstanding fees

tuition and accommodation. It was a week before registration for 2015 when a friend of mine suggested that I go back to university and try to talk to some people that can maybe help me. The first day when I arrived I headed to the NSFAS offices only to find that I did not receive NSFAS because of outstanding fees, at the admin offices I was told that I could not register without settling my account, the SRC did not pay for outstanding fees and registration and it was also the same with the bursary office.

At first I had energy a lot of it but as the days went by I started feeling depressed, crying myself to sleep as my friends one by one went to register. I heard [through the research project] about the rector's office and that one can submit an application for outstanding fees to be cleared. I did exactly that ... the application was successful and the first people I went to were the NSFAS offices. However the NSFAS offices now no longer had funds available and I was once again back to square one. However because I had other people helping me and I submitted many other bursary applications, a couple of weeks later I received a call telling me that I had received a bursary from a local law firm. This was truly a life changing moment. Life with a bursary is relaxing, even the way you walk, your attitude changes. My academics have improved profoundly. My mother and me talk about stuff and laugh rather than finances and debts. I am more happy and talkative. I don't mind engaging in campus life. I sleep more.

While Viola's life improved immeasurably when she received a bursary, the bursary did not include money for accommodation. As a result she spent her second year at university living in a friend's room and avoiding the person who cleaned the commune in case she was found out and made to leave. In the following quotation we see further evidence of how Viola's lack of economic facilities in turn limited her freedom for social opportunities.

- Viola ... here there's a lot of things that can make you go angry or feel that you are alone and stuff.
- Merridy What kinds of things?
- Viola It's, like, you can't really communicate with people. Sometimes when I have free time, like today, I couldn't find other friend, our new friend ... and I was just sitting there reading my book. Sometimes you feel I don't want to read a book I actually want to go and talk to people and interact with other people. But then when you see them, because people, the way they have these fancy phones and they're, like, what's your Facebook? I don't have a phone that has Facebook or Internet or what? Sometimes when people are talking about Twitter, I just laugh and I'm, like, sometimes I'm laughing, I'm like, yes I don't even know what this thing is. I'm just laughing. So then sometimes it's very hard to fit in.

Although Viola notes in the above quotation that her situation 'can make you feel angry' she does not allow herself space to express this anger, and also makes very little reference to broader political freedoms during her interviews or in her other project inputs. She has also largely expressed ambivalence about the student protests (although she was very relieved that there was no fee increase in 2016). This is likely because so much of her time and energy has been occupied with trying to secure at least some sense of financial freedom and the well-being and agency freedoms that would be enabled with better provision of protective security.³ These struggles, together with her focus on her academic work which she sees as the key to her future, tended to consume her days, particularly during her first two years at university. Nonetheless, Viola remains determined to complete her studies, and places much of the responsibility for success on her own shoulders. This is shown in the photograph and caption below, presented by Viola as part of a photovoice activity.



Figure 2.1 'We are all given a key. How you use it to achieve your goals is up to you in order to open the gates to success.'

While Viola's strong sense of agency and refusal to give up, which she has demonstrated since her school days, together with the social opportunities opened up by her good quality schooling, is arguably what has kept her from becoming one of the dropout statistics despite the numerous unfreedoms she has faced. However, what we could add to her description of this photograph, and the broader sense of personal agency she expresses, is a cautionary note

3 In her second year, Viola was able to secure support for buying food through the UFS No Student Hungry Campaign. She could not do so in her first year, because a minimum average of 65% is needed to qualify for such support.

that while each student is given a key (a place at university), the presence or absence of instrumental freedoms will determine whether students are able to find the correct lock for their key. We can use Viola's powerful image as a metaphor for what it really means for a student to have meaningful access to university, showing the importance of ensuring that these instrumental freedoms are in place for students so that they are in a position to be able to 'open the gates to success'. Where the lock and key do not match due to persistent unfreedoms, as is the case for so many students, rather than an opportunity, life at university becomes a constant reminder of what is out of reach. It is such injustices that ought to be addressed when we act in the name of transformation.

Conclusion: University transformation as freedom

Development [transformation] is indeed a momentous engagement with freedom's possibilities. (Sen, 1999:298)

Sen closed the final chapter of *Development as Freedom* with the quotation above. Given the grounding of this chapter in the ideas and arguments of his work, it seems fitting to end on a similar note by asking how different might our universities be if we approached transformation as 'a momentous engagement with freedom's possibilities'?

I have argued in this chapter that a conceptualisation of university transformation as freedom positions transformation as the fostering of conditions (through instrumental freedoms) that create spaces for all students to enhance their substantive freedoms, in particular their well-being and agency as students. Instead of directing most of our energies to attempts at defining what the ideally transformed university ought to look like and then debating how to reach this ideal, we can instead turn to the "remediable injustices" (Sen, 2009:vii) that we see around us every day on our campuses. Putting in place mechanisms to ensure that these instrumental freedoms are fostered and protected for all students would take the sector in the direction of justice, and transformation, and would improve the lives and well-being of large numbers of students who are currently precariously positioned in the system. This argument was illustrated by conceptualising what these freedoms might look like in a university context, operationalising them specifically within the limited space of a small-scale research project, and then reflecting on what a student's life is like when these instrumental freedoms are not guaranteed.

In sum, from the evaluative standpoint, transformation as freedom requires that we ask whether students are able to live lives that they have reason to value. From the effectiveness standpoint, transformation as freedom requires us to reflect on the extent to which students' free agency is fostered or hindered in a given university environment. Transformation then, is about expanding students' plural freedoms to be and to act such that they can live lives, as students, that they have reason to value. One way of doing this is by tackling remediable injustices through the promotion of instrumental freedoms, so opening up a space for 'profound and radical change' (DHET, 2015a:3).

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Chapter 3

Is University Transformation about Assimilation into Slightly Tweaked Traditions?

Kopano Ratele

This chapter is about traditions – institutionalised class, race, gender, linguistic, sexuality, bodily-ability related, national, but, above all, cultural traditions. Of course there are other kinds of traditions, including but not limited to nationality, religion, family, politics, and what should be of interest within universities, disciplines, paradigms and theories, but the chapter is mainly confined to the former set. The chapter is about thinking through the traditions of the colonial and apartheid university – a decisive historical fact with which to begin in considerations of the future and past of the present moment of the university. That is to say, the ruling idea of the university in contemporary society is of a colonial and apartheid university. In this society, we might dream of a university that does not gaze upon us as sexually queer, females, disabled, or poor, but we do not have the experience, at this time, of what such a space entails, what a transformed university is, what it feels like, and what it does. Indeed, efforts to trans-form – to change its form and to transcend the old colonial and apartheid form – are precisely intended as work towards changing teaching, research, managing, conversations, writing, teaching and learning so that such a new university can come into existence. The chapter is therefore focused on how to think of such work as well as to work towards transforming oppressive traditions of, in and underpinning the colonial and apartheid university as it still currently exists, particularly those oppressive traditions concerning culture, bodies, race, gender, language, sexuality and class. It is about how we might materialise new *just* traditions, contribute towards the

emergence of a new university, new teacher, new researcher, new manager, and of course new student.

How to be part of one another

It is possible that to have ‘tradition’ in the title of a chapter might turn many readers off. Some people erroneously associate traditions not with their own beliefs, sentiments, practices and experiences but instead with others’ backward, anti-modern customs and behaviours. However, traditions – because they always refer back to how we come to be who we are – inform even our hidden desires and unarticulated feelings, not only our worldviews and values. For some time now I have sought to show that tradition, in all its elusiveness, fertility and capaciousness, is one the most significant social, not only psychological, vehicles through which individuals and groups of people, from the smallest group such as a couple to a whole society, attempt to grasp and solve the basic issues of human existence such as eating, sex, birth, naming and identifying themselves, marriage and death (Ratele, 2013, 2014a, b). Issues that tradition deals with include educating the young, who and when and how group members are allowed to marry, whose surname the child takes, and how to bury and honour the dead. Perhaps because of its ethereality, the Frenchman Michel Foucault found tradition to “not have a very rigorous conceptual structure”, even though, he said, it has “a very precise function”. All the same, he was to observe that the idea of tradition, “makes it possible to rethink the dispersion of history in the form of the same; ... allows a reduction of the difference proper to every beginning, in order to pursue without discontinuity the endless search for the origin; ... enables us to isolate the new against a background of permanence, and to transfer its merit to originality, to genius, to the decisions proper to individuals” (1972:21).

I am not here specifically interested in origins of tradition, even though the spectre of the original haunts all talk of transformation. However it seems we cannot really know what is new, how we are becoming new, how we have changed from one form of a thing that is the colonial and apartheid university to another, or what is innovative, if we do not know what went before, what we were before 1994. We cannot transform if we do not understand the original or what preceded the current moment. Transformation requires that we investigate the structures that have shaped our universities within which we work and study. If we wish to radically change, we thus cannot but study the methods that we use, the customs that we have adopted in our daily lives, the models, configurations, types, practices and habits that inform our interactions. I am afraid no single chapter is able to do that. It is impossible to deal with

everything tradition calls forth, or how to completely change the injurious traditions around, for example, sexuality, which are implicated in the sexual violence that has been witnessed and experienced in universities or how to imagine and create new caring traditions around sexual arrangements and intimacy. However, one is able to simply indicate that tradition, its associations and functionality, its elision, symbolisation and the inattentiveness to its urging, its constraints versus possibilities, are things that require a great of thinking and working through if fundamental transformation is to become possible. There are, of course, many kinds of traditions, as already indicated, but perhaps all tradition in the end is about how to live with others. Put differently, tradition inevitably involves looking back at the cultural – where emergent culture references shared space that left a mark on the subject and the Other. As such, to seek to transform the life-with-others space and policies that govern universities is, in the final analysis, to set out to change the regulating notions of how to see one another – how, indeed, to be part of each other, upon which the university as a shared space is grounded.

The idea of transformation as assimilation is rejected

While usually invisible, and rarely explicitly written into policies or curriculum, tradition is a powerful force in universities as in general society. Consider this not very good example. Although I wish to argue for materialising new ethical traditions in our universities, the irony is that a certain academic tradition is what prevents me from writing the full question that would delineate the specific concern in this chapter. The question in the title has therefore been shortened because the dominant traditions of writing for academics teach that titles have to be short, among many other things. For example, it is said:

In preparing a title for a paper, the author would do well to remember one salient fact: That title will be read by thousands of people. Perhaps few people, if any, will read the entire paper, but many people will read the title, either in the original journal or in one of the secondary (abstracting and indexing) publications. Therefore, all words in the title should be chosen with great care, and their association with one another must be carefully managed. Perhaps the most common error in defective titles, and certainly the most damaging in terms of comprehension, is faulty syntax (word order). What is a good title? I define it as the fewest possible words that adequately describe the contents of the paper. (Day, 1998:26)

In light of the requirement for brevity in writing, I felt compelled – even though no one expressly said anything, no one but the ‘voice’ of tradition – to have the nine words in the title although the full question of this chapter is this: Is university transformation the assimilation of blacks, women, queers, and

those from poor backgrounds into slightly tweaked white, male, patriarchal, heterosexual, capitalist traditions? Tradition, that is to say, is a powerful influence on behaviour and structures. And in spite of how transgressive we sometimes think we are, there are always some 'traditional' beliefs that have a hold on us.

Regarding the question in my title, it refracts a response by Steve Biko to a question he posed regarding racial integration in the context of student politics as well as the wider political context in the country, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. "Does this mean that I am against integration?" Biko asked. His answer:

If by integration you understand a breakthrough into white society by blacks, an assimilation and acceptance of blacks into an already established set of norms and code of behaviour set up by and maintained by whites, then YES I am against it. I am against the superior-inferior white-black stratification that makes the white a perpetual teacher and the black a perpetual pupil (and a poor one at that). I am against the intellectual arrogance of white people that makes them believe that white leadership is a sine qua non in this country and that whites are the divinely appointed pace-setters in progress. I am against the fact that a settler minority should impose an entire system of values on an indigenous people. (Biko, 1987:24)

I too reject integration-as-assimilation as the mode of transformation in society and universities. The rejection of assimilation and, contrastingly, the imperative to decolonise university cultures and de-alienate subjectivity form the bedrock of this chapter. Transformation as assimilation is, after Biko (1987), taken to be artificial, unproductive, characterised by unresolved guilt and shame, and superiority-inferiority complexes. Any notion of 'accepting' those who have been excluded from largely unchanged universities is nothing but reheated colonialism and apartheid. Acceptance by whom? Who is being assimilated into what?

It is critical to observe that in contrast to the sociopolitical context within and about which Biko was writing, my concern here is with the culture within higher education in a changing social context. This is a context wherein black political enfranchisement has been attained yet white-black superiority-inferiority relations, particularly black-white economic relations, are proving slow to change. What is needed in such a context is to draw out why and how certain prevailing ideas of integration – that is to say integration understood as assimilation – are averse to the authentic transformation of universities. My contention is that instead of aiming to decolonise the ruling symbolic, structural and intergroup traditions within universities, some notions of transformation presume this to be the assimilation and acceptance of Others into white middle-class heteropatriarchal ableist normative structures of the poor and

working classes, blacks, women, those who do not belong to the dominant religions, queers and the disabled into an already established institutional cultural regime within universities. *Others* can be defined on the basis of language, class, race, gender, religion, sexuality, bodily ability, or cultures or some other difference. This definition is not neutral but, meant to exclude some people, creates a hierarchy of social value. Instead of reimagining new socially just traditions, assimilationist transformation merely tweaks oppressive traditions, applying cosmetic changes when what is needed is fundamental change in how we learn to be with each other, what we teach, how we learn, and how we run institutions. Universities, then, still have an opportunity to give birth to new cultures. Assimilation-focused transformation should be energetically avoided and opposed. At the same time, we should not abandon ongoing deliberation on the question of *how* and *to what end* to transform, or more specifically decolonise, the hegemonic university traditions. What is needed is to contribute towards thinking through the ongoing decolonisation of higher education, and perhaps wider society, by imagining future transformed universities.

Universities in 2044

Fifty years can feel, at one moment, like a long time, but at another, a blink of an eye indeed. Try to imagine the typical South African university in 2044, then, fifty years since the advent of democracy? Some readers might recall what universities looked like before 1994. Writing during apartheid, the pioneering black psychologist Noel Chabani Manganyi (1997:92) once said, “no university in South Africa is a university without further *qualification*”. The qualification he was referring to was the ethnically-determined character of universities in South Africa. In apartheid South Africa there were “English-language medium” universities (e.g. University of Witwatersrand and Rhodes University), “Afrikaans-medium” universities (e.g. Potchefstroom University and Stellenbosch University), and universities for coloureds, Indians, and Africans. Different universities were created to cater for different racial and ethnic groups. For example, a university like Fort Hare, founded in 1916, was created for blacks more generically; Zululand (established in 1960) was intended for Zulus; Venda (1982) for Vendas; Western Cape (1959) for coloureds; the erstwhile Durban-Westville for Indians (which merged into the University of Kwazulu-Natal in 2004, having been established in 1972, though in 1961 Indian students attended the University College for Indians on Salisbury Island in Durban Bay); Cape Town for white English speakers (founded in 1829 as the South African College for boys), and Pretoria for white Afrikaans speakers (1908).

Something is worth pointing out about this absurd map of racial and ethnic universities given birth by colonial lords and apartheid fathers. While blacks were largely excluded from teaching within the white universities, whites had the legal power to teach blacks and manage black universities. Blacks could not be professors at white universities. Black could not run white universities, and at the beginning, not even black universities. The colonial mindset and apartheid were essentially about the assertion and reproduction of white power and, conversely, the inferiorisation of blacks.

There were no new universities built for nearly two decades – where mergers of different universities and technikons such as the Nelson Mandela University and University of Johannesburg are commonly taken as different entities but not completely new universities – after the demise of apartheid until, that is, the establishment of the University of Mpumalanga and Sol Plaatje University (both in 2014). The question is whether the old ‘untouched’ universities like Witwatersrand or Pretoria, the mergers like Nelson Mandela and Johannesburg, or new ones such as Mpumalanga and Sol Plaatje are the template for what the transformed university will look like in 2044.

While some things have certainly changed, such as the introduction of the right of any person to attend any university of their choice (which, before the introduction of free higher education for poor and working-class students, was also constrained by the costs of university education), the term ‘university’ in South Africa is still *qualified* in the sense that Manganyi was talking of. The clearest indication is conveyed in phrases such as ‘formerly disadvantaged university’ and ‘historically privileged institutions’ which are commonly used, joining the company of ‘historically black’, ‘previously white’, and so on. These phrases are indicative of how many South Africans, particularly those managing, teaching or learning at universities, are still learning how to talk about universities in post-apartheid society. The terms reflect efforts of trying to feel and think a way out of a divided history of colonialism, apartheid privilege and black inferiorisation without offending each other as much as learning a future as a ‘united’ society. But witness how history haunts the present, since even while seeking to move on towards a common future the past – in the adjectives – is never too far off. This past that never passes has implications for thinking about how to decolonise universities and for creating universities characterised by more possibilities to be caring of others, to be *in* each other, for cultural justice, and towards egalitarian futures.

In 'Uses of the erotic' for teaching queer studies, which references the black queer feminist Audre Lorde's classic essay, *Uses of the erotic: the erotic as power*, Nikki Young (2012) writes about a class at a university as:

a space built on possibilities, grounded by collective potentialities, and filled with bodies that are materializing sensibilities. One of the most important processes in engaging students on the subject of queerness, then, is developing their willingness to critically frame the self as a sensual entity. This kind of framing calls for at least three things: (1) a willingness to testify to a truth about the self – even when that truth (or our assessment of that self) is nonnormative; (2) a commitment to challenge the policing of self-perceptions; and (3) the employment of counterhegemonic epistemological frameworks to dismantle oppression.

For those who teach, exercises in imagining the university in future ought to involve imagining how their classes might look. I propose that such future-building imaginative exercise have to involve envisioning experimenting with teaching students to want – to paraphrase Chawla and Rodriguez (2007) – to “examine difference that is mindblowing, that is beyond our/their imagination, that is rooted in the complexity of relationships rather than in the socially constructed categories of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation”. Is such a future a scary place or can't you wait to get to it? If you cannot wait to get there, what is preventing you from creating such a class?

To those who work as researchers, imagine the kinds of questions you would want to pursue if you had the time, support and guts to do so? What do you need to do “experimental” research – meaning research that tests borders – that asks not merely interesting and perhaps transgressive questions, but really difficult, meaningful and with some luck, important questions? What do you need to embed yourself in the complexity of South Africa's changing society, not merely repeating the same questions about blacks and whites, men or women, lesbians or gays, poverty and unemployment? Where would you choose to publish your work if you were not enslaved by the university bureaucracy to publish in approved journals?

To each of us, what springs to mind when you visualise what your particular university within and outside the gates might be like? Do you like what comes to mind or do you think the city or township or village and the university will have gone to the dogs? And what of the cultural, the social, technological, and political shape of our universities and broader society: how do you imagine those? What of your circle of friends – what might that look like?

The common question that ties all of these questions together is whether tomorrow will bring more of the same as today; whether you, as student, administrator, teacher, or researcher will be doing more or less the same work, in more or less the same way, perhaps with a faster laptop, but essentially unchanged. I suspect that if we are going to rebuild our universities as spaces of possibilities, the future has to be radically rethought. The same applies to ourselves and our work.

A conversation with a white man

Some of these questions that provoke this future-building imaginative exercise were stimulated by a discussion I had with a white man¹ sometime in 2015. Something the white man said was interesting. He said that during apartheid he could not for his life imagine what a democratic multicultural society would look like. If you live in South Africa and were old enough to cast your mind back to prior to 1994, you too might recall that, indeed, this is a place where people of different skin colours and ethnicities lived within the borders of what is South Africa. We had more than one culture and different nations (with their homelands) living in what became South Africa, yet we did not actually have a *multicultural* society. To be sure, it was not even in one country at some point during apartheid. We still have a way to travel, and that's what I shall have more to say about. *Imagination* is a key part of that journey. But, as already indicated, so is tradition and what do to with the past in the present and future.

If your imagination has told you that nothing much will have changed, the future will be more of the same, I have a suspicion you won't benefit much from the rest of this chapter. We might as well call a halt to these interventions on transformation which, I needn't stress, are about imagining what is possible, and putting in place possibility-enhancing policies and new culture-making programmes, creating spaces of interacting with one another and subjectivity-transforming structures, to actualise those possibilities.

Beyond transformation as assimilation

To conceive of transformation in higher education as racial integration (where integration is taken as assimilation) or gender, or sexual diversity (where diversity implies the *centre* remain heteronormative) or bringing into the university space those *wearily* called 'the historically disadvantaged' is to contribute towards new inequalities in our society. To approach transformation

1 The man is Dr Fanie du Toit of the Institute for Reconciliation and Justice.

as the ‘acceptance’ of the sexually ‘deviant’, non-English native speakers, the ‘non-white’, the disabled, women, or the poor into white patriarchal middle-class normed institutions is to create new, subtler, but *no less unjust*, forms of coloniality and hierarchisation. Therefore, the reductive conception of transformation in our universities, as in broader society, must be challenged. I am not, to be clear, against sweeping and deep change. I am for transformation that puts *all our traditions*, and particularly those that remain subjugated, at the centre of our governance, of teaching, of research, and of public engagement, and in that moment, *remaking* university traditions. I am for transformation that creates discomfort by placing all our traditions against each other so as to give birth to something radically new. Let’s call it, *deep* or *thick* transformation – transformation that engenders new traditions.

I do think we need work such as that by Soudien, as well as Govinder, Zondo and Makgoba, and other op-ed newspaper articles by people such as Xolela Mangcu, Siona O’Connell (2015) and Lieketso Mohoto (Mohoto, 2015). However, I am opposed to grounding our project to change higher education on the notion of assimilationist university transformation – by which I mean transformation as essentially or mainly racial (or sexual, gender, or economic) assimilation. I am not saying that these authors support assimilationist transformation. But I would like to see more explicit work on building new traditions on how to live with one another, to be in one another.

Why is integration-as-assimilation not thick transformation? The notion of transformation-as-integration (and integration as assimilating the Other) presupposes that every part of historically white universities was perfectly fine, that historically white universities were bastions of world-beating research, of world-class teachers, of student life characterised by well-being, of ethical administration and of good governance – save for the minor issues of racism and sexism and homophobia. They were not. Many still are not. In fact, the call to resist the approach to transformation as ‘bringing in’ and ‘accepting’ the poor, blacks, women, queers, and the disabled extends to the rest of the education system; to business; to housing developments; to sports, and to all the other arenas of society.

Some people have said colonialism, apartheid and their institutions were evil, and morally bankrupt. But some people have a different view. For example, on a morning in March 2017 the premier of the Western Cape Province tweeted: “For those claiming legacy of colonialism ONLY negative, think of our independent judiciary, transport infrastructure, piped water etc.” Zille would apologise and state that she was not defending colonialism, but she continued

via different vehicles to justify her argument about colonialism. That argument, as some people observed, was essentially that Africans could not have become advanced if they had not been colonised by those who would be white. I believe colonialism and apartheid were cruel and dehumanising in many ways, obvious as well as unseen. Universities were not left untouched by the dehumanising ethos of colonialism and apartheid. I propose that to overcome the marks that apartheid and colonialism left on us our institutions ought to be *radically and deeply reinvented*. Making racial, gender, economic and sexual assimilation or 'diversity' (that leave the centre as is) as the end goal of transformation, as the major reports on higher education transformation seem to do, is, in my reading, in large measure *detrimental* for the majority of black people, the poor, women, queers. It is not culturally injurious for those who find themselves in historically white institutions, but also leaves untouched the institutionalised ethnic cultures within previously disadvantaged universities. It leaves the higher educational cultural value system largely untransformed. Some people will say, that may be true, but lack of transformation is good for white men and those who enjoy the dividends of colonialist white-supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalism, and so why would they/we want to change?

It is obvious that in having women and blacks as professors or university leaders the *hope* is that it will change the institutional and cultural dynamics within higher education in the same way as this has been changing the political landscape. But you can't tell me that having those who were historically economically oppressed, women, queers and blacks as political leaders has radically liberated all women, queers and blacks and the poor. Perhaps it will still do so in the long run, and what is needed is to reach a certain critical threshold. But I have a suspicion that such a radical liberation will be brought about by something else.

There is no need to mention cases such as Marikana (when miners were gunned down by the post-apartheid government police), the xenophobia-related violence (in which many African people who are not and those who are citizens of South Africa lost their lives), the continuing high levels of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence in South Africa, the corruption and mismanagement in governments and big business. We need those with experience of poverty, blacks, females and trans-bodies in leadership positions and in formerly whites-only spaces, certainly. Transformation is not just about numbers, but of course it cannot be without paying mind to the numbers. Having black and female and queer university principals and professors is the ground-floor of transformation. And so the question that should have become clearer by now to those in positions to effect large-scale change is this: Is it

possible that we might, and what will it mean if we do, achieve perfect equity scores yet the grounding principles, the immanent values, in higher education remain largely unchanged? The question applies to all of us who would wish to change our society or parts of society.

I could go on to speak about the obvious fact that in the United States of America a black president did not change the fact that black male lives do not matter as much as white male lives, which is similar to how we have come to believe that black females are not as *injurable* as white females; or children from poor families aren't as *injurable* as children from the upper classes. But why go to the U.S.? The high body count of blacks and those from poor neighbourhoods in our country is indicative of the relatively low regard in which we hold their lives. If one believes that the Other's life is not worth as much as one's own, there is not going to be any respect for the Other's ideas, her body, her culture, her space, or any other aspect of the other's life, social psychology has shown. Ultimately, she is not human, not part of 'us'. In simple terms, we still have the chance to find an answer to the question. We ought to ground our work of changing universities on the question of how we as teachers, students, workers, administrators, or researchers make historically oppressed and marginalised *traditions* matter in themselves. Indeed, if I were part of the diffuse cultural leadership with an interest in developments in the historically Afrikaans-medium universities, I would not be much worried by having black students and professors and administrators as long as the way of seeing the world, of seeing Afrikaners in relation to non-Afrikaners as the governing way of seeing the world, remains at the centre of the university. The same applies to those institutions referred to as historically English universities (which remain South African English in their traditions).

I am at pains to draw out the fact that in troubling ourselves with questions of transformation in universities we soon realise that it does not take us far enough without also considering questions of traditions in the broad sense of the term. By this I mean what, from whom, and how we learn as students; what is taught, who teaches, how and to whom; what we publish, how and where. More emphatically, one cannot imagine transformation without concerning oneself with the constitutive traditions. The constitutive traditions are not simply the ruling institutional and intellectual cultures in the university. They also make us as university teachers, researchers, administrators and students into particular kinds of subjects. They allow certain kinds of thought and affect and discourage other thoughts and affects, until we become the kinds of subjects that the curriculum, structures and interactions intend us to be.

The imperative to change traditions in universities is repeatedly brought home when one hears or reads accounts of black students at historically white universities. Not that black students at historically black universities necessarily get a consistently better deal or have progressive traditions (since, we have said, we recognise that they too are creations of colonial or apartheid minds). Here is an excerpt of one account, written by a student at Rhodes University and can be found in the online publication *AfricaIsACountry*:

The extent of my fluency in white culture has afforded me experience in the corporate sector, even at my young age. I have even defied stereotypes by being one of the few blacks to compete in aquatic competitions at a national level for two consecutive years. I am socially, economically, politically and even epistemologically of value to whiteness. White hegemony has recognized my capability to understand its culture; it has praised me for participating in it. And, more so, it has rewarded me generously for assimilating into it. How I relate to white hegemony is undoubtedly rare, though not exceptional. And it is becoming less rare by the year. It is similar to the stories of others of my generation who have consciously or unconsciously assimilated into whiteness.

(Macheke, 2015)

Ever met an intersectional Zulu pro-feminist male activist scholar?

My own work is focused on liberating men, specifically black men. I would like to turn and present some brief thoughts about this, and then connect that work to this reflection on traditions.

Legal scholar and deputy vice-chancellor at the University of Cape Town (UCT), Thandabantu Nhlapo, tells an interesting story which has something to do with changing how we think of traditions, specifically heteropatriarchal traditions. The details are fuzzy. But the upshot of the story is that when he arrived at UCT and wanted to try to understand the problem of women abuse and how black male students at the University accounted for violence against women, he was asked at some point if he is Zulu. Yes, he said. You are interested in questions of sexism and men's violence against women? Yes, he said. And, then, the interrogator said, I have never met a Zulu male who is a gender activist.

Although it is part of my lineage, I was not raised as a Zulu boy. And I totally get the point by women liberationists and feminists that gender is a fundamental category of structuring and analysing the world, societies, universities, science, law, and indeed every aspect of human existence. Similarly, I get the work by lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans- and queer activists and scholars. I can never ignore, even if I tried, when considering issues of knowledge, or poverty, or income inequality, or race or culture, how these issues appear from the vantage

point of gender and sexuality. And vice versa, I can never ignore how gender equality is unsettled by subjects of culture, or race, or income, or southern theory. That's why intersectionality is such a vital analytical lens. Arguing for "the development of an adequate theory and praxis to address problems of intersectionality", Kimberle Crenshaw (1989:152) wrote:

This adoption of a single-issue framework for discrimination not only marginalizes Black women within the very movements that claim them as part of their constituency but it also makes the illusive goal of ending racism and patriarchy even more difficult to attain.

Intersectionality refers to the various ways in which different categories of social position such as class, nationality, race, gender, or sexuality intercut each other and constitute one another to shape practice and experience (Crenshaw, 1991). Understanding the need for intersectionality has become more widespread, but single-issue frameworks (or at best sometimes two-issue frameworks) remain the dominant mode of seeing both transformation and tradition. This is possibly one reason transformation in higher education is thought of in terms of bringing black people, or women, or the disabled, or those who are poor into of what is thought of as well-paid white cisgender hetero-patriarchs. It is less common to think of university spaces and structures as constituted simultaneously by intersecting forces than it is to think of them as dominated by well-paid university managers, professors, whites, gender traditionalists, heterosexuals, Afrikaners. Consequently, the most far-reaching change is often thought of as bringing blacks, women, and even more radically black women, into universities. And, perhaps most importantly, those who seek to transform universities often miss working together across their narrow constituencies.

To be what one might call a intersectional pro-feminist Zulu male activist scholar simply means you are willing to continually educate yourself about the fact that gender (in intersection with other social positions) structures women's and men's position in higher education; it means one learns to be unafraid to teach about race (as it intersects with other social axes of power) which frames our experiences as black, coloured, Indian, white women and men (or whatever racialised gender identity we choose or do not choose) inside the university and outside; and it means you, as an activist, are awake to and would mobilise around the fact that patriarchy (in intersection with other ideologies) organises knowledge. It does not mean you understand black females, let alone all females. It does not mean you will have a perfect relationship with your mother, daughter, lover, wife, sister, friends or colleagues. It does not mean you will

have a long and happy marriage – if marriage is what you want. It means you are moved by gender, racial and epistemological injustices just as much as by other forms of injustice.

We cannot overcome the deep legacy of cultural, economic, linguistic, racial, sexual and gender apartheid in universities, that is who gets to be at university as a student or teacher, researcher or manager, if we do not give all children a good education, especially those who still do not get quality education because of their social position. Even more significantly, I take for granted that of course black women have always been capable of running the world, as the musician Beyonce should have said. On a personal note, I was raised, nurtured, taught, set straight, encouraged and led by black women. And so I struggle for a future when South Africa and the world takes it for granted that black women of all orientations can run universities, churches, mosques, large multinational companies, countries and the world, because we know they run families, neighbourhoods, communities. Consequently, my turning my attention to boys was formed by the belief that educating a black girl for an empowered, feminist, confident, happier and healthier life, without empowering a black boy with progressive education towards becoming gender-egalitarian, democratic, non-violent and living a healthier life does not just mean we will be faced with the problem of the subordination of women and gender-based violence for the foreseeable future. It retards the general quality of life in our society. In other words, we need more Zulu pro-feminist male activist scholars informed by intersectionality to transform universities.

Subverting the continuing alienation of some people from the authority to explain the world

Although an often neglected issue in all but a few disciplines, traditions are rarely, if ever, not a foundational problem since all fields of knowledge are concerned with the transmission of cultures. Called paradigms, canons, schools of thought, or by some other terms, the academy as a whole and its constituents are invested in handing over and influencing others about a way of thinking and doing things. As I have said elsewhere, intellectual traditions come into view whenever we, as teachers, researchers, university managers, or other kinds of actors, self-consciously act with an attitude of accountability to a more or less common past and, it needs to be said, a common vision of the future (Ratele, 2015). To reference tradition is to raise questions about the histories of our intellectual and cultural locations, about how the authority to explain, interpret, invent or practice is conferred. What is a graduation ceremony if it is not this conferral of authority, if it does not also indicate bringing our

students within the fold of tradition? Tradition is, therefore, that selective, interpretive work through which authority is bestowed upon the continuity of experience. To concern ourselves with the question of tradition is to trouble the issue of authority, of decision-making, of interpretation, of voice. Who has authority? How far does it extend? How is it deployed? How does authority deal with contestation?

This brings me back to transformation-as-assimilation by another route, as well as to my call for us to refuse the prevailing terms of engagement that are being set for us in thinking about transformation. Transformation-as-integration and integration-as-assimilation is inimical for the majority of those historically outside the gates of the university because one comes to recognise, for example, the image of a minority of black students in a largely white class taught by a white teacher in a white language for what it is: a poignant reminder of the failure of our struggles for the radical overhaul of education and society at large; as a reminder of the continuing alienation of black people from the authority to explain not only their being but the world; as a failure to support the realisation of black genius. And yet, the questions raised by such an image have not always received the attention they deserve in the debates about spaces of education (as well as those where we work, play and live). The problem that lies in wait for us if we simply increase the number of black and female students in that class is this: the black students do not have to be in the minority for the hegemony of what we should call, after Bell Hooks (2004), colonialist white-supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalism to persist. The teacher can be a black queer woman born into a poor family in Mamelodi and the education traditions in class, university or higher education can still be sexist, racist, homophobic and anti-poor.

Do not hand your children over to the traditionalists

A recent case that took place in the public sphere about why even parents of black children hand over their children to be educated into heteropatriarchal capitalist racist traditions is illustrative of some of the problems of not thinking about the reimagining issues of traditions and culture. It is a good example because it also indicates the work we may need to do.

In 2014, historian and journalist RW Johnson claimed that blacks are keen for their children to attend schools which were reserved for whites under apartheid because these, he said, offer quality. What he meant was black children prefer white schools over black schools. The article was actually a comment on the short-lived appointment of Mamphela Ramphele, former vice-chancellor of

the University of Cape Town and at the time the leader of Agang political party, as the presidential candidate for the Democratic Alliance political party. In Johnson's view the mistake was that the white female Democratic Alliance leader, Helen Zille, was trying to 'anoint' the black female Ramphele as her successor. It is now much clearer that the grave political error was not committed by Zille, but by Ramphele, in accepting and then reneging on Zille's jobs-for-pals offer. Given the evidence of that kind of despotic indecision, voters were turned off Agang, and today it is as good as dead while the Democratic Alliance is holding steady as the official opposition.

In Johnson's appraisal, all of these political miscalculations are part of the same cloth with *other* white-black relations. "One notes how African, Coloured and Indian parents are eager", Johnson wrote, "that their children should attend formerly white schools – it is seen as a guarantee of quality – and also how, for the same reason, they do not want the whites to abandon the school to them: the ideal is to be racially diverse *and* keep the whites involved" (Johnson, 2014). He rightly received strong criticisms for his crypto-racist patriarchal views. Essayist and columnist Eusebius McKaiser (2014), who at the time hosted a talk-show on *PowerFM*, asked him on his radio slot whether Johnson came up with his view while drinking brandy and coke with his friends or if there is any peer-reviewed support for the claim. I am going to leave it at that. I hope it suffices to say that there are many who in our country still believe that black people prefer white patriarchal leadership, which is often interwoven with heterosexism and capitalism as it really exists (as Noam Chomsky might call it, meaning fundamentalist capitalism). I do wish to contend though that the difficulty we must confront is not posed by someone like Johnson or the lunatic fringes of our society but by the character of freedom (what PD Gqola has called flag freedom); by the character of this thin transformation we are currently settled with. However, as I have said, it is a suitable illustration as it suggests the work needing to be undertaken.

The difficulty we confront in higher education is that at times unconsciously, and on other occasions deliberately, we continue to privilege what I have called racist heteropatriarchal hyper-capitalist traditions. It is no surprise then that our higher education system, the curriculum we design, classes we teach, and research we produce continue to reproduce, or simply adjust, values supportive of racist, heteropatriarchal, fundamentalist-capitalism. This is why we have to be against so-called transformation-as-integration where integration indicates assimilation because it is indicative of the fact that the idea of transformation for which we – academics, administrators, students and university managers – may be settling in many universities falls short, in large measure, of what

inspired something like the Freedom Charter. There is a disconnect between such aspirations and everyday realities on university campuses. I have in mind here the debates ignited by issues at the University of Cape Town regarding the low numbers of black professors that have spilled onto newspaper pages. These debates have mainly turned on the meanings and articulations of transformation, of course – especially of race, language and gender. Others have rightly raised concerns about class, sexuality and disability. But, as I said, these are necessary but not sufficient conditions to satisfy transformation.

The horizon of transformation has always been the transformation of the traditions of higher education institutions which, of course, includes capitalist, racist, sexist and other supremacist traditions. The horizon of transformation features equally pressing questions which we cannot ignore – questions such as who teaches, publishes and leads; but also questions of, for instance, how the university is managed, what students are taught, and where we publish. Similar to the efforts of government, business, political parties, nongovernmental organisations, community initiatives and other bodies, the positive efforts of individuals within the university in terms of structures, of policies and programmes to change the lives of specific individuals, classes, departments, units, centres, institutes, schools, faculties or colleges, or the university as a whole, do not have to be minimised or undermined. We can use every genuine effort to positively change the structures, policies and practices. However, we have to keep reminding ourselves as we do so of what precisely it is we envisage when we say we would like to see a transformed higher education system. To what end are we aiming to change the university when we desire transformation and what does a changed university look like?

It is not hard to see that colonialist white-supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalist power and privilege is alive and well in South African higher education. This power and privilege consciously or unconsciously informs everyday practices, structures and policies in higher education. And this is what needs to be radically changed. I am against transformation as racial, gender, sexual, cultural or any other form of assimilation for the following reasons:

1. Especially black young people in so-called transformed historically white university departments tend to be in the minority, numerically, but more vitally, culturally. Therefore, instead of true transformation, what we have is black assimilation into and the reproduction of a colonialist white-supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalist value system; the problem, that is, is one of traditions, meaning cultural traditions in the broad sense, in which I include traditions within all South African universities, of how universities conceive of themselves. In many university classes black young women and

men are taught to admire and reproduce colonialist white-supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalist traditions.

2. Historically white universities train black young men and women to become, at best ambivalent and ignorant, and at worst distrusting of African thought, languages, resilience, pride, beauty and all the life-giving traditions they may have learned at home. It is incredible, but true, that in most social science departments there is very little in the curriculum about African and anti-colonial, decolonial, postcolonial social thought.
3. The costs for handing over black boys and girls to universities, and of course the earlier levels of education that teach them to admire colonialist white-supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalist traditions, if subtle in any single lesson, over the long term are high and highly destructive.
4. As a parent to a smart and kind black boy I would not want him to be an academic superstar and yet oppressive to others who are different from himself. But I live with the struggle to nurture an understanding in him of himself as inherently gifted, of blackness as inherently beautiful. It makes me sad when I to see how others can make him unhappy because he is a smart happy black boy in a world that tends to criminalise and pathologise black boyhood.
5. No parent in her right mind would want a system that teaches her child that black cultures are inferior to white cultures, girls have fewer rights than boys, or homosexuality is a disease or sin.

I am against transformation as class, racial, gender or sexual diversification because the truth is I desire thick transformation, and I have seen something of it – but that’s a story for another time. Such transformation is something we as a society, as universities, have yet to achieve. It is a culture towards which we need to work – a future tradition. Transformation, it seems to me, was never meant to be poor people, or blacks, or women, or queer folk being assimilated into a white, patriarchal heterosexist systems. It was, I think, supposed to be the realisation of new self and group identities, a new world, and new universities.

Conclusion

Here, at the end, instead of a summary, is Biko:

At the heart of true integration is the provision for each man, each group to rise and attain the envisioned self. Each group must be able to attain its style of existence without encroaching on or being thwarted by another. Out of this mutual respect for each other and complete freedom of self-determination there will obviously arise a genuine fusion of the life-styles of the various groups. This is true integration.
(1987:21)

True integration, that which does not unconsciously or wilfully aim to assimilate one group into another and does not 'eat the Other' is thick transformation. Thick transformation is involving those who are subjected to injustice and violence, as well as those moved by any form of injustice and violence, in the changing of institutions towards a future where people can advance their culture, learn, teach, and raise families and recreate society to the best of their abilities by building radically just and progressive technological, social, political and economic infrastructure (Ratele, 2015).

Since you might feel cheerless at this point, in an attempt to alleviate some of that sense of despair I may have caused you, I would like to suggest, in conclusion, where I think some of the answers as to how to transform universities might lie. There are four points, some of which I may have rushed over, which I need to make. All them are underpinned by this tension: In pursuing deep transformation, aren't we trying to pursue new forms of being a South African university, indeed new configurations of being South African, even while acknowledging that many of us have a strong sense of and appreciation for our specific traditions?

1. First, begin with the question of what precisely it is we envisage when we say we would like to see a transformed university. As mentioned, a complication when we put diversity at the centre of transformation is that we can have an entire class or university full of black people and yet, on close study, have colonialist white-supremacist heteropatriarchal capitalist tradition being hegemonic. So, racial, gender, sexual and other forms of indicators may be needed as signs of change, but they are certainly not the end of transformation. I should stress: imagining what you want a transformed future to look like does not apply only to the university at the top, but equally to what we imagine a transformed faculty, a department, a class could look like.
2. Second, the horizon of transformation cannot be who teaches, who is taught, who publishes, and who leads our universities, though these are necessary issues of course. That is important, of course. However, in the long game lie questions such as what is taught and how; what is published and where; the character of leadership and how inspiring it needs to be so that we can excel and innovate.
3. Third, do not just change the colour, ability, orientation or sex of the bodies. Change the structures and practices. Design systems that reward innovation with regard to instructional, leadership, and research and student-related traditions.

4. In the end, above all, what needs to change are higher education traditions. Universities are well-placed to support the growth of excellence around curricula and research that centres radical new African and anti-colonial, decolonial, postcolonial social thought. There are many historical and contemporary examples from around the world and other parts of our continent from which we can learn. Build and support the building of new traditions of how to be part of one another, to be in each other.

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Chapter 4

'This Revolution has Women, Lesbians and Gays, Queers, and Trans Bodies. Remember That!'

Finn Reygan

Introduction

Queer black women will lead ... In social justice movements, most of the time leadership positions are hijacked by men [and] we are turning the tables. Queer black women will lead. (Jodi Williams, student, Stellenbosch University, *City Press*, 2015)

Higher Education in South Africa is a contested space, characterised by an increasingly urgent demand for decolonisation and change. Student protests in recent years shut universities and challenged the ontological, epistemological and pedagogical foundations of the South African academy. In this context the historic epistemic violence of the university, coupled with the physical exclusion of certain subjectivities, foregrounds the possibility of a profound critique and reimagining of the higher education sector. In this regard sites for developing radical, intersectional knowledge and engagement are required as part of the project to create more just and equitable universities. In this sense the project of decolonisation and transformation needs to engage with multiple forms of difference including sexual and gender diversity. However, an exclusive focus on higher education is insufficient given that critical intersubjectivity must necessarily begin to emerge earlier in the educational trajectory in the primary and secondary school phases. Therefore, in interrogating the construction and representation of sexual and gender diversity in primary and secondary school contexts, it is apparent that issues of invisibility, marginalisation and violence

predominate. This is troubling given that basic education ought to set the foundation for the further emergence and expression of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) subjectivities in higher education.

The scholarship in the area of transformation in higher education in South Africa has tended to focus on race and, to a lesser extent, gender, and has been determined by the political and socio-economic change from apartheid to democracy (Fourie, 1999, in Msibi, 2013:65). While this focus has been necessary in addressing the systemic discrimination resulting from the apartheid legacy, the primary focus on race and gender has often left little space for other constitutionally embedded forms of diversity such as sexual orientation and gender identity. In short, the focus on race and sex in discourses of transformation in higher education elides other forms of difference. As a result, this chapter engages with the implications of the student protests in relation to intersectionality and sexual and gender diversity by asking: how inclusive of sexual and gender diversity is the #FeesMustFall movement?

In answering this question it became apparent that the marginalisation and exclusion faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people in higher education settings is preceded by immersion in a generally negating, exclusionary and hostile primary and secondary school system. The growing research base in relation to sexual and gender diversity in schools paints a rather bleak picture of hostility, lack of educator training and support, lack of affirming representation in learning and teaching materials, and school systems that are generally oblivious to the needs of sexual and gender minority learners. Nevertheless a number of initiatives in recent years from the national Department of Basic Education, as well as at SADC level, offer some hope that the inequalities generated by heteronormative power and privilege in basic education can be corrected. These interventions may then support the emergence of a more informed, inclusive and transformed tertiary education system.

Decolonising transformation

What should we do with the inherited colonial education system and the consciousness it necessarily inculcated in the African mind? What directions should an education system take in an Africa wishing to break with neo-colonialism? How does it want the 'New Africans' to view themselves and their universe...? (wa Thiong'o, 1981)

The European colonial project forwarded a process of dehistoricising, de-epistemologizing and deculturing African communities (cf. Abdi, 2007).

Abdi (2007:259, following Nyerere, 1968) argues that colonialism denigrated and annihilated African development and education as well as destroying the deeply embedded and multilevel relationships within communities. Central to the project of communicative annihilation was the centrality of language, according to wa Thiong'o (1993:13):

[Our] language, through images and symbols, gave us a [unique] view of the world ... Then I went to primary school and the bond was broken. The language of my education was no longer the language of my culture – it was a foreign language of domination, alienation and disenfranchisement.

Ghosh and Abdi (2004) argue that, in contrast, the underlying African worldview was to a much greater extent premised on the interconnectedness and interdependence within and across communities. wa Thiong'o, writing on Africanising and decolonising education, foregrounded the necessity for novel perspectives that assist us:

... to see ourselves clearly in relationship to ourselves and to other selves in the universe.
(wa Thiong'o, 1981:87)

Mbembe (n.d.) argues that this process of 'seeing ourselves clearly', that relationality, entails not detachment from others but instead seeing ourselves in relation to others with whom we share this world. What then does the thinking of wa Thiong'o, Abdi and Mbembe say about the issue of intersectionality in the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements, particularly in relation to sexual and gender diversity, as well as in relation to basic education in South Africa? Here the erasure of multiple subject positions and subjectivities, particularly gender non-conforming subjectivities, becomes apparent in the #FeesMustFall movement. Abdi (2007) argues that certain forms of transformation foster culturally inclusive understandings and interactions and what Abdi (2007, following Stam & Shohat, 1994) refers to as "...radical equalization of all histories, ontologies, and pragmatically malleable existentialities".

It is evident that the process of decolonising education in South Africa is a significant one given historical legacies and ongoing inequalities. Achille Mbembe (n.d.) suggests that the decolonising project entails black students and staff inventing creative practices that make it impossible for them to go unrecognised, unseen and unheard by university structures and processes. The same argument could be made for LGB, transgender and gender non-conforming individuals. Just as with black staff and students, gender non-conforming students will then be able to say: "This is my home. I am not an outsider here. I do not have to beg or apologise to be here. I belong

here” (Mbembe, n.d.) Such a project is not just tolerance, charity or simple assimilation so as to participate publicly in the life of the university but rather one that offers a process of transformation and reclamation: a “pedagogy of presence” (Mbembe, n.d.).

It is evident from recent protests and ongoing debate that the transformation of education requires deep rather than cosmetic change related to curriculum, pedagogy and relationality (Herwitz, 2015) in both schools and in the tertiary sector. The Africanisation of the curriculum, the democratisation of student/academic interaction, and the development of a more welcoming space for the student body are key. The entrenched whiteness of the system continues to be a stumbling block in that, for example, only 14% of professors in South African universities are black (*The Guardian*, 2014). In this sense, Mbembe (n.d.) argues that the process of decolonising education is “an attempt at imaging what the alternative to this [Eurocentric] model could look like. This is where a lot remains to be done” (Mbembe, n.d.).

This chapter takes Mbembe’s question and asks in relation to sexual and gender diversity: what is the alternative to a heteronormative and cisnormative model in both education and in the student protests?

Basic education

Before engaging with the issues of sexual and gender diversity inclusion in higher education it is evident that all participants in higher education have passed through primary and secondary schooling. Therefore, so as to better understand the ways in which non-normative sexual and gender identity difference is constructed and represented in higher education, it is necessary to understand the manner in which such difference is engaged earlier in the educational arc. The research in this regard paints a picture of school systems both in South Africa and across Southern Africa that are generally hostile towards sexual and gendered difference in terms of both content and processes. The literature (Bhana, 2012; Msibi, 2011; Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; Reygan, 2016; Francis, 2013; Francis & Reygan, 2015) points to school systems and educators that are unprepared to deal with the lives, bodies and knowledge of LGBTI people. For example, Francis (2012) has found that educators are generally anxious about broaching the topic of sexual and gender diversity because of expected negative reactions from learners, school management and the surrounding community. Msibi (2011) has found that classrooms and school yards are often threatening towards sexual and gender minority learners. Potgieter and Reygan (2012) found that Life Orientation textbooks often ignore

sexual and gender diversity completely and that, when they do engage with the topic, construct and represent these forms of difference as pathological. Reygan and Francis (2015) found that educators perpetuate a homophobic hidden curriculum and are often unprepared to engage in the necessary pedagogy of discomfort so as to open up spaces for a truly anti-oppressive, socially just classroom practice.

It is apparent that while constitutional protections are clear and general policy from the national Department of Basic Education is inclusive, this is not filtering down into schools and into pedagogic practice at the primary and secondary school levels. In response to this growing awareness of the untransformed, unjust and profoundly heterosexist and cisnormative nature of the South African school system, a number of initiatives at national and regional level have taken place. For example, the national Department of Basic Education developed guidelines and a resource for educators (Reygan & Wilson, 2015) on preventing and challenging homophobic bullying in schools. This manual sees issues of violence against non-normative sexual and gender identities as closely tied to patriarchy, misogyny and violence against girls. Consequently, the resource guides educators to respond to issues of physical, emotional and sexual violence against LGBTI learners in terms of broader initiatives and processes to deal with issues of sexual harassment and gender-based violence (GBV) in schools.

A broader initiative again on issues of sexual and gender diversity and violence in schools across Southern Africa was rolled out by UNESCO and Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA) in recent years, which found extremely high levels of violence against both girls and sexual and gender minority learners in Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, South Africa and Swaziland (see Francis, Reygan, Brown, Dlamini, McAllister, Nogela, Mosime, Muller & Thani, 2018). In short, it would appear that the ontological, epistemological and pedagogical foundations in basic education across Southern Africa in relation to sexual and gender diversity prepare the ground for the emergence of an adversarial, exclusionary and oppressive context in higher education.

Higher education: Fault lines and critical incidents

Recent years have seen an escalation of varied and vocal protest movements across South African universities. Early 2015 saw the emergence of a wave of protests including #RhodesMustFall, Open Stellenbosch and #TransformWits, among others, followed in October 2015 by nationwide protests and the shutdown of many higher education institutions under the

banner #FeesMustFall. More recently there has been an increased interest in intersectionality (or lack thereof) in the protest movements and an increasingly vocal minority has highlighted the ways in which transformation agendas and processes exclude and elide difference. For example, despite long histories of marginalisation and contemporary realities of exclusion and violence, student protesters have foregrounded the attempted erasure of sexual and gender diversity both in higher education institutions and in the protest movements.

The complexity of the transformation challenge requires a nuanced understanding of power, privilege and difference, and the fault lines that have emerged within the protest movement reflect broader societal and systemic realities. As Steyn (2015) argues, a nuanced and in-depth understanding of inequality requires critical engagement with the ways in which power and privilege determine which differences ‘make a difference’. In the recent student protests, there was a clear privileging of certain forms of difference over others and consequently the material and symbolic place of sexual and gender diversity has been denied and invisibilised. This in turn diminishes discourse and prevents a deeper understanding of the intersecting ways in which oppression and privilege operate, such as how gender is classed, sexuality is racialised, and class is sexualised among others (Msibi, 2013).

To better understand these intersecting fault lines in relation to race, class, sexual orientation and gender identity the use of ‘critical incidents’ to elucidate these fault lines is useful. Following Msibi (2013) I here use the role of critical incidents in elucidating ‘differences that make a difference’ in the protest movement in higher education. I employ ‘queer incidents’ to highlight queer struggle and to foreground the manner in which sexual and gender diversity has been largely silenced and marginalised within the protest movement. Nevertheless power is multirelational and I also highlight the manner in which sexual and gender minority communities and individuals have spoken back and claimed ‘queer’ space within the same protest movements. As Msibi (2013:66) argues, a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which racism, sexism and heterosexism intersect can help elucidate issues of difference more broadly and more deeply, thereby enabling a more inclusive and effective protest movement. Whiteford and McAlister (2007:74) argue that ‘critical incidents’:

...are context bound, generate thick description of specific phenomena and allow for iterative processes, that is, the person experiencing and recounting the incident is able to review the story over and over again, understanding it in different ways and with greater degrees of depth.

As Jansen (1998:106) points out, critical incidents: "...tell us more about the nature and extent of transformation than any official documents or quantified outputs..." Furthermore, Radebe and Taylor (2010, in Msibi, 2013) posit that the study of critical incidents foregrounds issues that are often left inchoate in the general study of transformation. In short, critical incidents are useful in exploring the fault lines that are policed and surveilled as well as being relegated by heteronormativity and heterosexism.

The critical incident that I refer to here foregrounds the key role of queer voices during #FeesMustFall as well as the visible presence of queer bodies. The politics of a queer presence in the protest movement arguably also made transformation more participatory and intersectional, as one commentator has pointed out:

#RhodesMustFall was not about just the statue and #FeesMustFall is not just about fee hikes. Young people involved in these movements understand what intersectionality truly means – that there must be justice for all or our politics will be bull. That is why the treatment of poor black workers, queer students, disabled students and women are critical components of their movement.¹ (Mhlungu, 2015:para 3)

Nevertheless, in early 2016, a critical incident received widespread media coverage when an #RhodesMustFall exhibition entitled *Echoing Voices from Within* was interrupted by members of the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Trans Collective. The Trans Collective is a student-led organisation that advocates for transgender, gender non-conforming and intersex identified students at UCT. In their protest the Trans Collective members blocked the entrances to the Centre for African Studies Gallery where the exhibition was taking place. Trans Collective protestors were naked, had painted bodies, held up placards and smeared some of the photographs on exhibition with red paint. One written statement held by protesters read: "RMF [RhodesMustFall] will not tokenise our presence as if they ever treasured us as part of their movement."²

1 Gugulethu Mhlungu, 25 October 2015. <http://city-press.news24.com/Voices/This-youth-protest-is-about-everything-20151023>

2 <http://www.groundup.org.za/article/rhodes-must-fall-exhibition-vandalised-uct-protest/>



Figure 4.1 Curator of the Centre for African Studies Gallery Paul Weinberg asks a member of the Trans Collective to stop the disruption.³ (Photo: Ashraf Hendricks⁴)

In a subsequent statement and speaking back to the lack of trans visibility in the exhibition, the Trans Collective indicated that its

...role has now evolved into speaking back to RMF and keeping it accountable to its commitment to intersectionality precisely because it is positioned as a black decolonial space.⁵

The Collective also highlighted the excessive loyalty to patriarchy, heteronormativity, the gender binary and cisnormativity in the #RhodesMustFall movement:

Following a year of literally wrestling with patriarchy and trans antagonism in the shadows of running from stun grenades, tear gas, jail cells and private security, the Trans Collective has decided to give content to what has been popularly known as 'radical black feminist militancy'.⁶

3 Ibid.

4 <http://www.groundup.org.za/article/rhodes-must-fall-exhibition-vandalised-uct-protest/>

5 Ibid.

6 <http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/trans-collective-trashes-rmf-exhibition-1996847>

The actions of the Trans Collective, emerging from a growing frustration with a limited notion of protest premised on a singular or limited understanding of possible axes of oppression, foreground the ways in which new hegemonies emerge even in sites of immediate and pressing transformation.

Discussion: Queer transformation?

This revolution has women, lesbians and gays, queers, and trans bodies. Remember that!⁷

The process of making transformation participatory and inclusive of gender non-conforming bodies and subjectivities is a key test of the desire of the protest movements in higher education to be intersectional which is also relevant for basic education given the levels of homophobia and transphobia in the school system. As the Trans Collective critical incident (above) highlights, the question remains as to how best to make processes of knowledge production engage across lines of not just race and class but also gender and sexuality. The initial and vocal participation of queer collectives in the #FeesMustFall movement was subsequently replaced by protests at their exclusion from the decolonial project of transformation. While historical imperatives necessarily foreground issues of race and class in the student protests, there is also a clear imperative for engaging with intersectional and multivalent forms of difference and exclusion in the entire educational arc from basic to higher education. The critical incident presented in this chapter troubles thinking about transformation and raises questions about the level of engagement within the protest movement with often hidden and ongoing forms of marginalisation and exclusion.

The contribution of trans and queer forms of knowledge foregrounds the need to continuously defend against the perpetuation of sexism, racism and cisgenderism whereby new hegemonies form and constellate in the place of old. In this context, previously and currently marginalised categories of race, class and gender can function to maintain rather than challenge patriarchy and traditional notions of masculinity, femininity, the acceptable body and desire. In this regard, the nuanced and informed critique of marginality among the protest movement is at risk of ignoring the ways in which its own 'politics of presence' marginalises and silences those within its own ranks.

However an understanding of the invisibility of queer subjectivities in this broader 'politics of presence' must necessarily engage with an earlier stage in

7 <https://hugokacanham.wordpress.com/2015/10/28/lesbian-love-in-the-student-revolution/>

the educational trajectory in South Africa. What emerges from a brief analysis of the construction, representation and engagement with sexual and gender diversity in the school system is the reality of sites of practical 'non-being' for LGBTI learners. This process of abjection and annihilation of queer subjectivity is apparent in the violence perpetrated on young people's bodies as well as the epistemic violence inherent in the erasure of queer subjectivity in learning materials and pedagogic practice. Consequently, this chapter aims to highlight the ways in which the practices of the protest movement in higher education can produce and reinforce forms of marginalisation and inequality that precede higher education and that emerge in the epistemological and pedagogic givens of the school system. In these multiple education sites the fundamental social justice questions remain: How is 'new' knowledge being produced in and through sites of learning?; How, if at all, are subjectivities of race, gender and sexuality being engaged with in ways that open up rather than close down spaces for dialogue and understanding?; How can dialogic space continue to be opened up that supports ongoing forms of critical thinking that challenges the tendency to develop new hegemonies and dominant norms in place of the old?; How can processes of engaged, critical subjectivity be fostered and encouraged early in the education trajectory?

Conclusion

Education at both higher and basic levels in South Africa perpetuates the colonial and apartheid legacy in terms of demographics, access, funding, equity, knowledge production, curriculum, levels of graduate unemployment, attrition rates, drop out, and academic exclusion. In engaging with the issues at intellectual, pragmatic and policy levels, it is necessary therefore to elucidate the concurrent discourses in terms of power, privilege and practice, and the complicity of these in perpetuating inequality and exclusion in education sites. Therefore a nuanced understanding of power and privilege is necessary, that interrogates material and symbolic formations, including within the protest movement, that elide and exclude certain forms of difference while simultaneously privileging others. While the #FeesMustFall movement has reinvigorated social and political engagement and participation at third level in South Africa, the question remains as to how inclusive and participatory the movement has been. After the successes of the movement in 2015, fault lines became apparent in early 2016 in relation to gender and sexuality. It is evident that processes of knowledge production, research and teaching need to critically engage with students across lines of race, class, gender and sexuality. However, while the Africanisation of the curriculum is a key element of the

transformation of the academy, there also needs to be robust engagement with issues of exclusion and marginalisation on the basis of other forms of difference, such as gender and sexuality. In this debate an exclusive focus on higher education avoids engaging with the sites where critical subjectivity may be opened up or closed down, that is, in schools.

The obliviousness to issues of (non-normative) difference is as present in higher education as it is in basic education. For example, the approach of the Soudien report in relation to sexual and gender diversity is captured in the following sentence:

...although all institutions raised issues of gender in relation to access, few institutions raised the impact of gender in the context of patriarchy and unequal relations of power. The challenges of ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation and disability were also, by and large, given less attention. (Department of Education, .2008:11, para 3)

The material and symbolic value afforded certain subject positions is therefore evident in the general invisibility and ongoing marginalisation of sexual and gender minorities in schools and universities. These realities are not tangential to transformation or incidental, but speak to the refusal of a genuinely anti-colonial, socially just and inclusive education system at both basic and higher levels. In answer to the key question underpinning this chapter, it is apparent that the future direction of both basic and higher education in South Africa must take an intersectional and critical approach to issues of difference. This means focusing on the margins, on who is being excluded from full participation, and in foregrounding the ways in which power and privilege are played out, including within the protest movement. Education is a key component in the arc of democratic consolidation, transformation and social justice and the process of transformation must necessarily engage with the complexities of interlocking and imbricated forms of difference in both schools and universities.

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2

SECTION

Researching Material and
Symbolic Spaces
on Campus

Chapter 5

Location and Dislocation: Spatiality and transformation in higher education

Kerryn Dixon and Hilary Janks

People know what they do; frequently they know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does. (Foucault, in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982:182)

Introduction

We begin this chapter with an incident that highlights the complexity of spatiality in higher education and the need for discussion about spatiality and transformation.

Mashudo¹ was one of our undergraduate students who came to Wits from Limpopo province. Limpopo is largely rural, and Mashudo came from a traditional Tshivenda-speaking community. Hilary was working with a colleague in her colleague's office when Mashudo knocked on the door. He found them working together side by side in front of her desk. A third chair was covered in books and papers. Mashudo looked around and sat down in the only available seat – the colleague's desk chair [Figure 5.1].

Mashudo appeared to be embarrassed and uncomfortable. It was clear that he knew that in the context of the University, this was not culturally appropriate, but for him it would have been rude to remain standing in a position higher than his 'seniors'. We understood that he had to 'get down to our level'.

The colleague then spoke to him; she asked if he wanted to see her; they set up an appointment for a different time; and Mashudo left.

1 This is a pseudonym.

Pleased that we understood why he sat where he did, we nevertheless wondered if there might be more to Mashudo's and our discomfort. We discussed the incident with one of our African colleagues. What we were told is that in traditional Tshivenda society, Mashudo would probably have sat on the ground, at an even lower level than us. In this office he was stranded between two different sets of socio-spatial norms with the only possible option leaving him marginal to both.

But the story gets more complicated. For Mashudo, it was also extremely disrespectful to disturb his 'elders'. We were told that had we been in his village, we would probably have been having our discussion outside. He would have sat on the ground far enough away not to hear us or disturb us, but not so far that we would not have been able to see him. When we were ready, the onus would have been on us to invite him to speak to us. The moment we stopped our conversation, we positioned him as someone who had interrupted us. Even had we known all of this, in the confined space of a small office it would have been difficult to maintain privacy and to accommodate his cultural practices.

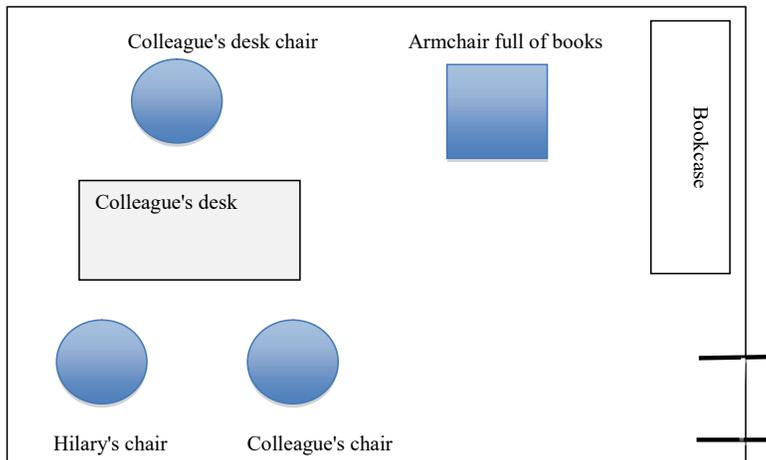


Figure 5.1 The arrangement of furniture and people in colleague's office

In rural Venda, Mashudo would have attended inadequately resourced schools and been taught by teachers poorly trained in apartheid colleges of education. It is important to remember that how we inhabit space is embodied and often unconscious but not necessarily deterministic. Despite the socio-historical and educational odds being against him, Mashudo did well enough in school to enter higher education. However, the incident we described illustrates that moving into a new space can produce a profound sense of dislocation.

In this chapter we argue that how space is constructed, by whom, for whom, for what purpose, and according to whose normative expectations, is therefore

an important social issue with particular relevance for both education and transformation. Foucault (1998) argues that space, time and social relations are inter-related. Analysis should not separate them as they need to be understood in relation to one another. In thinking about issues of transformation in education, we show how the inclusion of a spatial analysis in relation to time, social practices and social relations has explanatory power.

This chapter on spatiality relies on a Foucauldian analysis of exterior and interior spaces, the purpose and function of these spaces as well as the distribution of people and objects in these spaces. This history of these spaces and their current effects are also considered. It is organised around four moves. The first is a spatial reading of key aspects of the Wits School of Education (WSoE) Campus. The second analyses the ways in which a second-year group of Foundation Phase BEd students in 2015 inhabited this space. The third examines how Wits students involved in the #FeesMustFall movement in 2015 harnessed space as a tool in their protests. The final move considers the challenges of transforming educational spaces.

A spatial reading of the Wits School of Education campus

Spatial designs matter because they constitute the people who inhabit them (Foucault, 1994, 1998; Lefebvre, 1991; Massey, 2005). For teacher education we have to think of the role buildings play in producing particular kinds of educational subjects – both students and teachers. The architecture at WSoE reflects a particular view of both society and education. Its buildings valorise institutional authoritarianism with monolithic, heavy, grey, concrete columns and bare empty spaces designed for surveillance.

Foucault (1977) argues that schools serve the same social functions as prisons and mental institutions to define, classify, control and regulate people. Figures 5.2a and 5.2b show two interiors. One is the interior of the building in which we work, and the other is the interior of a British prison. At a glance, you may not be able to tell which is which. Foucault (1977) would not be surprised.



Figure 5.2a Our building or a prison?

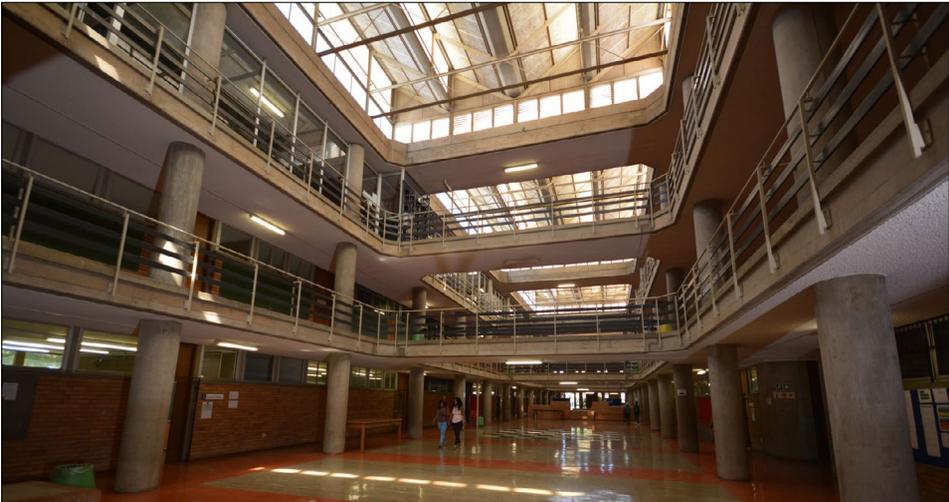


Figure 5.2b Our building or a prison?

The similarity in design is neither co-incident nor immaterial. Both buildings are designed for surveillance with walkways that look down on the empty space below.² This space, because it is large, bare and exposed to the external gaze,

2 When Wits University merged with the Johannesburg College of Education it inherited its apartheid-designed buildings. Thus far, in one of the buildings, the empty space has been turned into a purposeful computer laboratory known as the Glass Lab.

becomes a space of transit rather than a space to congregate. In both institutions this is a space for ephemeral connections; for fleeting contact of people moving with purpose to somewhere else. It is an unproductive space.

This empty space is surrounded on all levels by cells (Foucault, 1977) designed for containment that is physical and mental. The difference is that in prisons such containment is involuntary.



Figure 5.3 Tutorial rooms in the building where we work, WSoE

The images in Figure 5.3 are of the tutorial rooms on the South side of our building taken first thing in the morning before classes. Where we were unable to enter the room we photographed the exterior. The exterior images clearly show how locked security gates restrict access to many of the rooms.

What the images of interiors show is that the default arrangement of furniture in these spaces is that of a traditional teacher-fronted classroom: the students' desks are arranged in rows facing authority. While some staff take the trouble to move the furniture every time they teach, the position of blackboards and screens, class size and the practice of furnishing rooms so as to provide an individual table for each student, together with the time it takes, do not make this easy. However, there has been no discussion in the school about changing either the furniture or the historical classroom layout that has become the norm. The ability to move away from the teacher-fronted teaching is further compromised by the placement of the fixed furniture such as blackboards, screens and new technologies. In recent alterations no thought was given to the best placement for screens and boards, which were placed in the default position at one end of very long rooms. Had they been placed in the middle of the room,

more students could have been closer to the centre of the action. Naturalised norms are unthinkingly perpetuated. Ironically the people who have control over the spatial arrangement of moveable furniture in the classrooms are the cleaners, who are least qualified to make pedagogical decisions. No doubt it would be possible for the school to negotiate something different in order to have a variety of spatial arrangements of the furniture in different rooms to accommodate different teaching styles.

Where the tutorial rooms have moveable furniture that allow for other possibilities, lecture theatres remain in fixed, ranked rows complete with dais. The most powerful example in our school of seats positioned to face a dais and a screen is the staffroom (see Figure 5.4). Overall the furniture in this space mitigates against interaction which is further exacerbated by extremely poor acoustics. This space has an upstairs balcony which, with its own entrance, is well positioned to surveil the proceedings below.



Figure 5.4 Education staffroom

How bodies are organised as rank and file to face a seat of power, occurs in other institutional spaces: buildings designed for worship, conferences, venues, sweat shops. The place of power is symbolised by the dais, the altar and the supervisor's desk, which also enable surveillance. The point to be made about the endless repetition of this spatial norm is that it becomes taken for granted and invisible – naturalised (Barthes, 1973). Naturalisation constructs our sense of what is normal and, in the process, constitutes meaning through form. It is

important therefore to understand what form does, and what ideologies inform it. It is important to understand that space and spatial forms are not neutral because “power produces, it produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production” (Foucault, 1977:194).

The placement of objects in space affects the ways in which educational rituals of truth, such as lectures, powerpoint presentations, tests and examinations, are enacted. In these rituals students seated in rows are constructed as individuals who are there to receive the truth in silence unless they are invited to speak. That each student sits at his or her own table suggests that individualism is privileged, and that collaboration and cooperation are not foregrounded in the acquisition of knowledge. At worst this produces docility, at best passivity.

There is an orderliness to lines and rows that speaks of discipline, regulation, and obedience to which students are expected to conform. Foucault’s (1977) descriptions of the ever-increasing need to maximise the use of time means that bodies have to be managed. Productivity on a factory floor requires docile and useful bodies and education provides the training ground. However, democracy and new forms of labour require an agentic workforce capable of creativity and imagination. This is particularly important if we hope to transform teachers so that they are able to educate their students to be autonomous subjects for a democratic society. The way space, macro and micro, is arranged needs to be considered in relation to transformation because of the ways in which spaces produce embodied subjectivities. Our analysis points to the importance of reconceptualising spatial arrangements in higher education Institutions as part of the process of transformation.

All of Foucault’s (1977) techniques of power – distribution, surveillance, exclusion classification, totalisation, individualisation, regulation and normalisation – can be read as operating in the forms given to spaces by our institutional architecture and interior design. They operate in concert to produce and maintain power. The tutorial rooms epitomise the art of distribution, which divides, arranges and ranks bodies in space. We see distribution, individualisation and regulation working together to produce future teachers. The design of the buildings also distributes people in space: staff have access to different spaces from postgraduate students who often have access to better seminar rooms than undergraduate students.

Surveillance works side by side with distribution to support the working of hierarchical power relations. The walkways as shown in Figure 5.2b enable

both the ability to watch and the threat of being watched for people walking through the empty space below. The tutorial rooms, with the lecturer placed at the front of the room, next to the blackboard, the screen, the desk and the technology, standing above the level of the seated students, also produces this spatial hierarchy of power on a micro level. Surveillance is not only about being watched, it is about avoiding the gaze. The design of the buildings is such that academic staff can avoid the gaze because their offices are in separate recessed corridors. These corridors are secured by locked, glass doors, and iron gates; they include the staff toilets.³ Students cannot access these corridors unless the academics open the gates. The space is thus designed to mark staff as more powerful – with access to their own enclosed spaces that are specifically designed to minimise disturbances (Foucault, 1977). In these spaces, many staff tend to arrange their furniture as in Figure 5.1, positioning themselves behind their desks in the zone of power.

Staff offices are spread across the campus and office corridors are situated at the edges of the buildings. The principle of partitioning is part of the art of distribution (Foucault, 1977). It operates where space is allocated to individuals on the basis of classification. Within these corridors, a hierarchy of power and authority is created by the size and placement of the offices, with the larger professorial offices situated furthest from the entrance. Inaccessibility and size differentiate staff according to institutional rank and authority. Across corridors, individuals and groups are separated from one another according to their fields of specialisation. This reinforces the process of individualisation that specifies individuals based on their teaching: the Maths and Science academics are in the first building, the curriculum staff are on the second floor of the middle building, the arts and technology people are not in the main buildings. The allocation of space reinforces the power and prestige of some disciplines over others. For example, until 2014, staff teaching African languages were situated in offices that were much smaller and dingier than others in their disciplinary field. Now these offices are used for part-time contract staff – another form of classification that separates the temporary from the permanent, the part-time from the full-time. Separate office silos limit the possibilities for chance meetings and an ongoing exchange of ideas across the school. As a result, the parking lot, the open space behind the chairs in the staff room (with the urn and water cooler), staff pigeonholes and the printing room become spaces where one encounters colleagues one does not normally see.

3 The original design distributed men's and women's toilets differently across these corridors suggesting that hierarchies of gender were also in operation. Staff toilets are separated from students' toilets and, until recently, there were no wheelchair-friendly or gender-neutral toilets.

Exclusion is a technique that focuses on the boundaries and zones that define limits and signify difference (Foucault, 1977). While staff have space allocated to them and are distributed within buildings, students are not. There are no spaces designed for students to be inside the buildings when they are not in class. Students have not appropriated the concourse spaces in the building, because they are wide, cold, drafty, echoing and empty. The floors above, with their walkways of surveillance, diminish people in the concourse and reduce them to insignificance. Figure 5.5 shows how small we are in this space, despite the use of a low-angle shot, which usually makes human subjects appear powerful.

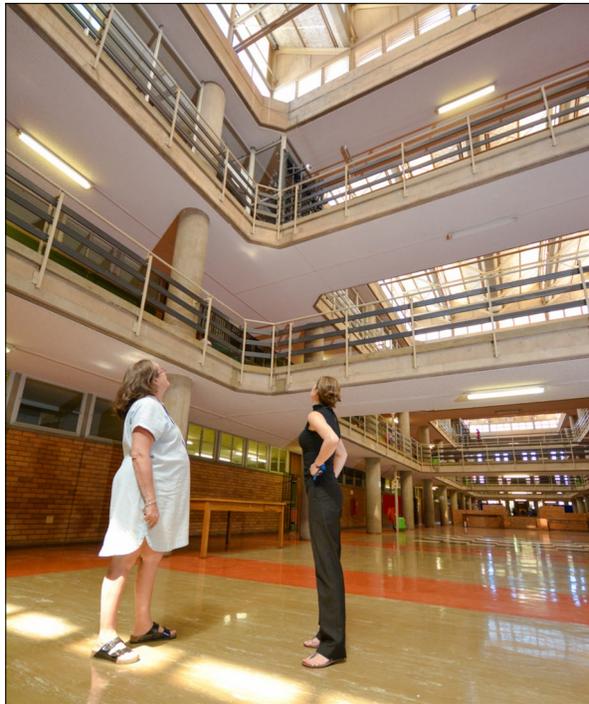


Figure 5.5 Diminished human subjects

In the thoroughfare that connects the three main buildings in the WSoE, some benches and tables have been placed on the sides, and students often sit there to work. Large windows make the space bright and there is Wi-Fi access. But students do not stay for long periods of time; the furniture is limited and uncomfortable and there is not enough space to congregate. People who bump into friends or colleagues in this space have to stand to talk.

This thoroughfare connects the three main buildings and it is designed to take one from one building to another as well as to the staff room, the mailboxes, the library and the administration building. Like the empty open spaces in the three

main buildings, it is a space of transit. These transitional spaces push students out of the buildings. They sit in the gardens, congregate inside and outside the canteen, and engage with one another at the bus stop. Or they leave campus. With staff and students pushed to the margins, the buildings assume a grandeur of their own. Cold, bare and inhospitable, they become a concrete manifestation of power and authority.

The architecture works to regulate movement through space and reinforces a range of normalising practices. Here practices of individualisation normalise

- ▶ students as individual learners;
- ▶ assessment and ranking of students based on their individual work (students' individual marks are published on noticeboards across the campus);
- ▶ learning as an individual and non-participatory experience, evidenced by the layout of tutorial rooms; and
- ▶ academics as individual scholars who teach alone, publish their own research, and are rated and ranked accordingly. They have their own offices with their names and titles on the doors.

What constitutes productive and unproductive space is also normalised. Tutorial and lecture rooms, offices, and even the staffroom are constructed as productive places of work. Marginal spaces are then de facto non-productive, non-work spaces – places of socialisation and recreation. The expectation is that student subjects should be engaged in work, in the library, in tutorial rooms. The result of this, as Foucault (1977:200) puts it, is that “visibility is a trap”. Students who are in open or recreational spaces and not moving with purpose are clearly not engaged productively. Thus, the student body is expected to conform to a particular individualised work ethic. Conformity becomes totalising.

In addition, the WSoE campus is removed geographically from other campuses that have more student-friendly spaces. At the time of writing the campus had no spaces specifically designed for out-of-class collaborative work. There are no designated spaces for undergraduate students to talk about their work or to do joint projects outside of class and, as the classrooms have become more high-tech, students have been denied access to them, except under supervision. Students are positioned as untrustworthy with regard to these new resources. Where they do have access to technology in the computer labs, there is a high level of control and camera surveillance.

Many of the new developments on the Education Campus are for the Faculty of Health Sciences, which has its own campus across the road east of WSoE. According to students many of the facilities are better than those of the education campus. The School of Public Health, with related lecture theatres, was recently built on the east side of the Education Campus and the Nelson Mandela Children's hospital on a sizeable chunk of the north-east corner. Encroachment is squeezing Education from both sides.

Lived spaces: How students inhabit the education campus

Data was collected from second year BEd Foundation Phase students in 2015. Sixty-two students of the BEd Foundation Phase class of a 110 students consented to take part in the research. Of the 62 students: 3 are coloured, 13 are Indian, 22 are white and 24 are black. We are aware of the challenges of working with race as a fixed and essentialised category and acknowledge that there are some students who may not identify with these markers. While this is not a fully representative sample of students in the WSoE, interesting patterns emerge from the data and race emerged as a strong category in the data.

These students completed a questionnaire that asked them to list the places where they 'hang out' between lectures and at lunch times, who they meet, and what they do there. They were asked to identify places where other students congregate; what their favourite and least favourite places on campus are, and what space/s on the campus they would change if they could.

Data was first coded by organising students into their self-identified friendship circles. The data was then coded according to the spaces where students said they spent their free time. The spatial data was mapped onto the friendship circle data to establish the favourite spaces of the different friendship circles. Favourite spaces were collated and then read across friendship circles. Ideas for transforming space were coded separately.

We recognise that the patterns that emerge in a survey are not as nuanced as findings from more in-depth forms of qualitative research. Even so, it is clear that the majority of students socialise within their second-year group, within their phase specialisation (Foundation Phase) and with members of their own racial groups. In this sample, the majority of black (23%), white (30%) and Indian students (18%) socialise almost exclusively within their race groups. There was a smaller category of students who socialise in multiracial groups (11%) and a final category of students who had no identifiable friendship

circles and who identified themselves as loners/being alone (18%). There were only two examples of students who socialise both within and across racial groups. This cohort of students is very aware of the patterns of racial segregation on the campus, both in and out of class, and they have discussed this at length with Kerry.

Black students belonged to seven friendship circles, with one circle straddling two other friendship circles. The friendship circles were small with between three and five students being identified. But, a number of these students live in the residences and have a larger number of friends in other years and phases. They return to the dining halls for lunch. The majority of the black students said they spend their time in the computer labs where they work or watch movies or music videos or search the web. Since the students are not only working in the labs, it is likely that they are using resources that they may not have access to at home, or within the residences. Students also spend time at the cafeteria eating, laughing and 'chilling'. Some use their free time to check on their NSFAS applications. Interestingly many students talk about spending their time on 'Main Campus' in Braamfontein and the Health Sciences Campus across the road.

White students belonged to four friendship circles with a smaller friendship circle also straddling two circles. These friendship circles are bigger than the black students' friendship circles and all the students are second-year Foundation Phase students. White students appear to spend their time outside classrooms waiting for lectures to begin, or in the cafeteria. Several students said they spend their time in their cars. One group mentioned spending time off campus at restaurants like Mike's Kitchen, Nando's or the nearby Woolworths, which has a cafe. This group is quite insular and closed.

There are five friendship circles to which the Indian students belong. The average number of students in the friendship circles was seven. Three friendship circles spend most of their time on the lawn between our building and the building adjacent to it. Two friendship circles spend their free time outside the cafeteria, and one on the lawn opposite the bus stop.

Students in multiracial friendship circles, comprised five circles. They located themselves on the lawns, on the staircase between two buildings, outside the cafeteria, and in the sun between buildings.

Eleven students (two Indian, one coloured and eight black) did not identify themselves as having a specific friendship circle. They all reported spending time alone in the computer labs, in the library, or on other campuses. Some of

them reported this as a choice (“Anyone whom I speak to, does not really matter”, LA6; “Anyone I meet before or after class. There is no specific person that I always go with”, LA7.) Others feel isolated. This comes across in their comments:

I go to the cafeteria to get lunch or I eat in my car. (LA5)

I’m always alone around campus. (LA2)

I am usually alone. (LA8)

It is a concern that by the middle of their second year, these students are not yet socially integrated.

All of the groups, including the ‘loner group’, spend a lot of time outside the main buildings. Overwhelmingly, the students refer to how cold the buildings are inside, variously describing them as ‘cold’, ‘dark’, ‘depressing’, and as ‘a concrete castle’. Many students mention finding ‘sunspots’ across the campus to keep warm. The architecture pushes students out of the space and, at times, right off the campus.

Students also commented on not feeling welcome in the spaces. The state of lecture and classroom venues, described as ‘old’ and ‘dusty’, and the lack of plug points needed for working on computers and tablets are specific complaints. The state of the toilets is also viewed negatively across the entire cohort. They see them as ‘dirty’, ‘scary’, ‘blocked’, and as having a ‘strange design’, with some students commenting that they walk across the road to use the toilets on the Health Sciences Campus.

Across all groups, there is agreement that WSoE spaces need to be improved to create a ‘warm, colourful teaching environment’ that is ‘inviting’. They want ‘places to sit’ and ‘spaces to interact’ – ‘chill spots’. All groups report spending time in the library but want ‘collaborative spaces’ to work there.

While at first glance the data indicates that students regularly spend their free time in the same spaces, these are liminal spaces. Within these spaces different groups of students have colonised particular areas and play out old apartheid practices of racial segregation. Foucault argues that architecture produces positive effects if the “liberating intentions of the architect coincides with the real practice of people in their exercise of freedom” (1994:355). That our campus does not make students feel welcome, that the groups students congregate in are not fluid, and that many students feel isolated, constitutes a worrying set of social relations that have far-reaching effects.

How students use the affordances of space in the #FeesMustFall protests

Clearly the spatial organisation of the Wits education campus only partly explains the sense of alienation evident in the #FeesMustFall protests. The continuation of social relations produced by apartheid together with the colonial history of universities work together with the geographies of apartheid to produce the students' demand for the transformation of higher education.

#FeesMustFall started at Wits University in response to the announcement that there would be a 10% rise in student fees for 2015. In addition, the hashtag was chosen to echo the #RhodesMustFall protests which used the removal of the statue of Cecil John Rhodes as a symbolic act to initiate the process of decolonising the University of Cape Town together with the practices that continue to colonise African minds (Ngugi 1986). From the start both of these struggles were linked to the University workers' demands for fair pay and to be directly employed by the University rather than outsourced, with benefits equivalent to that of other staff. These strategic alliances created a national student movement strong enough to force change and put the ongoing structural effects of apartheid on the national agenda. South Africa's history of the power of students' resistance contributed to the creation of the conditions of possibility for student action, worker action, and government and institutional responses.

Wits University is made up of a number of fenced campuses each with a limited number of controlled access points introduced to make the campuses more 'secure'. The securitisation of campuses prevents outsiders from entering in order to protect the university population and property inside. On the first day of the protest the student protesters targeted these points of access on the Braamfontein campuses. They blocked these access points with their bodies – lying, sitting or standing so that motor vehicles could not pass (Figure 5.6). They prevented insiders, the university population, from entering, symbolically linking financial access to the University with physical access to its campuses. They also prevented staff and students from leaving the campuses, fencing them in. By allowing people to use only the pedestrian gates, more privileged staff and students with private transport were forced to experience what a large number of students do every day: walk, catch public transport, rely on other people to help to get them home.



Figure 5.6 A student blocking one of the entrances to Wits

This action also brought public attention to the student protests. Despite fences, universities are connected to the world outside. These actions gridlocked Braamfontein and the northern suburbs. People sat in traffic for hours. While this was probably not a conscious goal of the student leaders, what it does speak to are the very real connections between the city and the university, between people moving in, through and around the university, and the political, social and economic consequences of disruption.

Students were also strategic about the buildings they targeted. Senior managers and administrators work in Senate House in Braamfontein. It is where the offices of fees, admissions, financial aid and international student offices are located along with disciplinary hearings and Senate and Council meetings. By commandeering the Senate House concourse, students were speaking 'space' to power. This is where they staged their mass sit-ins, where they held the Vice-Chancellor and other senior managers 'hostage', requiring them to sit on the floor for hours with the students (Figure 5.7). In renaming the building Solomon Mahlangu House, the students capitalised on the name of a great education struggle hero, an ANC cadre who was deployed to help with the student protests in 1977. He was wrongfully arrested and tried for treason and terrorism.



Figure 5.7 Vice-Chancellor Adam Habib held by students in the concourse

Students showed an understanding of the political use of space when they resisted Council's intention to report the outcome of negotiations on the outside steps of Central Block, instead of the concourse inside Senate House as previously arranged. Student leaders told us that if they stayed outside, the police would be able to disperse them. This would have resulted in power shifting back to the University. By forcing their way back into Senate House, students used space and their distribution in space to maintain the advantage they had gained.

Students also used time to their advantage. By staging their protests in the last weeks of the term, during the run-up to the end-of-year examinations, they put the whole of the 2015 academic year at risk. Academic staff, university management and many students, particularly final-year students, were anxious to complete the year. This created additional pressure on those negotiating with the protesters, giving the students a strategic advantage. To demonstrate a commitment to their own studies, sit-ins doubled as study sessions in the evenings. Sympathetic staff and students provided these students with support. Like the seemingly incongruous remark written in a pink heart on the side of the poster in Figure 5.8, 'Witsies for life', this was not an anti-education or anti-university protest.

Many students are proud to be at Wits and want an education. What they do not want, is financial exclusion or the occlusion of the identities they bring with them to the institution.



Figure 5.8 Witsies for life

A failed attempt to transform space

While it is hard and expensive to transform brick and mortar, we need to think about what we do with space. While we may 'know why [we] do what we do' (for example, lecture theatres that seat 500 students are one way to respond to the massification of education and high student teacher ratios), have we thought carefully enough about 'what what we do does'? (Foucault, in Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982:182).

Responsible for the new interior design of a postgraduate room, Hilary purchased furniture that was semiotically far removed from the wooden tables and chairs, so reminiscent of a school, that fill most of the teaching spaces on the education campus. She chose red upholstery for the chairs, white tables, white, grey and red paint for the walls, a grey carpet and grey pinning boards. The room looks smart and fit for adults. Most important of all, however, is that the furniture is easy to move. The tables have wheels that lock and the chairs are light and stackable. The room has two screens, one blackboard, one smartboard, and one whiteboard which are positioned on different walls for maximally flexible use of space. A large amount of pinning board is available for students' to pin up their individual or collaborative work for all to see and discuss. The room can easily be transformed into a space for drama, a gallery walk, group work or arranged with different areas for different activities. Figure 5.9 shows how we set the room up for a teachers' workshop on a weekend.

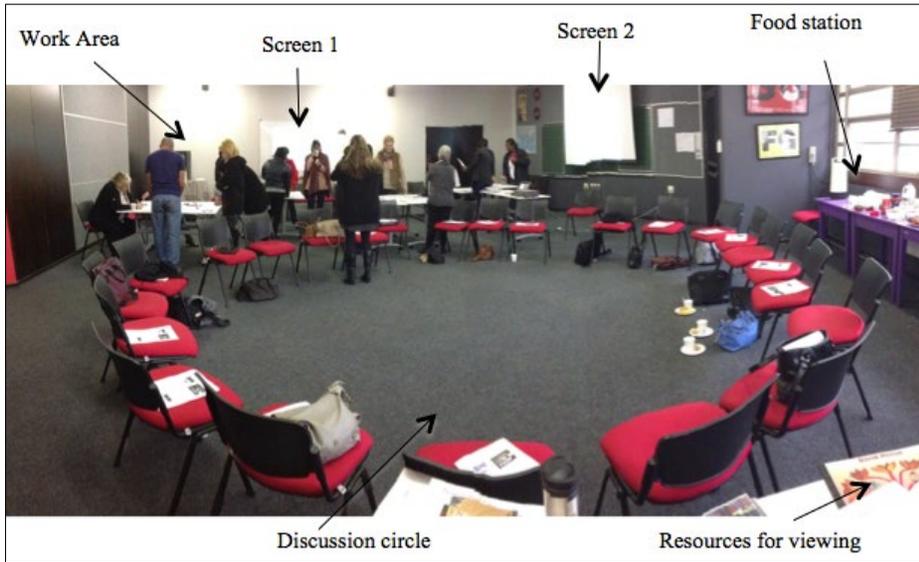


Figure 5.9 Teachers' workshop space

We waited to see what would happen when our colleagues used it for teaching the following week. By Wednesday, it had been changed back to a teacher-fronted configuration.

The students were more successful in their efforts to effect transformation. The name of Senate House has been officially changed to Solomon Mahlangu House and Central Block is now the Robert Sobukwe Building. The government has acceded to their demands for free higher education based on an income threshold and the University is exploring ways of decolonising the institution. None of these gains address the question of space *per se* and it remains to be seen in what ways social relations at Wits are re-constituted after #FeesMustFall.

Conclusion

Space is not neutral. It produces us as embodied subjects and it shapes our sense of self. It affects who can speak and who can be heard. It enlarges some and diminishes others. It includes and it excludes. It marks who and what is at the centre or the periphery. It affects the routes we take and the people we encounter. It is familiar to some, a space of belonging; and unfamiliar to others, a space of alienation. It is imposing or intimate. It invites us in or pushes us out.

It is can be colder inside than outside. It echoes or it resonates. It is light or dark, soft or hard. We need to understand what space does in order to transform it – to make the University a welcoming place.

In this chapter, we have discussed some of the historical dimensions of spatial relations and some of the historical formations that shaped the students and staff who inhabit the spaces of higher education and how this affects their experience of these spaces as places of belonging or alienation across time. We have shown how architecture produces material forms that endure, imbued with the ideologies of the past that are carried forward into the present and on into the future. The historical and spatial dimensions of students' power and resistance constructed the conditions of possibility for both their actions and the responses of both the University and government. Although there has been change the kinds of conditions that need to be in place to disrupt normalised practices and create possibilities for long-term transformation need more sustained attention.

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Chapter 6

'Why Did You Choose to Sit Here?'
Interviews with people in same-race friendship groups
at Stellenbosch University

Michelle Duncan

Introduction

While arguing for transformation in student demographics in formerly white universities a number of critical commentators have also raised concerns about the limitations of the 'contact hypothesis' (Vincent, 2008) or the assumption that cross-racial mixing will inevitably follow and grow with the creation of a more diverse student population. Jonathan Jansen (2014) has pointed to the limitations of demographic changes in the student population in promoting cross-racial friendships in the University of Free State given their home backgrounds and their unfamiliarity with experiencing such relationships at home and school. He argues, further, that universities need to be pro-active in creating meaningful opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to engage with and learn from each other as the key component of transformation.

My chapter is informed by these sorts of concerns which raise questions not only about student demographics but how diversity is actually lived and experienced, and whether this takes the form of cross-racial friendships and relationships.

It draws on informal conversations I had with students who were sitting in predominantly white, black or coloured groups in the Neelsie students' union at Stellenbosch University. This was a research activity I chose to do as an undergraduate anthropology student in 2013 in response to a request from

our lecturer to engage in a fieldwork exercise involving observation and/or interviews on a topic of interest to us in Stellenbosch. I chose to engage with students in the Neelsie, because I was interested in how and why informal friendship patterns in leisure spaces like the Neelsie were rarely racially mixed, and wanted to find out from students themselves if they had reflected on this.

When I approached students in friendship groups in the Neelsie I introduced myself as an anthropology student who was doing a small research study with students and friendship groups. I asked them if I could put some questions to them about the groups they were in and what brought them together. And I said I was interested in asking these questions because most of the groups I observed were not racially mixed and wondered if they had noticed this, and if so, why they thought this was. I made it clear that if they did not want to engage with me at any stage they should let me know and I would withdraw. I also explained that I would like to write up the interviews which I would show to my lecturer, but these would be anonymised.

I conclude this chapter by reflecting on how my observations and conversations may help us to re-think 'transformation'.

“Why did you choose to sit here?”

The Neelsie is Stellenbosch University's student centre. It is situated in roughly the middle of the campus and consists of four floors. The very top floor comprises offices used by student societies and the third consists of computer labs and the Student Representative Council offices. The second and first floors are the most used and frequented by all students, either for services or as a walk-through. The second floor houses stationery shops, the post office, travel agents, an optometrist, a pharmacy and a coffee shop or two. The bottom or first floor is the food court, the site of observations which I made that inform this chapter. At the time of this research, there were two or three rows of wooden benches in front of the stores and small round tables in the middle of the floor. There have been changes in the Neelsie since this research was conducted in 2014 and 2015. Some stores have been removed and replaced with a bank, and the furniture has been revamped such that the round tables that are mentioned in my observations have been replaced with rectangular plastic ones. A change in the make up and positioning of the stores may have altered the seating arrangements of students and so the racialised seating pattern that I observed may have changed, but the content of the conversations and the implications that can be drawn from them regarding social cohesion and transformation are still relevant.

Figure 6.1 is a map of the first floor. The blue rectangular shop is Kwikspar and to its right was 3 Degrees and King Pie. Both these stores have been replaced with Standard Bank. The row of green shops in front of the bathrooms are Feathers, Jeff's Place, Buzz, and DCM (there are two new stores in addition to these recently opened), and Vlambojant and Nca'kos are the stores at the bottom edge of the map. As I note on the map, I had observed more coloured students sitting on the wooden benches in front of Kwikspar and 3 Degrees, and more white students sitting on the wooden benches in front of Buzz and DCM.

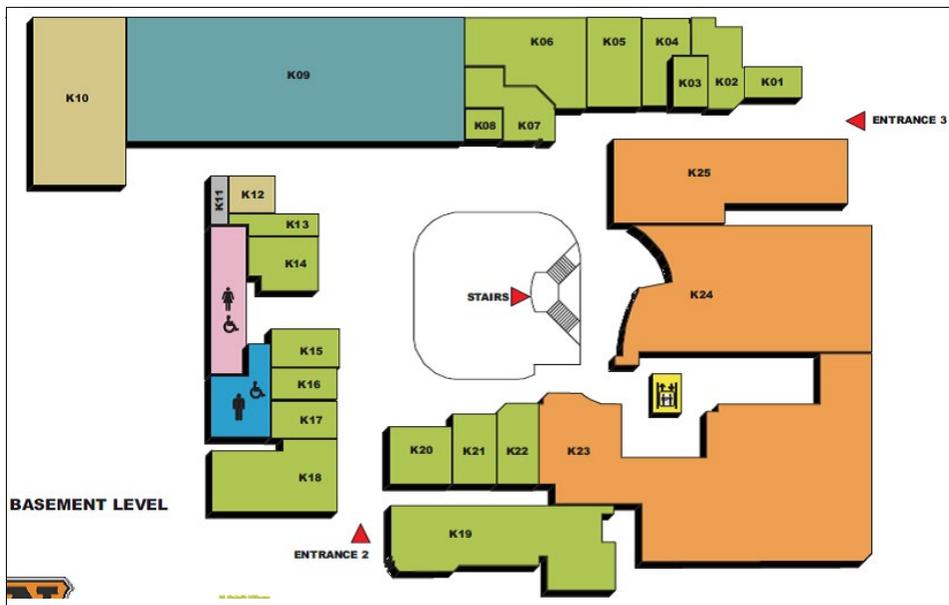


Figure 6.1 Layout of the Neelsie food court area at the time research was conducted in 2014 and 2015 (<http://neelsies.co.za/>)

Having divided the food court wooden tables into the white and coloured areas that I noticed, I interviewed groups from each side. I found that coloured students usually sat in groups of three or more while white students sat in twos. My opening question was why they had chosen to sit where they were. Overall, there is a strong tendency towards choosing a seat close to where food had been bought, followed by choosing a side that was or was not noisy. I was told that the side (which I had observed) comprised mainly coloured students and was quieter and calmer because there are fewer shops, thus less people, and so less noisy. This was a draw card for the white students who sat there as well as for a few of the coloured students. Their claim was supported by the fact that there was a higher number of individuals studying in this area. A number of interviewees on the white side liked this area (white area) for its more social nature. People could watch people coming down the stairs, the low roof created

a more intimate vibe, and students were usually friends chatting over coffee from DCM or Buzz which were nearby.

Interviewees started their answer to my question by saying that they liked the wooden benches, as opposed to the round tables in the middle of the eating area. The wooden benches are more comfortable, stable and can accommodate more people. They are also closer to where they had just bought food. There was a strong preference for Jeff's Place and Kwikspar, and DCM for coffee because they are the cheapest, as evidenced by interview C9/14, 2014, and C12/14, 2014:

- Male 1 Coffee at DCM and lunch at Jeff's Place or Feathers, depending on who has the most food for the cheapest price.
- Male 2 We get quite tired of eating the same thing so we try to eat different things ... we try to balance our budget because some of the places here like Buzz has the nicest burger but is quite expensive so we usually try to get Jeff's Place who has quite a low price.

These two interviews provide a good overview of the dominant sentiments of white students around food. However, white students do not exclusively buy from Jeff's Place. Health and food preferences are taken into consideration, which prompt a wider choice of food. One individual stated he had his favourites and was not necessarily concerned about prices. When I asked why they had chosen this particular side to sit, the answer would usually be for its more social atmosphere. Others enjoyed the coloured side because it was less noisy which made conversations easier.

Coloured students' responses typically started off with, "we always sit here", as well as this being closest to where they buy food. Kwikspar and King Pie were common, because they were considered to be the cheapest. The quieter atmosphere was also an attraction.

We just came out of Spar so it's the closest.

Female (B2/05, 2014)

When I asked interviewees whether or not they had noticed a racial divide, seventeen of the eighteen coloured students as well as six of the eight black students had noticed it. A table of three coloured students said the following (B2/05, 2014):

- Me Have you ever noticed any racial divides?
- Male Yip.
- Me You have?

one white Afrikaans male (B4/05, 2014) who stated that white people like that food and can afford it so will sit that side. They too had noticed the racial divide:

Maybe ... there can be ... there are a lot of coloured people this side. ('Coloured' male)

As such, class seems to be influencing the racial divide in the Neelsie food court area. One can draw a strong parallel between the Neelsie and the social factors that seem to be shaping how people position themselves in it and around it, and an article written by Bhana (2014) in which she studies intersections of race and class on the Howard College campus of University of KwaZulu-Natal. In her article, it emerges that the coffee shop area is constructed as being for the middle-class, elite and white students because the catering is expensive and inhabited by a multi-racial group of middle-class and elite, white, Indian and black students. It has become a symbol of power and social inequality for the majority of poor and working-class black students who buy cheaper meals elsewhere. As such, this coffee shop, and who does and does not inhabit it, is a marker of South Africa's overall social history in terms of separation by race, but shows how class is increasingly making racial divides no longer the symbol for social inequality.

Bhana (2014) writes how sitting in the coffee shop is a statement of social power where the racial divide is being blurred by class. Similarly, the Neelsie food court area may be one of many new post-apartheid arenas where there is a complex interaction of changing macro-social structures from the historical race classification to the new class force. This little microcosm of interaction is a direct reflection of the changing social forces of South Africa in the twenty-first century. Natrass and Seekings (Burgard, 2005) write that inequality is shifting from race to class as people with skills and social capital maintain employment while those with less or no education, skills and social connections find themselves jobless. And this hampers their ability to send their children to tertiary institutions, let alone give them a little extra pocket money for lunch or to socialise with friends over coffee from DCM.

"So what?"

However, does it matter that there appears to be little racial integration? As a black Botswanan female student (D1/14, 2015) answered in response to my question 'should we be concerned about this divide?':

I don't think we should be worried, I think it depends on what you are into. But if it's negative, and we can see animosity, then we should be worried. But if it's just a matter of taste...

Her answer was reiterated by an Afrikaans white female sitting with her, as well as six other tables. Five tables of English and Afrikaans white students argued that the divide just happens, and that common language, culture and similar backgrounds drew people together, which created the racial divide. As such, we should not be worried, there is nothing we can do to fix it, but rather it will sort itself out with time. Two tables of mixed students (including the one quoted above) said that people sat with whom and where they were more comfortable, and thus the divide was not purposeful. Four tables, two tables of black students and one of a mixed group, as well as table of coloured students also agreed that it is something that just happens, and that there is a level of comfort involved, but that ultimately, mindsets were responsible for the divide. The twelfth table recognised that race and culture are not the same things, and that while people may identify on the basis of similar culture, this should not be an excuse for a racial divide. One focus group did not notice the divide, while the other rejected the notion that culture is the dividing factor.

However, while all answers shared to some extent the common response of 'people sit with who they are most comfortable with' and stated that you could not really force people to mix, the explanations for the racial divide is of interest. Pattman (2007:480) argues that "a sense of 'racial' identity is derived through constructing the 'racial' Other, which becomes a fantasy structure onto which difference is projected". In the conversations to be discussed below, different racial and language groups constructed racial identities on the basis of a "bioculturalist version of race" which drew "upon readings of socio-cultural and bodily differences" (Posel, 2001:64).

In the following conversation with four Afrikaans males (D12/14, 2015), it became clear that to them, one's skin colour determines one's behaviour. They equated race and culture and, because they consider music taste to be culturally determined, they also consider it to be a racial characteristic. They racialised music and culture. Nadine Dolby (2001) found that, in a similar manner, students in a former Model C Durban high school racialised music and fashion, which then became markers of racial identity.

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Me | Have you noticed a divide in the Neelsie? |
| All | No. |
| Me | In the socialising area off campus, have you noticed a divide? |
| All | Yes. |
| Me | And what do you guys think about it? |
| Male 1 | It doesn't really matter. |

- Me Why don't you think it matters?
- Male 1 Different cultures.
- Male 2 It's their choice.
- Male 3 If I want to go to Club Space [a predominantly coloured nightclub] I can, but they choose to go to their club and we choose to go to our club, so it's chilled.
- Male 2 Different cultures just like to hang out with the same cultures, that's just how it is.
- Male 1 It's human nature.
- Male 4 They don't like our music, and we don't like their music.
- Male 2 A certain culture has their music, and certain clubs cater for their music.
- Male 1 Like Downtown caters more for Afrikaans guys, whereas Vibes caters for the English people mostly.

Freedom of choice is used to justify the racial divide as it keeps the respondent free from any role in perpetuating the divide and thus discriminating on racial grounds, as the onus is on the 'other' in how they choose to behave. Tileaga (2006:481) quotes Gill saying that frequently the oppressor draws on the idea that the oppressed do not want to change their situation in an attempt to justify their (oppressor's) action or inaction. This line of thinking also subtly suggests that the existing power relations are inevitable and natural (Tileaga, 2006:481). We need to see this conversation against the background of a white-dominated Stellenbosch. Vincent (2008:1437) stated that white students have been able to negotiate interactions with black and coloured students in such settings relatively easily because the institutional culture is familiar and they have not been challenged to change. Indeed, in response to my question of whether or not the divide in the Neelsie is problematic, one male responded: "It's not a problem, because this is not the first year that it's been like this. It's been like this forever."

Furthermore, these students are attempting to naturalise the racial divide by comparing it to the divide that exists between English and Afrikaans students. In doing so they avoid confronting their white identity and the historical injustices that are the reason for the racial divide. Comments like 'it's human nature' and 'a certain culture has their music' are 'essentialising forms of racial reasoning' which Vincent (2008:1435) argues form "powerful internal mechanisms for patrolling the boundaries between one supposed race and another". These boundaries, represented by going to Club Space, as well as the policing of them, are seen to play out in the rest of the conversation.

- Me And would you ever go to Club Space? Would you go to an area where you are the minority?
- Male 2 I have been to Club Space, I've been there twice.
[Laughter in the background from rest of table]
- And ja, it feels weird, but it's not a racial thing, it's a cultural thing, because you are not used to the music because you didn't grow up with it, you aren't used to the way things are done. And I am sure if you put them in Downtown upstairs, or even an English guy upstairs and ask them to sokkie, they would also be uncomfortable, because they didn't grow up with sokkie. They grow up with trance and house music.

This belief that culture rigidly determines and fixes one's music taste contrasts with the following statement from a coloured male (D9/14, 2015):

You know, I think it ties in with taste also. Some people are very comfortable with the way they have been doing things. So back in the day, because I am from the hood, I would go to Club Space, because that is what I would be comfortable with, but now I have come out of my comfort zone, and now I like ClubX, I prefer it over Club Space. So, I think it's all to do with taste. And most people are set in their ways. I have been doing this, it's been working for me so I don't feel the need to change.

For this coloured man, culture does not fix one's music taste, nor are either tied to one's race or language. Culture and music taste for him is not a marker of racial identity, though he is aware that music and culture are racialised. For the white Afrikaans students I spoke with, however, the social realm of music taste and culture were understood as being predetermined by the biological basis of skin colour. Furthermore, he did not police racial boundaries in relation to music, in sharp contrast to the white Afrikaans students who laughed when one of them simply mentioned visiting a night club frequented mainly by coloured people.

While the Afrikaans men drew on culture and music as markers of racial and language difference to justify the racial divide, a table of English white students (D10/14, 2015) strongly implied class in arguing that similar language and similar backgrounds drew people together. They too drew on the Afrikaans–English divide to naturalise the racial divide. Yet, in the following statement, one can see that there is still a level of self-identification as white.

Ja, I think you have a pretty accurate breakdown of the demographic, but I don't mind sitting there, like I have sat there before. And on the bib [library] steps outside.
(Male 1)

White students do know themselves to “occupy the position of privileged normalcy” (Vincent, 2008:1433). And as this privileged group, they view themselves as the standard by which others are measured. This makes their white identity invisible (Martin, Krizek, Nakayama, and Bradford, 1996:125). Salusbury and Foster (2004) explain how white English-speaking South Africans work hard to portray themselves as “cultureless” and thus the norm. In doing so, they attribute culture to the Other, and because they are the norm, this positions them as the spokespersons for humanity. Indeed, Tileagá (2006:482) argued that the white majority draw on a “range of liberal and egalitarian arguments that drew on principles such as freedom, fairness, individual rights and equal opportunity” when talking about inequality. While the Afrikaans students drew on the culture argument, the English students did indeed become the spokespersons for humanity.

As long as equality keeps happening, there will be more integration. But it will take time, like when people are really equal. Like our generation is still unequal because people’s parents were involved in apartheid, but if equality keeps happening then our children’s generation will be more equal. (White English female, D10/14, 2015)

The manner in which the word ‘equality’ has been employed implies that the speaker views it as something that happens to a person, not something that people make happen, or not make happen. There does not seem to be a working understanding of the word, and that rather, she understands the word to be used in the context and conversation around race and transformation, as suggested by Tileagá. The students at this table see themselves and their position in South Africa as being the norm as well as incidental.

Steyn (2001:111) writes that appealing to external forces is one manner in which racial innocence is accomplished as it denies personal agency. Time is such an external force, as it is employed in such a manner to imply it will bring about integration. This is exemplified in the following statements:

I think it slowly happens over time, like you make black mates, like, it’s not that I am trying to be racially divide. (White English male 3, D10/14, 2015)

I think over generations it (racial mindsets) will phase out, but in our generation, it will not cease to exist. But I think in time it will, don’t think there is anything specific we can do to change this. (Afrikaans white female, D7/14, 2015)

This girl also stated that parents teach their children racism and so it is her view that these attitudes will change the “more you (try) to reach out and learn each other’s culture” (D7/14, 2015). As such, they are relying on the contact hypothesis. However, I have already argued that it is not as successful as initially thought, in achieving racial integration and the eventual elimination of racism.

Time is considered a solution to the reduction in material inequality as well, which will further serve to bring black, coloured and white people into the same socialising spaces. As the male stated (D10/14, 2015):

You are mainly friends with people who are similar to you, like grown up in private schools etc, so when you get to university then you are friends with people from the same background, so it will take a while before more diversified people have the same background. (White English male 3, D10/14, 2015)

Obviously we have had 20 years of BEE being implemented, and that will slowly start taking effect in people our age and people older, and you will start to see the divide is, or the gap is a little smaller. (Male 1, D4/14, 2015)

His argument is based on class being the determining factor in how groups form. Indeed, Salusbury and Foster (2004) stated that White English Speaking South Africans view themselves as “naturally middle class” and stated that class superseded race as the basis of affiliation. Apartheid for them was a structural barrier that prevented racial groups mixing, as well as structurally disadvantaged black and coloured people. However, now that these barriers are gone, it is the perception then that previously disadvantaged people are able to receive a better education, get a job and work towards a middle-class life, like white people, a process that is perceived to take time. For these white students, equality is about material equality.

However, one must be wary of a class-based argument because it neglects the racial oppression and discrimination that occurs on the basis of skin colour, not only on a structural level. Steyn (2001:104) stated that some white South Africans “conflate racism and apartheid”, and if these students viewed apartheid as being nothing more than a structural oppression, then their perception is that racism no longer exists because the structure no longer exists. This inspires their solution of time, as time is perceived to be needed to attain the same level of material wealth. This aspiration for a time when everyone is the same must also be met with caution. Waiting for everyone to be materially the same could appear to be waiting for a time when black and coloured people are like white people. This can be argued to be a form of racism and oppression as well, as white people are still considering themselves to the norm.

In drawing on the argument that present times are better than their parents' time, or things will get better the further we move away from 1994, students are attempting to distance themselves from history and racism. Acknowledging history, as well as being part of the solution, would mean acknowledging their white privilege as well as admitting that they benefited from the violent oppression of others. Admitting accountability, as Steyn (2001:113) says, is

“blindly terrifying”. In drawing on time as a solution they are waiting for material equality, which also serves to distance themselves from confronting their whiteness. While indeed time does heal, the employment of this external force as a solution must not be used to negate active participation by white, and black, students in finding constructive solutions to better improve integration and transformation, so as to move to non-racial existence, in the true sense of the word.

This denial of being white showed itself not only in the worded responses discussed above, but also in the manner in which I was given responses, comparable to the responses I received from black, coloured and racially mixed tables. The responses from white students were always guarded, and ranged from an outright refusal to talk about race for fear of being overheard, to one-worded answers and resistance in elaboration of answers, to closure of dialogue as soon as it got too personal. This is in direct contrast with black and coloured and racially mixed tables of students whose talk was less guarded, and who spoke openly and freely, even to me as a white student, about race, discrimination and their experiences on campus. Conversations lasted 10 to 30 minutes, as opposed to white conversations that stalled as soon my questions got too personal.

Upon noticing this pattern of white people not wanting to talk about race, as well as their lack of presence at campus discussions on race, I added the question, ‘Why do “white” people not want to talk about race?’, to my interviews. A coloured female as part of a racially mixed group summed it up well (D3/14, 2015):

Well, I guess it’s because South Africa has gone through the apartheid era, where differences were highlighted and white people benefited from apartheid. So, to acknowledge difference, it just seems that they are still there. So, I guess that’s why they don’t speak about it openly. But I know amongst themselves they speak about it. I’ve sat close to a group of white kids, and they speak about it amongst themselves. But once an outsider tries to say something, or involve themselves in their conversation, they just close up and don’t say anything. (Coloured female)

Botsis (2010:241) found a similar situation in a Cape Town High School where she says there is a ‘lack of will, vocabulary and knowledge as to how to negotiate this sensitive terrain’. White student identities, as are black, coloured and Indian identities, are in flux. As Steyn (2001:xxxix) points out, with our official discourse calling for non-racialism, white South Africans, as the benefactors of apartheid, view talking about race as being racist.

However, Vincent (2008:1448) writes that black students find the lack of 'willingness to engage passionately and sincerely with questions of prejudice, stereotypes and racism as deeply disrespectful and a mark of continuing white arrogance'. Indeed, one black female stated that there are many spaces where people can speak, but she felt that the underlying issue is ignorance and misunderstanding (D2/14, 2015).

As such, I sense there is an impasse between the deep desire of black and coloured students to have their pain and experiences heard and understood by white students, and white students who are trying hard to distance themselves from their white identity. They do not consider themselves to be part of the racial experience of black and coloured students, or part of racial redress. And as dialogue is commonly considered to be the solution to confronting and deconstructing racial stereotypes, the question should perhaps turn to, how do we get all parties at the table? While the black female (D3/14, 2015) stated that there are many spaces for people to speak, the following comments raise the question of the types of spaces conducive to such engagement.

People get so aggressive, and uncomfortable, immediately wanting to attack people when they talk about it (race). (White Afrikaans female, D13/14, 21/08/2015)

People are so scared of having their opinions victimised and ostracised once they say it, and then they don't want to get information about why their opinions are perceived as wrong. So, we need to have spaces where people speak freely about their perceived notions, about perceived stereotypes, about perceived biased things they have. Then we can teach them to see that that is not objectively correct, and that it infringes upon another person's rights, and is discriminating against another person.

(Black male, D2/14, 19/08/2015)

As such, we need to define and create the type of space and subsequent engagement that will lead to the deconstruction of racial stereotypes, and so generate meaningful conversation about race, equality and the future of all South Africans.

Implications for thinking about transformation

This chapter has focused on exploring the reasons for the racial divide I had noticed in the sitting area of the Neelsie food court at Stellenbosch University. In asking questions about why students had chosen to sit where they were, I came to see that the racial divide was more a result of class than race, and so reiterated a larger body of literature pointing to class being racialised.

However, when I asked whether or not we should be worried about this divide, students replied we should not, because the divide is unintentional. The divide is not because students do not want to socialise across race groups, but because students form relationships and friendship groups with people who have similar tastes in music, and are of a similar class and cultural background, they explained. But because these are racialised, so are friendship groups.

What my research showed was not only how social spaces were racialised physically, but also linguistically in their accounts of these. While some of the students I spoke to often attributed their socialising patterns to common interests and tastes (in line with Nadine Dolby's findings in her ethnographic study of learners and their identifications and relations in a formerly white, now racially mixed school in Durban), in ways which suggested that these were not fixed by 'race', others suggested that socialising patterns were informally policed through negative sanctions which might be directed towards students who socialised across race and were perceived as crossing symbolic borders.

I came to see that for some students, taste in music and culture are markers of racial identity. Some students equated the social realm of music taste and culture with the physical existence of race, such that they identified a person to be a particular race by their culture and taste in music. For some students, there seemed to be little understanding that while personal background and upbringing may have been key influences in one's music taste and culture, the colour of one's skin did not define what these necessarily were or had to be.

My research raises questions about the limitations of transformation understood only in terms of making the racial demographic profile more in line with the wider society. This is not to deny the importance of making Stellenbosch more accessible to students from poorer backgrounds which are still highly racialised in the post-apartheid era. But transformation in racially mixed universities also needs to engage with questions about how to create possibilities for the formation of 'diverse' friendship groups. As Jonathan Jansen, 2014, argues, desegregation of formerly segregated spaces on campus like Residences or drinking and eating spaces on campus does not necessarily generate forms of 'integration' across lines of race.

In a 'transformed' campus in a racially mixed university one would expect cross-racial conversations to be normal, and race, therefore, to be less salient as a category through which primary identifications are made, and where people are not perceived as signifiers of other racially defined groups in ways which preclude forms of socialising across race. While recognising the importance of promoting

diversity across lines of class and race on campus as part of a transformation strategy, we also need to encourage possibilities for rich and meaningful social relations which cross racial categories and subvert or de-reify these.

This is certainly not to equate transformation with assimilation of black students into a formerly white university or to deny the operation of institutionalised cultures and practices which reflect and reproduce power relations mediated by race and gender. Indeed, how to promote participation in common social and intellectual activities between students from different backgrounds, and how to encourage and enable conversations between such students, should form a key component of a transformation strategy aimed at promoting integration while cultivating mutual respect for differences. In these conversations students should be able to acknowledge where they come from and what has shaped their lives, and then feel safe to ask questions about how others express their lives.

Transformation initiatives aimed at promoting forms of integration across lines of race need to be informed by this kind of research which engages with student cultures and tastes and how these may operate as sources of identification in exclusionary and inclusionary ways in relation to race and gender.

As Steyn (xxxii) suggests, we need more racially nuanced ways to deal with the racial attitudes of each group, although groups “require a constructive engagement with the past”. Such an engagement refers to the stalemate I sensed between white students who are attempting to distance themselves from their racial identity and in doing so, not being open to having conversations about race and prejudice, while black students were wanting to have white students understand their racial experiences. If we do not develop a sense of community and democratic practices through conversations, technically desegregated spaces, I suggest, may deteriorate into sites of oppositional identities, identities that continue to be strongly formed on and by race in quite exclusionary ways.

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Chapter 7

The Writing on the Toilet Wall: Researching graffiti conversations in women student toilets at Stellenbosch University

Naledi Yaziyi

Introduction

The year 2010 brought the politics of the toilet into sharp focus in South African media. In the midst of the fanfare of the preparations for the first African soccer world cup and what would be the nation's biggest sporting extravaganza, a series of media images punctured the euphoria with questions that seemed far too unpleasant for the momentous occasion. Media circulated images of the residents of informal settlements such as the community of Eqolweni in Plettenberg Bay, where five thousand community members were reported to share "two toilets and one tap" (Nkalane, 2010). Around the same period, the residents of Makhaza township protested tirelessly against a local municipality they felt had provided them with inadequate structures to protect the privacy of those who went to the toilet.

The irony of what would eventually be named 'the toilet-saga' was that residents had to be very active in very public ways in order to assert their demand for shelter to perform this most private of acts. The so-called private/public dichotomy could not hold, because the physical, built structures government offered its citizens would not allow for that illusion. Residents complained that "using open-air toilets [was] embarrassing and undignified" (Majavu, 2010), indicating an understanding of freedom that entailed the ability to move in and out of the public and private realm of your own volition.

The flimsy open-air toilets meant that they were 'on', in public even when they did not want to and there was indignity in the choicelessness of that reality.

The toilet, in the new South Africa then, is a fragile space, a space that threatens to strip naked some of the rainbow nation's representations of itself. In so far as it is differentially and inequitably accessed, it lays bare the class fissures that criss-cross South Africa's interior. Class is hardly ever independent of race in South Africa so those fissures overlap and nestle neatly into the racial tensions that are so persistently part of the South African reality. The Human Rights Commission recognised the symbolic importance of the toilet space by being among the first groups to speak up on behalf of the Makhaza residents, highlighting just how much the solitary act of ablution is laden with meaning, such that it bears resonance for conversations about individual rights and dignity.

Even if it is not a social space, the toilet is evidently a live space, a space that is charged with meaning. One can therefore appreciate that the opening up of previously whites-only public toilets that came with the opening up of previously white spaces such as universities, for the education of so-called non-white groups, was also the opening of another space for negotiating meaning. The writing on the walls of Stellenbosch university's student toilets, if studied together with other spaces on campus where students interact, has potential to present a germination of this engagement.

'Threads' of a single conversation sometimes span an entire wall, and most of the 'conversations' that run on the longest discuss or are premised upon politically incorrect topics or statements, an indication of the willingness of participants to engage in otherwise suppressed conversations. This research is an attempt to understand what it is about the toilet that allows these conversations to take place. It interrogates the place occupied by the public toilet; as a space located among other spaces. It seeks to gain insight into the writing on toilet walls as conversations shaped by and located among other conversations in other spaces.

Method

Research for this essay was conducted in the female toilets of Stellenbosch University's Humarga section of the Humanities building in the year 2012. These toilets were chosen for the amount of writing on their walls in comparison to other toilets on campus. Graffiti was found on the doors as well as the walls and some was dated as far back as 2009. This indicated that they had not been

recently painted, which was found to be the case with, for example, the main library and other campus buildings. The toilets in the Humarga building were therefore chosen for two reasons: the sheer volume of their graffiti and the gendered nature of the toilet, which meant a female researcher was unable to access the male toilets, access to which requires the use of a student card. A male informant reported that the content of the male toilets in the same building dealt with the same themes but more “aggressively”.

Grffiti collection was conducted over a period of one month. Initially, all the independent statements on the walls were recorded in a notebook and then responses were carefully monitored and recorded. The statements that had not elicited any response by the time the research was concluded were eliminated from the study. It was relatively easy to keep track of the progress of conversations as they tended to be grouped according to the subject under discussion.

An example of this is a toilet cubicle where the graffiti on the door constituted a conversation about Christianity while in the far corner there was a conversation about homosexuality. Also, students linked their responses to the statements they responded to through the use of arrows, which made it possible to see the progression of a conversation even when the original statement was no longer visible or had been erased; the responses remained, still pointing to the original statement. Sometimes responses came a week after the initial statement had been made. It is possible that some statements might have been responded to after the collection of the data was concluded.

The focus was on finding and analysing ‘conversations’ that took place within the toilet, instead of statements made by individuals. Through tracing the themes of these ‘conversations’ the aim was to gain insight “into the society to which those [students] who author them belong” (Ernst & Buckley, 1977:3). To this end, I employed the techniques of conversational analysis. Working from an understanding that there is “a structured and systematic procedure” through which participants conduct their conversation (Wooffitt, 2005:6), I found present in toilet graffiti many of the features conversational analysts look for when analysing conversation. The “organisation of turn-taking” is one of them and through it the current speaker is said to either select the next speaker or the next speaker will volunteer to respond to a statement. However, turn-taking in the toilet only engages the latter of these two options since only one speaker is present and volunteers their response. Thus, even in the toilet, graffiti conversations happen in adjacency pairs; “two utterances which are adjacent produced by different speakers and typed so that a first part requires a second type” (Wooffitt, 2005:32).

As in other face-to-face conversations, the person who makes an initial statement “generates the expectation that the next speaker should produce the appropriate second part” or if they do not do so, give an account as to why not (Wooffitt, 2005:32). This is what I found to have happened in the example below which I termed a ‘failed conversation’. The first pair part, which is the statement, asked others to discuss a statement and a self-selected speaker produced a second pair part that, although not the expected response, gave a reason as to why they refused to get into the conversation; that the toilet was not the place for metaphysics. The following is an example of what was considered to be a statement:

We all want to be time-less, writing
on the walls of a bathroom stall is
one way to do so

There was no response to this statement. The following is an example of what I shall call a ‘rejected’ or ‘failed conversation’ in which a statement is made but is rejected by a respondent and there is no subsequent attempt to salvage the conversation:

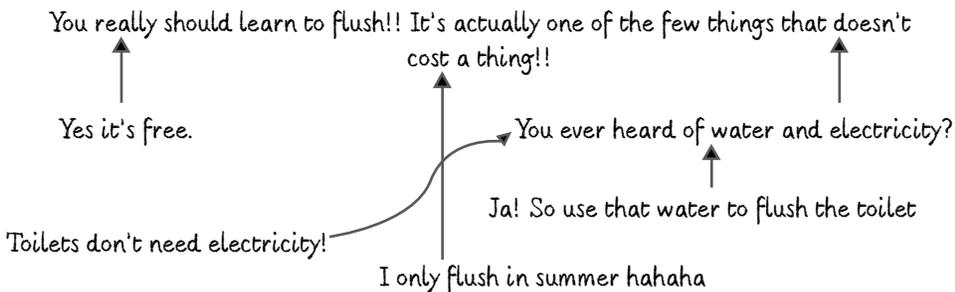
As writing on toilet walls is done neither for money
nor for critical acclaim it is the highest form of art.

Discuss.



Let's not try to get into metaphysics okay?

The last example is of a conversation and in keeping with conversational analysis theory; I consider two or more statements discussing the same topic a conversation. The example that follows is one in which a statement is made and leads to a thread of conversation:



It became apparent from the differing levels of engagement illustrated above that there were some conversations with which students were willing to engage in

the toilet, while they ignored or rejected some others. Even though the examples I have used above deal with much the same topic – the toilet as a communal space and the awareness of its communality by the individuals who use it, they vary in engagement. I found that it was not the topic that was being rejected but the way the statement was made. Thus, rejection does not constitute a mere rejection of a statement but implies that there are acceptable and unacceptable ‘genres’ with which students expect one to engage when writing toilet graffiti. The first two statements, for example, are somewhat academic, quite philosophical in tone. The last statement on the other hand is less rigid, more informal. Clearly, even in the toilet as with other conversations, there are expectations from both those who make initial statements and those who respond to them. These expectations, I will argue, are largely shaped by the place that the toilet and its graffiti occupy among other spaces and other conversations.

Framing the inquiry

Theorising the public toilet

The first order of the research was to attempt to understand the relationship that societies and communities have with the public toilet as a space among or removed from other spaces. Foucault’s paper, *Of Other spaces* (1987) in which he describes the concept of the heterotypic site proved useful. He describes heterotopias as “places that are absolutely different from other sites” (1987:24) because they can be absolutely removed and treated differently from other sites even when they exist within them. They are real enough because one is able to pinpoint their location but at the same time unreal because they only exist in relation to other sites; they are reflexive sites (1987:24). He names among such spaces cemeteries, museums and retirement homes, arguing that within them “all the other real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested, and in-verted” (Foucault, 1987:24). Using Foucault’s heterotopy as a frame through which I could attempt to understand the public toilet assisted towards comprehending the seemingly paradoxical nature of the public toilet.

For the public toilet is indeed a paradoxical space; it is both public and private, both open and closed. It is a space detached from all other spaces yet bound to them because it exists within them. It is an ironic space; privacy in public. Heterotopias are not straightforward spaces since they “always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable” (Foucault, 1987:23). The public toilet is no straightforward space either since it is both open (public) and closed (private cubicle).

Mindful of the toilet as a heterotypic space – a space that is “outside all other spaces” – I could begin to theorise the ways in which the toilet “reflects and speaks about other spaces” (Foucault, 1987:23). Locating the public toilet among heterotypic sites helped explain why the residents of Makhaza might have been opposed to their open-air toilets: because they undermined the implied distance of the toilet from other spaces, they simplified the paradox. When one can be ‘seen’ in the toilet, it becomes difficult to imagine it as a space that is removed from other sites within the Makhaza community.

More importantly, for the purpose of this research, Foucault’s heterotopias facilitated an understanding of student toilets at Stellenbosch University as sights that could offer insights into other sights on campus. Like the cemetery that through its ‘occupants’, the decomposing bodies, reminds the living of their own mortality, the toilet too reminds its current occupant of other occupants before her; the student is reminded that theirs is a fragile privacy. This then seems to be the reason for the prevalence of graffiti on public toilet walls; the toilet by its very nature is already a space that presupposes the existence of other spaces and toilet graffiti is a tangible manifestation of the toilet’s paradoxical nature. Graffiti on public toilet walls makes visible what the toilet as a heterotypic space already does: representing, contesting and inverting the different sites within the culture or the institution in which it is situated.

Theorising toilet graffiti

While Foucault’s heterotopia was helpful in so far as understanding the public toilet (and especially its graffiti) as a space in constant communication with other spaces, it could not account for what I found to be variations in terms of which ‘sites’ are represented in a particular toilet; why some themes might appear in graffiti more than others do. Thus, Foucault’s paper only assisted in so far as comprehending the nature of the toilet. In order to understand graffiti, I needed another frame through which I could begin my inquiry so that I would be able to provide an adequate account for why some sites within the culture are overlooked in favour of others; why toilet graffiti at times “reflects and speaks about” some sites more than others or leaves others out entirely (Foucault, 1987:23).

In Gonos, Mulkern and Pushkin’s *Anonymous Expression: A Structural View of Graffiti* (1976), the authors resist the notion that toilet graffiti be viewed as a reflection of a society’s “collective consciousness” but propose that it be seen rather as a forum that provides an outlet for those sentiments that are considered inappropriate in a given society (Gonos et al., 1976:40). They argue

that “when values are in the process of change and proscriptions against the publication of utterances of particular sentiments are becoming stronger, there will be a tendency for some individuals to express these sentiments covertly” (Gonos et al., 1976:41). Thus, public toilet graffiti is more accurately read as an expression of those utterances that are no longer acceptable in public.

The content of the graffiti in the public toilet can then not be read in the individualised, psychoanalytical fashion that some authors have tended to treat it (see Olson & Sechrest, 1971; Bates & Martin, 1980; Abel & Buckley, 1943) in which toilet graffiti is seen as “providing access to patterns of intimacy, fantasy and desire” (Texeira, Otta & Oliveira, 2000:2). Rather it is acknowledged that “the normative structure of the community is the major actor affecting the content of expressive graffiti” (Gonos et al., 1976:41).

Where individuals feel that their views are incongruent with the wider public position on certain matters, public toilet graffiti provides an alternative space where they are able to ‘speak their mind’ without censure. The reason for the prevalence of some themes in toilet graffiti is to be found in the very society in which the toilet is situated and graffiti “must be considered in their original context in order for them to contribute as data to an explanation of graffiti as a social phenomenon” (Gonos et al., 1976:44).

This position not only corroborates Foucault’s heterotopia; allowing for a view of the public toilet as representational of other public spaces but it goes further to consider why some spaces might be represented more than others. The authors find that the answer to this question lies in connecting graffiti to other social spaces within the institution or culture that hosts the toilet and that when the values of the culture or institution in question are in the process of change, one will find that those sentiments that are no longer welcome in public will form the dominant themes of toilet graffiti.

Revisiting the earlier example of a failed conversation with the two frames in mind one finds that since Stellenbosch University is an academic institution it is safe to assume that students interact on the basis of their academics such as group assignments in which they quite frequently don’t choose their group members. Thus, there is no need for a formal, academic tone in the toilet since it is largely acceptable in the lecture rooms on campus. If students from different backgrounds are not interacting in less formal, non-academic spaces, then the toilet would indeed be the place to have such interaction. To prove or disprove this hypothesis, one would need to observe students outside of their academic setting. This approach to analysing graffiti thus illuminates a need for the study of other spaces in which students are interacting, if at all.

This research was then conducted using these two frameworks, Foucault's heterotopia in order to understand Stellenbosch university's student toilets and their relationship with other spaces on campus and then the structural view of toilet graffiti in order to understand Stellenbosch University as a community; what it is about it that meant some conversations flourished in the bathroom while others did not.

Through observing other spaces on campus where students interact (or do not interact), which are non-academic, I tried to get an idea of how what is outside the toilet may shape what happens within it. Observations, interviews with students and following student news were some of the methods used to obtain access to the student community of Stellenbosch University in order to test this hypothesis.

These two frames were then tied together with due consideration to the anonymity that the toilet provides those who occupy it and how this might contribute to the content that is found within it.

Anonymity and the making of conversations

Much of the research into toilet graffiti has focused on the statements made by individuals rather than what was attempted in this research. Sechrest and Olson (1971) collected inscriptions on various toilet walls and then classified them thematically, while Texierra et al., (2000) follow the same method, stating that "all detectable inscriptions were recorded by faithfully copying them into a notebook" and then categorised in order to be analysed for frequency and proportion of certain themes against others (64). Bates and Martin (1980) went further and instructed their data collectors "to note on each card whether the graffiti was an original statement or clearly a reaction to a previously written graffiti" and then proceeded to separate those inscriptions that were reactions from those that were "non-reactive" (1980:364). The preoccupation in most research into toilet graffiti has been with testing for the "independence of response[s]" so that all the data that was collected could be fairly relied upon as the products of different individuals (Bates & Martin, 1980:308).

What the above authors concluded in their various studies was somewhat similar: that while graffiti may allow some access into private thoughts, it only provides "some indication of what the person who wrote it was thinking about when it was written" but they argued that "motives behind writing that particular graffiti may be completely obscured" (Bates & Martin, 1980:303). From this literature, it would appear that the anonymity of those who write on the walls of public

toilets, something that is granted to them by the private nature of the public toilet, has been problematic in this area of research.

However, what I proposed in this research, which was not to discard responsive graffiti but rather to treat it as the second pair part of a continuing conversation, assisted in managing the anonymity of those who write in the toilet. The research was not the study of “the individual and his psychology but rather the syntactical relations among the acts of different persons” (Goffman, 1967:2). In this way, I moved away from the limiting anonymity factor that seems to have occupied research into toilet graffiti.

Findings and analysis

There are four cubicles in the Humarga female toilets and there were 56 statements unevenly distributed among them. The first stall had only six statements of which only one constituted a conversation. I later observed that students did not frequently use this cubicle, perhaps because it is closest to the entrance; too public a public toilet. Students tended to choose either number two or number three, which incidentally had the most conversations. Of the 56 statements, 21 constituted conversations as I have defined them here. I subsequently divided the dominant conversations into three themes: Christianity, Race and Sexuality, but they did tend to overlap.

On Christianity

The longest conversation in any of the toilets was to be found in the second cubicle. The author of this statement had made three separate but related statements (the handwriting and the fact that she used corrective ink helped ‘identify’ her):

Oh lord, how beautiful you are!
How great is your name!
Jesus Saves. Thank you for your love dad!
Thank you my dear lord Jesus for loving
me even with my faults. I want to be
like you daddy! I love you!
Your daughter
3/5/2010

Responses to these statements varied, some questioning why the author was using the toilet as a space for worship. The more obviously Christian responders poked holes in the prayer and questioned the faith of the original

poster because, they suggested, it ought to be God that she prays to, not Jesus. Some others questioned the author's assumption that everybody who used the toilet was Christian. One responder simply asked, "what about other faiths?" Another response that bypassed the question entirely sought people of her own faith by asking that if "anyone here" belonged to the Wiccan Coven. If so, she instructed such a person to leave a note. A short while later a note was indeed left by somebody who wanted further clarification on whether the respondent referred to the white or black Wiccan Coven. There were others who agreed with the author, but it is worth noting that many more students felt that the use of God's name on the toilet wall was inappropriate.

These three statements produced a conversation that spanned the door of the toilet and constituted the longest conversation of all. In the physical representation of the writing on the wall, there was the sense of a contestation over space for faith in that little cubicle. The "what about other faiths?" seemed to me not as simple a question but an interruption of a conversation that otherwise would have been dominated by Christian debate. The occult posts performed a similar function and in a much more overt way because rather than being content with disturbing the conversation, they attempted to redirect it, to change its course without so much as a nod to the original Christian graffiti.

Interestingly, Christianity seems to affect every discussion that takes place within the Stellenbosch university student toilets. A conversation about 'blacks' started with the statement "Thank God I'm not black", to which somebody else replied and said "Jesus was black". The conversation moved back and forth between racial stereotypes about black people and the nature of God or Jesus. In yet another conversation which starts with the question "is female masturbation wrong?" Christianity again comes in. One respondent writes, "if you Christian yes", effectively steering the conversation away from the question at hand until somebody else came in a week later and replied to the original question with a "no never, its freakin' awesome!" Again, there pervades this sense of wrangling over space where Christian morality dominates conversation while others come in and out to disturb or probe.

One student was not surprised by Christianity's insidiousness in the toilet. The student has been at Stellenbosch for four years and has previously lived in residence when she was in her first year of university. She told me that during the first week of term (first-year orientation week) part of the programme for her residence was attending a church service. She is Muslim, and she says she had no choice but to go too as part of the initiation. Another student who was in first year in 2010 said that in her residence going to church is part of the

programme, but that “you don’t have to go if you don’t want to, you can just chill in res and do nothing”. There is no alternative programme for those who are not of the Christian faith.

Either way, you do not have to attend a church service to hear the good news of Jesus Christ at Stellenbosch University. While doing my observation on campus, I was approached by a member of the River of Life Church who invited me to a service. While I did not have the opportunity to attend the service, I would soon realise that such groups maintained a regular presence on campus. Yet I could not find a single student who would admit to being interested in their message. Instead, students in a conversation during a seminar spoke of their experiences of being approached by similar church groups which they rejected as representing what one student called “extreme Christianity”. Interestingly, in a later conversation, the tutor in charge of the seminar pointed out the irony in these exact students’ being against overtly Christian sentiments when in fact a lot of their essays were “preachy and moralistic, and often quoted the bible”.

Analysis of both the graffiti and these incidents that take place outside of the toilet cubicle would seem to suggest that Christianity is the sentiment that can no longer be expressed overtly and is therefore relegated to the safe space of the toilet wall. It appears to me that over the last few years, Stellenbosch University has been in the process of change, becoming a more secular institution and as such those who have been left behind have relegated themselves to the toilet as it becomes more unacceptable in an academic setting to be “preachy and moralistic”. Also, more and more faiths are beginning to claim a space within a historically white, Christian university and they too are tentative as they are not yet fully ‘acceptable’ in an institution that even as it is changing, retains some of the rites and rituals of its Christian origins. Such faiths would be the Wiccan Coven sect that finds expression in the toilet and the various people who ask the question: what about other faiths?

On race

In another interview, I was alerted to what black students call the ‘Black Party’. These are parties organised by black students for other black students. The student I interviewed said it was very difficult to find places in Stellenbosch that play to the musical tastes of black students and “have a black vibe”. So, students have e-mail groups and used word of mouth to organise black parties where they played house music and other genres they enjoyed. Asked if other parties within the student community are called ‘white parties’, he said “no, they are

just called parties”, implying that there was an unquestioned normativity to the white party at Stellenbosch that even black students accepted.

I thought I found resonances of this accepted normative standard at the Neelsie student union on a Tuesday evening. While doing my observations, I noticed that the big main television screened sports, watched by an exclusively white audience. One smaller screen broadcast the news in IsiXhosa, watched by a black audience, while another small screen showed a programme in Afrikaans in which the characters appeared to be coloured. The audience of the last screen was exclusively coloured. It seemed in that leisurely space of the Neelsie one could not be contradicted in thinking that black, coloured and white students experience Stellenbosch University in separate pockets. More accurately, black and coloured students seemed to be present in ‘pockets’ such as the corner table with the small television at the Neelsie while white students, by virtue of their big television, sat sprawled across the Neelsie tables with the sound of their television blaring loudest. The irony, of course, is the recognition that the television screens reflect the university’s efforts to be accommodating to students who are not white.

In toilet graffiti around race, I found that there were two types of conversations; those that were vitriolic, racist and anti-black and those that expressed strong pro-black and affirmative sentiments. These two extremes reflect the lived experience of those who write in the toilet; those who write the racist statements are aware that it is no longer acceptable to be intolerant of other races. In the same breath, black students are keenly aware that white parties are just parties at Stellenbosch – that is to say, they understand the hegemony of white culture within the university and find no room to express the kind of strong pro-black sentiment that exists in the toilet within the university community. Both sentiments are incongruous with the status quo and so are relegated to the toilet.

On sex and sexuality

The longest conversation in which sexuality was discussed responded to a statement made by a student about her desire to have sex with a woman. Only one respondent claimed she was offended by this statement; all others were curious as to how sex between two women “works” and a debate ensued around that. Interestingly, in 2010, Stellenbosch University was scandalised when two gay students from the University of Cape Town were pictured kissing at a student event, *Soen in die Laan*, where students gather at a designated

location and kiss (Jones, 2010). The picture made the front page of the student newspaper. Angry students tore up the papers, arguing that the image was inappropriate. The event has since been cancelled by the SRC (Marais, 2011:1).

What is worth noting, however, is that female students were curiously quiet about the incident. It was their male counterparts who publicly tore up the papers and generally vocalised their disapproval (Jones, 2010). A female student I spoke to said it wasn't as big a deal to female students as it was to the men. It is interesting then that the graffiti in female toilets entails conversations that are tolerant, curious, even defensive about homosexuality. It would appear that female students were quiet during the *Soen in die Laan* debacle not because it wasn't "a big deal" to them, but because they realised that their sentiments about homosexuality would not be acceptable in public where their male counterparts held court, tearing up newspapers and declaring the university an anti-gay space.

Conclusion

Toilet graffiti in the student toilets of Stellenbosch University provides much insight into the lives lived there. However, it is only when one does not read them in isolation that they will be able to comprehend the place that graffiti occupies in relation to other interactional situations. The Neelsie student centre, seminars, parties, student news were just some of the interactional spaces and situations that I found to be both represented and contested in the toilets through graffiti conversations. This was only possible because the graffiti was studied as conversations rather than statements and that analysis of these conversations had to take into account the silences at play in other spaces on campus.

Taking on an approach to studying toilet graffiti that emphasises an awareness of the place occupied by the toilet first (in South Africa and in general) facilitates an account for the existence of toilet graffiti that goes beyond individual, psychoanalytical or gendered ideas. It allows one to account for the variations in graffiti and link them to other happenings within a culture or institution, so that the conversations that happen in the toilet become conversations about and with the community at large. I have demonstrated that it is possible to use the techniques of conversational analysis in the study of graffiti and that toilet graffiti can therefore be treated as conversations among other conversations.

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3

SECTION

At Home or Not at Home:
Raising Concerns about
Forms of Othering
On and Off Campus

Chapter 8

Out of Sight:
Beyond these walls, inside this machine

Mohammad Shabangu & Ianne Currie

I: The Bus Home

March 2016

Here is the university. It is old and important. It has very high walls. It is said to be very pretty. Here is the family. Hegel, Shelley, Brontë and Kant live in the university. They are very happy. See Zwelethu. She has a blue fez. She is tiny against the wall. She wants to learn. Who will learn with Zwelethu? See the cat. It is called Desdemona. It goes meow-meow. Come and learn. Come and learn with Zwelethu. The kitten will not learn. See Hegel. Hegel is big and strong. Hegel, will you learn with Zwelethu? Hegel laughs. Laugh, Hegel, laugh. See Brontë. Brontë is macabre, but valued. Brontë, will you learn with Zwelethu? Brontë is smiling. Smile, Brontë, smile. See the dog. It is called Kant. Bow-wow goes Kant. Do you want to learn with Zwelethu? See Kant run. Run, Kant, run. Look, look. There goes the sun. It is cold outside the walls. Here comes a bus. Vroom goes the bus. Take Zwelethu home. Home, Zwelethu, home.

Here is the university it is old and important it has very high walls it is said to be very pretty here is the family hegel shelley bronte and kant live in the university they are very happy see zwelethu she has a blue fez she is tiny against the wall she wants to learn who will learn with zwelethu see the cat it is called desdemona it goes meowmeow come and learn come and learn with zwelethu the kitten will not learn see hegel hegel is big and strong hegel will you learn with zwelethu

hegel laughs laugh hegel laugh see bronte bronte is macabre and valued bronte
 will you learn with zwelethu bronte is smiling smile bronte smile see the dog it is
 called kant bowwow goes kant do you want to learn with zwelethu see kant run
 run kant run look look there goes the sun it is cold outside the walls here comes
 a bus vroom goes the bus take zwelethu home home zwelethu home
 Hereistheuniversityitisoldandimportantithasveryhighwallsitissaidtobeveryprettyh
 ereisthefamilyhegelshelleybronteandkantliveintheuniversitytheyarever
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 allshewantstolearnwhowilllearnwithzwelethuseethecatitiscalledes
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 homehomezwelethuhome

She can't remember when the road home became a spectacular banality. She travels this course as with a habit that requires no effort, carefully weaving her way through the market square en-route to her half-past-four Putco bus. Zwelethu never thought she'd tire of the whiff of freshly fried amagwinya for her on-board delight, the din of blaring taxis taking turns to play the same song, or the cacophonous calls for virtually every little thing for sale – cell phone chargers of all kinds, hair pieces in lumo-colour even, impepho laid out on brown sacks. It's true she's bought at least one item from almost all these vendors before. At times, she gets infuriated when she remembers that she's already bought five seasons of an early 2000s Tyler Perry sitcom (and each one acquired on different occasions), which she keeps in a shoe box in the room divider, right next to the many volumes of counterfeit Romantic Ballads she also felt coerced into buying. What's worse is that the DVD player stopped working in her matric year. She wouldn't be able to account for each one of those copies, though she cannot forget the one guy who threatened that he would find a way to make her pay for her lack of interest in his sales pitch. (Was that him whistling?). She knows for sure it was him who once said, with no humour in his expression, that she'd owe him big time if she continued to refuse his thoughtful discounts, that if she could not appreciate his generosity, which was always unsolicited, she'd be obliged to take him up on another more urgent matter. By that point, she had exhausted her catalogue of put-downs on this man, and so resolved to pay R15 just to get him to fuck off.

She makes her way to an empty seat at the back of the bus.

Homeward.

There is only one point of anxiety on this journey which otherwise provides safe refuge from the despair of the university.

Homeward?

She sees herself as a loose thread in a tattered cultural fabric that fits uncomfortably, on her dark-skinned student-body. Now, with the university far out of sight, Zwelethu breathes.

Here, she only has to worry about the suitability of her travel companion; will he be disarmingly vapid, as disinterested as she prefers in these fleeting moments of estranged intimacy? Or will he pry, inquire as to her day in the spirit of polite niceties – she hates that. But her greatest aversion, more than any other in this orange time-machine, is the self-appointed advisor. “In our days”, they often begin, at which point she slips into a quiet reverie, entranced by the cityscape that lies beyond the smudged window, a perfect looking glass from which to observe once more the transition from one cultural time zone to another.

Her epiphanic muses occur mostly during such episodes.

Kumelwe ufunde sisi. Sasingenawo amathua ngezinkhathi zethu ...

Was this the echo of the village entrusted with the upbringing of a child? Or was she being told the secret ingredient to cooking the soul?

Zwelethu offers only a half appreciative smile.

The old woman grunts to Zwe’s approving nod.

How tired these words. And still, how heavy the burden of a gift hard-worn.

While Zwe struggles to focus her attention, the old woman speaks about her sons, about how inconsolably disappointed she is by them, to think that they squandered the opportunity for a university education, about how she had worked 15 years as a tea girl at Telkom’s dispatch unit until 2000 to secure each of them a Technicon rebate at the main training centre in Pretoria. She makes nothing of the sense of care and responsibility that is implied in the old woman’s commitment to others.

A feeling of guilt descends upon her, and for the first time in a while, she does not know what to make of it. Is it that the guilt comes from a deep knowledge within her, a knowledge that, from the deck of cards that life can deal, she's got the better hand in the presence of this woman? If her guilt is one about the open secret of her relation to this woman, if in other words her guilt is about her own proximity and posture towards opportunity that lies within reach, then it might have been enough for Zwe to consider herself the lucky one, the one for whom mountains were moved, for whom blood was spilled in preparation for this moment. Perhaps. In spite of everything, in the old woman's speech, all that Zwe could catch were the frayed remains of a distant dream.

Ungamoshi isikhathi sakho ulokhu wenza izinto zobupolitik, ulokhu ulandelana nezilima. Nakekela imfundo yakho ngoba unkulunkulu akau dalelanga ukuthi uhlupheke mtanam.

The words return to her as a coded message, but she wants desperately to avoid eye contact so Zwelethu casually lowers her hand to beneath her feet, burrows inside her black bag and brings to light tightly bounded pages of the English II course material. Her book in the other hand, Zelwelethu looks presentably at the old woman, and murmurs without any desire to be understood.

She is comforted by the white noise that the grumbling engine stutters, its hot air seething from under the chassis, she can feel the warmth through the moulding soft sponge of the threadbare seat. Three rows back, two school boys fight over the last bit of rocket sherbet they promised each other to take turns puffing, their reward from the volunteer teacher Ms Booth. As if competing for an audience, the voice of another old woman ricochets across the orange time machine, she is on the phone to her cousin's friend's child's daughter, who is called on to play indefinite au pair for yet another day. She's pleading for the child to get out of his school uniform, but aka mameli uMxolisi when his grandmother is not home.

Zwe could almost swear she's seen this exact scene play out before.

The bus is closer now: in the distance, the glare of the zink of Silverlake begins to blind the naked eye like the glistening waters after which the township is named.

Why does she feel maladjusted to her surroundings?

She gazes blankly onto the pages of her newly assigned novel – *Jane Eyre*. She certainly likes the parts she's read so far, about a little orphan girl who grows

up in an abusive home, escapes and later marries a wealthy gentleman from the North. The English II class was today made aware of a sequel to this classic, written by a Jamaican woman. In this version, which is decidedly aimed at supplementing the neglect, as well as the erasure of the black woman by Brontë, an English gentleman marries a Creole woman, declares her insane and then moves her to England where he banishes the mad woman to the attic of his old mansion.

She wasn't sure if she remembered correctly, but Zwe had a sense that the sections of *Jane Eyre* that describe the Creole woman were 'problematic'. Or, had she borrowed her opinion of the book from someone else and forgotten to return it? Either way, something about the mad woman and her failed resistance to her oppressor had Zwe impatient to get to the details of this sequel, told from the perspective of the demented Creole woman. For now, she returns herself back to basics, drifts into the historical, private consciousness of her Penguin Classic's protagonist. She tries to chart her hereness in the presence of, relative to, this great work of fiction, but she thinks instead about the stories she has not been told about people who do not resemble Jane. Her fingers pressed to the page, she wants to satisfy a hunger for narrative that she cannot fill. Her imagination plays out a scenario:

First we marvelled at the greenery surrounding the babbling brook.

Arm in arm we strode the treacherous northern-gothic planes.

The American journey westward thrilled our souls. Queens and faeries and wolves and infernos filled endless notepads, white pages scarred with black ink.

Then too suddenly we were faced with the doomdark edge of a thick and barren forest.

The forest had, for years, remained untouched and unspoken – though it was never far from sight. With a deep breath we strode beyond its border. Immediately a thick and confusing air burned our innocent eyes. Before we could recover, this lumbering, naked, ebony, snarling creature leapt at us from behind a hoary trunk. We staggered backward, then braced ourselves, for we had long been organising for this moment. Years training to read this native. We could study, categorise and anthropologise it. With Brontë, Coleridge, the Eternal Bard, and all their friends calming our excited minds, we were exhaustively prepared to ENCOUNTER AFRICAN LITERATURE.

When it does arrive, it is always later than expected. This is the first and only stop the bus makes. Through the dusty window, she can see past the taxi rank, the other side of which the time machine will come to an unceremonious stop, where ahead lies a potential scene of the Wild Beyond. A queue marshal is said to have been shot dead there just last week, she discovered later how the women at her mother's burial society refused to believe the circumstances of his untimely death, that he apparently died claiming his right to work this route that is Zwe's daily commute. The details are always vague. She picks herself up from her thoughts, and spots, amid the sea of people shuttling back from everywhere, the little boy from down her street, he's playing soccer with some kids from another part of Silverlake. Barefooted, their calloused feet trudging against a tiny smoothed portion of hard gravel, the children take turns placing, aiming, and then kicking the ball with just enough force to guide it deftly into the empty crate of Black Label which has been re-purposed as a goal post.

At last! His patience has paid off, the boy sees her too. He marches his way excitedly towards Zwe, announcing nothing of his departure to his co-players who hurl profanities at him in his mother's name, yelling *msunu wakho!* as he takes off. Zwe greets the little boy in a tone that barely acknowledges him, but he seems unsurprised when she immediately reaches into her bag to pull out a Lunch Bar and places it in his cupped hands as if by accident.

Not long ago, an unknown man followed her from the bus stop until she was too close to home. Or was it that vendor? She wouldn't turn around to confirm his identity. To make him solid, a threatening mass. Feeling vulnerable, she hurried into the neighbour's yard, as the man stood outside feigning a lengthy phone call, clearly attempting to get a good look through the front window of the house. If he was trying to play coy, he certainly had a brazen conspicuousness about him, which somehow made him more frightening. When Zwe and her neighbour emerged out the house to confront him, he had disappeared into the night. That was terroristic enough for Zwe, and so she figured it better to make a deal with the little boy. Since he was already playing much farther than his mother would have preferred, for as long as she needs him to, he will wait for her near the bus stop when she comes back at the end of each day so they can walk home together. In exchange, she would bring him treats from town as often as she could. The other day, when she had no offering to make, he simply smiled and informed her that he had made a mental note of this breach of contract. Not wanting to rack up a bill with the little boy, she tried to persuade him that they might as well be each other's means. She knew he wasn't much liked by the other kids, and that if he hadn't been snuffed out by the older kids from C3 already, it wouldn't be too long before they did. If he could adopt that

view of their mutually beneficial deal, he would go easy on her the next time she defaults on her payments. Whatever she feels about him, about this peculiar deal making, if she is being honest she would concede that she prefers it that way for her own sake. She once thought of it in those terms but felt the inexplicable need to conclude that, in the end, it was for his sake, too.

As they walk, they tease each other about their latent fears, and he reminds her of the day she burst through the door of his home while his family was preparing to watch the evening news, trembling with extraordinary fear, so scared was she, she almost peed her pants. She walks head down most of the way, the little boy too, and they occasionally hold one another's hands, exchanging only words and glances here and there. Zwe suddenly realises that she is unaccompanied. It hadn't occurred to her that she had been walking alone with her thoughts for a good distance. Moments earlier, the boy freed himself from one of her speed-it-up clasps, and ran quietly in the direction of his house where his mother was surely expecting him.

She walks a little faster now, a rehearsed solo step beneath a mauve-like canopy, feeling tiny and insignificant, but very much in character. The last rays hovering gently above the silver give way to expanding evening sky, half past six ... she's Home.

II: To Write

A plastic subject who suffered a process of transformation through destruction, the Black Man is in effect the ghost of modernity. (Mbembe, 2017:129)

Ianne Currie: For one thing, the title gestures towards the conditions for something that we cannot yet see, at least from this contemporary moment, it infers that which establishes and regulates the university is out of sight of the general discourse about education in the country. As a point of reflection, I wonder whether a good place to begin would be to ask why we should begin this conversation about transformation with the story of Zwelethu. What work can this incident do for us?

Mohammad Shabangu: I think the language of transformation has atrophied, because we think in terms only of the institution, the very high walls that the story mentions in the first line. But there is another scene of sociality, and perhaps there is benefit in taking precisely these micro-episodic moments in which the affective outlines of the historical present, of the university in the historical present, play themselves out. It is one thing to invoke as we often do

that the personal is political, feminist work as bequeathed us with that much. This is to underscore the relation between the personal realm, and the ethico-political realm in the ordinary activity of everyday life. But it's quite another to do the work of tracking the specificity of the ordinary scenes in which this idiom plays out. How do we value this when we routinely think of the decolonial project as having to do only, or mostly, with the statecraft and political power? In a way, the scene offers us an arena from which to read the political, because the university is not only *in* the environment, the university is also the entity that modulates a particular kind of world, the way we experience that world, it's social impress is everywhere felt, especially where it is absent in its institutional material form.

So, in what ways does transformation as a concept show up in the student's daily life? When she encounters it, it is as a reminder that her present condition is one of waiting, waiting for a true order that will replace the current condition. It therefore seems appropriate to think with this political as personal, personal as political, where the inventory is reified. Transformation of the type needed in universities will require an ideological shift, for sure, but it will also require infrastructural change that has to do with human beings in the every day, the usual business of life, and the web of complex relations it holds. Indeed, change requires her to accept, even momentarily, the unchanged status quo, and it is my hope that an ordinary story such as this can bring our attention to the simple but edifying potentiality of transformation in action. When we stage this scene, then, it is with a sense of both the limitations and potentialities of the grammar of resistance in the space of the university in which a systemic intellectual disarmament fails to capture the mutating forms of a collective brokenness.

We cannot delimit the ambiguities of the term *transition*, or its cousin, *transformation*. But if we tried, we would have to come to terms with the fact that neither transformation nor transition merely describe the activist potential for social change in a post-apartheid climate. If the overseers of transformation, with a self-congratulatory tone, speak of transformation and the 'post-apartheid' as static entities, how can a more temporally inflected sense of the term inform our daily actions? If we are unable to conceive of an active understanding of the 'post' in 'post-apartheid', we can only do the work of transformation that feels like catching up, like we are always back and wrong-footed, as if we are working and thinking with a sense of time as a cumulative succession of past, present and future, where the moment of a transferral of political power comes to stand in for the claimed possibility of any real political work.

What does she hold as the marker of her values, who does she aspire to be? Who and how *can* she *be a becoming*? Perhaps she is black in the Bikonian sense; cut off from revisionist history, with a shared experience of oppression of one kind or another, gendered, racial, economic. Perhaps we can call her a social unit of the “born free” generation, an auxiliary to her millennial contemporaries, or perhaps she aspires to a version of the good life that is figured in the notion of an ‘Afropolitan’, at once connected and disconnected from the social phenomena that produce the world in which she moves. She is in a former white university, or perhaps, the former white university is in her. If it is, then the *infrastructural* domain, where the reproduction of a life worth living is at stake, remains unavailable for the student. Such an infrastructure remains obliterated in anything that is predicated on whiteness.

What then are the transformative powers of a pedagogy that has as its imperative the *critical consciousness* of the human subject? And, if we are not suspicious of the acquiescence to a creative inquiry that accommodates a critical consciousness, what might that mean for an institution of higher learning, in transition, in the post-apartheid moment? In other words, to what extent can ‘curriculum reform’, a first priority on the road to transformation, guarantee the development of a critical subject who pushes at the limits of the real world?

She may have to learn the hard way, eagerly enlisting herself for the Encountering African Literature Course three years into her degree, that ‘transformation’ in South Africa stands for a temporal uncertainty, a deeply felt insecurity in the stretched-out present, a present which is always already a transition.

But transformation could also stand for a blank ahead, to the extent that it is the unfolding of a situation that as yet has no shape, which we will only retrospectively come to name *x*, but that is not exactly in the future or, more to the point, that is as much in the future as it is in the potentiated now. So, if we accept the invitation to be in the moving scene, that we are already in the scene which we enter, it will be up to us to try to read how she feels sensorially, how she is in communion outside, in the university, and how her experience will help her make sense of these transitional uncertainties.

This conception of a transformation, then, is to be understood as being both in the past, the liberation moment as the overcoming of apartheid, and in the future, the true order that was imagined in advance of that overcoming, now presented as a consolation to the suspension of a real revolution.

So her situation reminds us that while we occupy a continuous state of *becoming* rather than simply a state of being, we ‘encounter African literature’ as her course says, but in stumbling upon it, what we do not see is that African literature encountered her centuries ago – is this a lesson in the politics of interpellation?

IC: Zwelethu’s tale is fragmented and complex. In it, and indeed in her, many conventional markers of delimitation are collapsed. For example, your final proposition calls into question the notion of temporality in the university and the nation – it seems that the transition suggested muddies the temporal framework of past/present/future. It calls into question whether this framework, for Zwelethu, is valuable or even viable. These boundaries, delineated by their supposed exclusivity and difference, are revealed to be permeable and mutually transgressable. Furthermore, it seems that the university exists as an equally uncertain and as yet irreducible symbol in South Africa.

A fruitful way for us to understand this is to ponder for a while on the term ‘hegira’, defined as follows. *hegira*. noun. A journey or trip especially when undertaken as a means of escaping from an undesirable or dangerous environment; or as a means of arriving at a highly desirable destination. We can also take it as a journey a “defined course of travelling, one’s way in life”. What the term ‘hegira’ denotes is a process that is rooted in something existing or something aspirational; something either dangerous or desired; either refuge or exodus. However, it is through the story of Zwelethu that the journey of hegira takes on an entirely new potency. In her story, it becomes clear that the undesirable or dangerous environment she wishes to escape is precisely the same environment that can be said to be highly desirable, the destination at which she wishes to arrive. Both of those places *are* the university. With this understanding, the Manichean framework that is implied in the definition of the term collapses. Now, the hegira is rooted in *both* the existing *and* the aspirational; it is both dangerous and desired; it is simultaneously fled from and sought after.

When Zwelethu gets on the Putco bus and begins her journey “home”, it is with a sense of palpable relief. The space she is leaving, the university, is shown to be incoherent and conflicted. At the end of her day it dissolves into a jumble of letters and there is little room to breathe. The university is a space that is not designed with her in mind, indeed could not have been. Here the university is dangerous and undesirable, and Zwelethu is glad to be journeying away from it towards her home and all that which ‘home’ symbolises. However, on the

bus, she encounters a staple feature of that home. A benevolent woman who repeatedly reminds her that the university is something to be cherished, something hard won in this country's history, and something that should be taken full advantage of. This marker of home, generally accepted as the maternal well-meaning figure, unknowingly suggests that what Zwelethu experiences in her everyday life as dangerous, is in fact a destination to which she should aspire. Yet it is at this moment that Zwelethu seeks to escape this old lady, this symbol of home, through the reading of 'classical' literature. Ironically, at this point, 'home' is to be escaped. But it is in the manifestations of the university that refuge is also sought. We can say, then, that the binary of the hegira has collapsed into a multi-layered double-movement that colours an exceptionally grim moment.

For me, the *transition* that you mentioned seems to spring to life in this tale and the accompanying metaphor. Contained in this hegira are temporal uncertainties, contradictory impulses, misinformed gestures and an overall sense of loss for the being-present of Zwelethu. By this I mean that she is denied her existence as a subject and an agent and is asked to perform a role of an object, dictated to by the past, uncared for in the present, and absent in the future – and indeed these are borders that she constantly negotiates in her liminality. She is not the being present at the heart of transition, nor of the struggle, nor of the would-be transformed university. On this hegira she is always unnoticed. Certainly, the experience of the university as dangerous or undesirable is a frightening prospect, particularly when she is so unwittingly encouraged to remain in it, and therefore see it for the transformative powers it supposedly possesses. Furthermore, the fact that, for Zwelethu, home and university exist in such antagonistic opposition is entirely problematic. Yet, there is reason for hope. In the saturated and unnavigable university remains the potential for something aspirational. Both Zwelethu and her bus companion gesture towards this utopic possibility without ever quite comprehensively accessing it. The misstep for both these agents is in the manner in which they affirm the institutionality of the university.

The old lady absolutely champions the university, believing it to be a univocal force for individual and collective transformation, which features in her life as an absence, as something she was denied, and thus something which diminished the possibility for self-actualisation. You might recall Jacques Derrida's inaugural conversation at Villanova University's doctoral programme in philosophy. What I find most apposite is his suggestion that deconstruction is "affirmative in a way that is not simply positive, not simply conservative, not simply repeating the given institution" (Caputo, 1997:5). It is also remarkable,

and perhaps unsurprising, that Derrida was here speaking at the opening for a programme in an American university, already auguring the discussion about transformation in our context, by proliferating a discussion of a different kind. This is applicable to our post-apartheid moment because in this discussion, Derrida is aware of the paradox inherent in the moment of what we can call a type of 'transformation'. He speaks of a living institution as one that is able to be criticised, transformed and made open to the possibilities of its own future. This is the potential of the *hegira*. The *hegira* is always going to present a multi-layered double-movement, but that is not necessarily a sullen proposition, for "if an institution is to be an institution, it must to some extent break with the past, keep the memory of the past, while inaugurating something absolutely new" (Caputo, 1997:6).

It appears then that Zwelethu's *hegira* is one decidedly caught in a double-movement of temporality, potentiality and being-becoming. Yet in the *hegira* is the opportunity to open the institution to itself, to its own dynamism and vitality. This rupture with the status quo is necessarily violent, "violent because it has no guarantees" (Caputo, 1997:6), because Zwelethu's *hegira* calls for a moment of institution at the institution: a moment new, as yet unimagined, creative and worth aspiring to. Derrida believes that this moment is underwritten by the alliance between "memory, fidelity, the preservation of something that has been given to us, and, at the same time, heterogeneity, something absolutely new, and a break" (Caputo, 1997:6). *If it is possible for this hegira to be envisaged in this fashion, it seems to me that the troubling moment we find ourselves in, at our universities, is not doomed to result in an exodus from a dangerous or undesirable institution.*

MS: So, there are a number of things that you mention that I would like to explore a little more. But let me suspend this intervention for a little while in order to deal first with what I think you correctly understand to be Zwe's 'refusal' to engage this old woman. We can ask a number of questions about the refusal, and we can make a series of assumptions related to her disengagement. It's convenient to lay this matter aside by suggesting that she wishes not to enter into any arguments with this elderly woman. One thing that can come from that is a discussion about intergenerational conversations. And, I think, it is precisely the nature of these intergenerational conversations that determines, for instance, the credence and future of social movements that seek to bring about transformation. There is, arguably, a generally disavowed post-apartheid black experience, disavowed by the older generation *vis-à-vis* the born un-frees. The assumption on the part of the latter is that "we fought so that you, black child, can be afforded the same opportunities as the white

child, avoid Bantu education, aspire to Model-C-ness, ensure admission into a prestigious institution” and then, apparently, “gain access into a world hitherto denied” to you.

It is the gap between this historical preclusion and the supposed ‘promise’ of flourishing which is assumed by the older generation to have been bridged by them, so adequately in fact, that there is no need to do any further work on that front. I have in mind one such instance in which this was tentatively brought into the public discourse. Eve Fairbanks of *The Guardian* highlighted just this in her aptly titled article, “Why South African Students Have Turned Their Backs on Their Parents’ Generation” following the #FeesMustFall uprisings in 2015. It is curious, if you will allow me a side note, that no South African outlet picked up on this generational gap in the way that *The Guardian* article did.

Nevertheless, she mentions a moment in which, in the run-up to the historic decision by University of Cape Town to have the statue of Cecil John Rhodes removed from its campus centre, the Vice-Chancellor – Max Price – convened an urgent council meeting intended to deliberate the future of the statue amidst the brouhaha surrounding its imminent removal. As students from all kinds of backgrounds, we had been quite clear about our motivations, calling for the *decolonisation* of the university space, which was then positioned as antithetical to ‘transformation’, and brought attention to the lived experiences of black lives in such spaces. The conditions of black life in the untransformed university have been enumerated at such length that it would be futile to do so here. But I want to underscore Fairbanks’ (2015) observation about the generational gap, and the structural domestication at play in black intergenerational dialogue. She recounts a story of when, having climbed through the window of the Council Chambers they had broken, the students attempted to stage an intervention during this meeting. They barged in singing struggle songs and calling for the radicality of their template of demands not to be elided. This is what she highlights about the pressures in the room:

Most of the members of the largely white council just sat there. But the head of the council, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, a former anti-apartheid activist who was imprisoned with Nelson Mandela on Robben Island, stood up and flapped his hands, gesturing for the students to leave. They climbed up on the table and moved towards him. ‘Who made you the policeman of black rage? As a black man?’ one student spat, his eyes filling with tears. ‘You are disgusting! You are disgusting! Don’t you have your own children?’
(Fairbanks, 2015:para 41)

Although in a more forceful way, the students in this moment can and should be read as registering a strong opposition to the terms of engagement apparently

preferred by the older generation. And, in a way, they are facing up to the same confrontation that Zwe, however inchoately, has to come up against in her own personal way. One of the students, Kgotsi Chikane, writes an open letter to the older black man, eager to castigate their actions, to cajole him into publicly accepting their demand for the recognition of their struggle in its entirety (they later settled for ‘intersectionality’, but we can leave that too in suspension). Chikane’s imploration was, of course, more forthcoming than that of our student’s, coercing an acknowledgement of ‘black pain’ as legitimate – as far as the post-apartheid black student is concerned. In his letter to the elder, again no doubt more spirited than Zwelethu’s avoidance, Chikane was:

...begging him [the elder, Ndugane] to publicly express that he understood and supported the students’ anger. The young man compared the ‘obvious, obscene and repugnant acts of racism’ in the past to the kind black students currently experienced at UCT. ‘Ours is worse’, he wrote. ‘Ours is subliminal. It is the form of racism that makes you ignorant about your subjugation.’ (Ibid.:para 42)

But if their desire to have their interests count and taken seriously by the ruling elite seems overstated, then the elder’s response should lay to rest any such suspicions: “The archbishop sent Chikane a one-line note that he had received his letter, but said nothing more” (ibid.:para 43). There can be no more powerful expression and demonstration of the notion that ‘forgetting’ was indeed a central part of the deal made between the incoming black government and white power at the turn of the new dispensation. Now, let me offer yet another personal-is-political anecdote taken from this piece, which may offer some clarity on the situation with Zwelethu and the old woman she sits next to. If indeed there is a “powerful, emotional component” to the denial of black suffering on the part of the elders, it must find its *trace*, here used in the Derridian sense, in the private realm. Emotions are as much a public affair as they are private. Consider what I take to be a useful analogy offered by Fairbank. Having landed at Cape Town International airport, and on her way to the University of Cape Town to do her interviews for the article to which I am referring, Fairbank meets an Uber driver with whom she starts up a conversation about the goings-on in South African politics, and the student uprisings invariably come up. It is not by chance that our student should have her encounter during a routine trip on board public transport, and that such exemplary material should affront this journalist on her journey to understanding and documenting this potentiated moment, her own *hegira* we might say. She draws her article to a conclusion ponderously, recalling her conversation with the driver thus:

What else had blacks fought for over so many years, if not their children's release from suffering a black identity? [...] the Uber driver who picked me up from the airport, a black man from a township called Langa, spontaneously told me a potent story. His son was 14, he said; he was 50. Recently, his son had come to him to ask him what apartheid had done to him, his father. The question had made the older man feel angry. 'I don't want you to know about the past', he had told his son. 'You are free of all that!'

If we are free of all that, then how do we explain the sense of unfreedom that surrounds us? For me at least, the possibility of framing this question in various ways is more important than the resolution or answers with which we might want to satisfy ourselves.

Let me fast-forward: more important than stumbling upon African literature for the first time in one's final year at university, is the need to ensure we are not merely thrust into an aestheticised fixation with 'African literature'. Black students may need to learn what Spivak calls 'the first right', which she says is the right to refuse that which has been refused to you. This is not to say refuse African literature, but to refuse the interpellation into a rainbowist discourse, where African literature is simply an add-on to already rigid coordinates of value. To refuse the conditions under which African literature is brought into being. To do this, we must demand some imaginative ground from the university, and the university here will be the space where we can train in the practice of freedom, 'train the imagination for epistemological performance', to think with Spivak, so that a critical consciousness that produces a flexible political subject can emerge. This is one way to question even the already-present narratives that inadvertently domesticate our resistance and that circumscribe the limits of the possible. Ultimately, perhaps, Zwelethu's scene might even be an example of how *not* to undertake the work of transformation in higher education.

III: To Write to Fail

April 2018

But the true college will ever have one goal – not to earn meat, but to know the end and aim of that life which meat nourishes. (Du Bois, 2007:51)

MS: The end, the aim, the purpose – teleological. There is no end. There is no end. There are only means. It's been a couple of years since we first wrote the opening parts of this piece, and I wondered whether something like a postscript

might be useful in helping us map the ways in which the situation in the higher education landscape has unfolded, or how this ongoing unfolding has implications for what we thought we knew, how we thought we knew it, and what these subtle shifts have amounted to in the contemporary moment.

IC: The sections above, written after the first set of widespread Fallist protests, attempted to respond to the demands of that particular moment. It rings clearly that, at a time in which so much was declared as being certain, clear and uncompromising, this piece (in response to that moment) contained few of those qualities. The form of the first two sections is revealing of a struggling for language.¹ In the midst of a movement that, at its nascence, suggested a clean trajectory towards a glittering vision, the opening sections of our piece formally resisted any such declaration. This uncertainty of form seems to me to hold much potential for the *type* of engagement that is demanded of those of us with an investment in a transforming global landscape of higher education. The opening section is of course inspired by that powerful and memorable opening passage in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. In ways that could not be known beforehand, our appropriation of it offered a conversational opening which was pursued in the second section. This conversation combined speculation and suggestion, hints and gestures, towards a language that would shift even as it became available, a language that always wanders between insufficient and necessary. Through different registers, and often outside typical modalities of criticism, the form of this piece displayed in many ways its own inadequacy to tackle the totality of the question of higher education in South Africa.

The form of this piece, I believe, suggests that we might begin to productively write and think about this moment even though we know that these writings and thinkings will be overtaken by developments that they could not possibly have anticipated. To accept these offerings for conversation is more an act of preparation, a commitment to futures – what Derrida (2002) might call a *profession of faith in the Humanities of the Future* – than it is a comprehensive overview and clear hypothesis of what those futures will ask of us or, even what those futures will look like.

1 The formal aspects of the opening section are in obvious allegiance with some of the thematic concerns of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. Of course, the Dick and Jane primer in the opening chapter of *The Bluest Eye* stages a breakdown and annulment of the unitary coherence that whiteness (ontologically and as fantasy or attitudinal disposition) depends upon. For us, perhaps, the foundational logic of Enlightenment or Romanticism and so forth, in the productions of time, as well as its literary legacy are here brought to crisis in the context of an ideologically reproductive pedagogy.

Our speculations should and always will be open to questioning. We speculate towards truths, and truth is, as Avery Gordon writes:

...a subtle shifting entity not simply because philosophy says so or because evidentiary rules of validation are always inadequate, but because the very nature of the things whose truth is sought possess these qualities. (2011:20)

So, what truths do we seek? The answers to this are perhaps broader and deeper than we realised when we began to write. And as such, looking back, our conversation again requires interrogation. The metaphor we put stock in, the journey, is itself something shifting and subtle, and perhaps not a journey at all.

MS: A further thing that I think puts these speculations into question is the glaring need to access the very possibility of resistance from what we might call ‘the left’ in South Africa. Well, we may need to ask questions of the order of: Who is the left? And what constitutes its affective impulses? Apart from the fact that it is has misgivings about the present, what else organises our social and political impulses? Which is really to say, what organises our modalities of resistance in the *longue durée* of political life? Can we take for granted that we are all engaged in the same activity when we are at the frontlines of a protest? This is also to ask a question about the ways we take for granted the things that bring each of us to resistance. Not only is this a question about what we’re fighting against, but it is also to do with an even more important question that bears on the collective: What are we fighting for?

Since much of this has germinated hot on the heels of the protests, I was surprised to see that writing and thinking in the moment itself enabled something of a beginning of a thought towards freedom and justice. These are big words. I want to conjoin them with another big word – imagination. This has come up a lot in recent times, since it has become clear that as we were engaged in the student protest, there were some among us who were engaged in a fight for the remaining scraps of a society that thrive on the decimation of a collective political imagination. I had not yet discovered the language when I said that there is a “disavowed post-apartheid black experience, disavowed by the older generation *vis-à-vis* the born un-frees” – that what I was talking about was a type of acquiescence to a particular genre of living, one that Lauren Berlant has termed a condition of ‘cruel optimism’ (2011), the sense that the very thing you desire most in your conception of ‘the good life’ is also the thing that gets in the way of your flourishing, a truly aporetic moment. So, part of the way I chose to read Zwe’s refusal today, is to think of her as exercising her right to refuse that which has been refused to her, this genre of the reproduction of life under

capitalist globality. This formulation has given me a better handle of what you are getting at when you suggest about Zwe that her movement is “rooted in *both* the existing *and* the aspirational; it is both dangerous and desired; it is simultaneously fled from and sought after”. Today, I try to bring this to bear with Stefano Harney and Fred Moten’s (2013:6) proposition that what we think we want in the imagined future cannot take its grammar from the present. Jack Halberstam puts this contingency into perspective for us in quite a useful way. He describes the project of the undercommons as one that calls forth a ‘we’ who “cohabit in the space of the undercommons”, the empty space left by colonialism, and that ‘we’ “black people, indigenous peoples, queers, and poor people” who insist that:

We cannot be satisfied with the recognition and acknowledgement generated by the very system that denies a) that anything was ever broken and b) that we deserve to be broken apart; so we refuse to ask for recognition and instead we want to take apart, dismantle, tear down the structure that, right now, limits our ability to find each other, to see beyond it and to access the places that we know lie outside its walls. We cannot say what new structures will replace the ones we live with yet, because once we have torn shit down, we will inevitably see more and see differently and feel a new sense of wanting and being and becoming. What we want after “the break” will be different from what we think we want before the break and both are necessarily different from the desire that issues from being in the break. (Harney et al., 2013:6)

We must be suspicious of the impulse for totality, a drive towards closure, because, if we have learnt anything in the years between, it’s that everything in the name of revolution will always be provisional. The revolution must therefore always look to renew itself. It can never claim arrival in any neat way, especially not in a metaphor of journey.

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Chapter 9

The Fall of Rhodes: A photovoice investigation into institutional culture and resistance at UCT

Shose Kessi

The past few years have seen many transformative gains across the country in higher education institutions (HEIs). Student-, worker-, and academic protests have led to the 0% fee increase for 2016 and insourcing agreements in a number of universities. At the University of Cape Town (UCT), the #RhodesMustFall movement marked a significant turning point in how we engage around transformation and decolonisation in our institution. This movement had a local, national, and global impact that reinvigorated the drive for transformation in academia. The fall of the statue of Cecil John Rhodes (CJR), a symbol of institutional culture, was the engine behind this change. In this chapter, I reflect on the findings of a photovoice project conducted with black students¹ at UCT between 2013 and 2015 and how the image of the CJR statue remains a central narrative in the struggle for change.

Institutional culture can be referred to as “the deeply embedded patterns of organisational behaviour and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that members have about their organisation or its work” (Peterson & Spencer, 1991:142). The decolonial moment in South African universities is accompanied by a questioning and shift in institutional cultures (Tabensky & Matthews, 2015). Indeed, the assumptions, beliefs, and ideologies that characterised the UCT tradition of thought, rooted in white liberalism

1 The term ‘black’ is used here in the inclusive sense. In this project, ‘black students’ refer to students who fall within the racial categories of African, coloured and Indian.

(Phnuyal, 2016), are coming into conflict with the incoming generation of black students and academics. As Ali Mazrui states, reflecting on the role of the university in Africa:

African university systems are colonial in origin and disproportionately European in traditions. African universities are among the major instruments and vehicles of cultural westernization on the continent. (Mazrui, 2005:62)

Hence, as an emerging generation of black students post-apartheid are pursuing higher education studies, it is not surprising that they find themselves confronted with institutional values inherited from the colonial and apartheid past. Universities have been a key site for the production of colonial intellectuals and knowledge projects. The CJR statue which, until recently, occupied a central place on the UCT campus was a stark example of what was still valued by members of the institution 21 years after the dismantling of apartheid and it is no surprise therefore that this symbol of institutional culture became the catalyst for the student movements.

Bridging the gap between lived experience and institutional culture

In this chapter, I suggest that a fundamental measure of institutional culture is an affective one (Tabensky & Matthews, 2015) – who feels at home in a university environment and who feels that they don't belong? What are the elements of university life that make some individuals or groups fit in whilst others are excluded? Answers to these questions of belonging often have to do with identity markers, such as race, class, gender, sexuality and sexual orientation whilst other factors include issues of governance structures and decision-making processes, university policies, environmental and market pressures, the politics of language and knowledge projects, and the socio-historical context of inequality and oppression. All of these practices are interrelated in ways that produce a particular environment that is experienced differently by its various stakeholders.

Foregrounding the role of affect is important as it is often deemed as separate from intellectual work. The fall of Rhodes was symbolic of the need to dismantle the racist masculinist culture of UCT (and other HEIs) and has led to many critical debates² about dismantling whiteness, patriarchy and heteronormativity in the lived and affective experiences of staff and students. As institutions that are forging and inspiring the minds of future generations, challenging these

2 See statements by #RMF on <https://www.facebook.com/RhodesMustFall/>

dynamics is fundamental to creating a society that fosters inclusivity, dialogue and well-being. As the present author has argued elsewhere, the role of affect reframes or shifts the terms of engagement (Kessi & Boonzaier, 2015). Engaging with the experiences of black students, workers and staff develops a new level of consciousness where the affective experiences of exclusion are at the root of how critical perspectives on institutional culture can emerge and lead to decolonising and transformative practices.

Resisting institutional culture: The photovoice process

For us to understand the affective dimensions of university life as manifestations of institutional cultures, the telling of day-to-day experiences gives life to and makes real the often complicated and subtle dynamics of exclusion. In 2013, two years before the fall of the CJR statue, I initiated a photovoice project with black students at UCT to collect narratives of their daily experiences of the institution. The last group of students to participate in this initiative was in 2015, after the fall of CJR led by the #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) movement. The timing of this initiative is significant as will become clearer later in this chapter.

Photovoice is a participatory action research (PAR) method using photographs and written texts as narrative constructs of lived reality. Drawing on Freirian empowerment, feminist standpoint theory, and documentary photography (Wang & Burris, 1997), photovoice methods are rooted in community empowerment imperatives with a focus on social and transformative justice. Over a period of three years, six groups of black students at UCT were involved in the project (36 in total, both undergraduate and postgraduate) and participated in a facilitated process of dialogue and reflection, through focus group discussions on transformation and decolonisation and through photography training and production. These activities culminated into two public exhibitions in November 2013 and November 2015, showcasing the experiences of black students at UCT and designed to raise awareness and dialogue amongst the broader university community.

The students' stories highlighted the subtle and not-so-subtle practices of exclusion on campus, the ambiguity of university policies and practices that reproduce racism, sexism, classism and heteronormativity, and that maintain privilege. The photovoice process facilitated participation in a way that not only deepened a critical consciousness of the lives of black students at UCT amongst themselves and others, but also that built solidarity around common

experiences of 'being black'. The result was a shared narrative that enabled them to locate their affective experiences in a historical and institutional context and therefore to make sense of what they were going through and what needed to change.

The politics of identity and representation

Such an approach speaks to the transformative potential of collective memory projects to shed light on how institutional cultures are maintained and reproduced (Vincent, 2015). A key example that emerged from the participants is how ideas of standards and excellence are reserved for particular students and particular academic projects. In previous writings, I have shown how affirmative action policies have been met with a discourse of overcrowding and lowering standards of universities (Kessi & Cornell, 2015). Academic development programmes are key sites for the reproduction of these stigmatising discourses when the approach taken is a deficit model that presents black students as catching up with their white counterparts (Kessi, 2013). The findings from this project demonstrate how these ideas about the intellectual capabilities of black students are manifested and reproduced through daily interactions between students from different backgrounds, through teaching and assessment practices, research projects and the general administrative functioning of universities (Kessi & Cornell, 2015).

In addition to ideas of black students as lacking in intellect, the black/African body has been historically represented as grotesque, uncivilised and crudely sexual in academic and popular discourses (Lewis, 2011). These images have resurfaced in critiques of #RMF protests where the transformative actions of black students have been labelled anti-intellectual and images of black students as irresponsible, deviant and criminal are commonplace (Timakwe, 2016). Much can be learnt from the experiences of black queer and trans students on campus. Their stories, emerging from this project and showcased in the Body exhibition³ held in November 2015 speak to the institutional culture of violence against black bodies at UCT. The policing of their bodies through institutional practices of exclusion such as the ascription of gendered identities on student cards, lack of access to toilets, and experiences of single-sex residences are examples of how racial and gendered identities are prescribed and regulated (Cornell, Kessi & Ratele, 2016).

3 The photostories from the Body exhibition were compiled into a self-published coffee-table book titled, *Imagining a Decolonised University* by Josie Cornell, Shose Kessi and Kopano Ratele.

Myths about black intellectualism, gender, and sexuality thus intersect to create particular experiences of exclusion for black students located in an institutional culture that reifies the figure of white male privilege as embodied in the CJR statue. As one of the participants in this study cautions:

There is no existing as a queer black body in UCT. There is fighting as a queer black body, there is running as a queer black body, there is certainly dying as a queer black body. But existing would be to assume the position of an acknowledged identity and there is none of that0. (Thengi)

Louise Vincent, writing about experiences of belonging in academia, invites us to see how the reproduction of power happens in daily experiences of “pain, shame, and humiliation”. She draws on feminist methodology and participatory action research to advocate the need for consciousness-raising that can lead to the production of counter narratives and the type of memory work that can help us see from alternative perspectives. As Vincent (2015:35) writes, “we can learn to see the world from the perspective of lives and experiences that are not our own and to generate knowledge from the perspective of these other lives and experiences”. The stories presented below, emerging from our photovoice project, depict how the process of critical consciousness, storytelling, and representation led to alternative, transformative and decolonial perspectives, exposing the pain, shame and humiliation of black people in our institution, and disrupting the dominant university culture.

Affective barriers to belonging at UCT

I begin with two photostories that symbolically represent the affective aspect of not belonging at UCT. These were produced by students participating in the first phase of data collection in 2013.

Masingene where?



The (in)famous Masingene is known for hassles and worries when it comes to the administration of being registered at UCT. I've heard, seen and experienced enough challenges in those offices to have myself asking, so where exactly do we enter in this building to belong, or did I read/translate Masingene wrong? (Mpho)

Through this photostory, Mpho describes his first encounter with UCT. The Masingene building, the first port of call for students wanting to register at UCT, is described by Mpho as a place of “hassles and worries”. This photostory is about the barriers to access to the institution. Although premised on administrative issues and physical access, Mpho extends this experience to being about the lack of *belonging* in the institution. He does this symbolically by questioning the meaning of Masingene [translated from isiXhosa as ‘let’s enter’], a phrase that is supposedly welcoming but does not tie up with the difficult experience of entering and being at UCT. The photograph itself is a further indication of a sense of alienation: the lack of activity and people brings out the coldness of the building; furthermore, there is no obvious entrance to the building which reinforces the symbolism of being unwelcome. The representation of UCT in this story, its ambiguous character of inclusion and exclusion, is characteristic of an institutional culture still affected by the legacies of its past. In the following photostories, black students speak to this symbolism in more detail.

Out of focus



As part of the theme on transformation at UCT, I took this photo as it captured this idea. The fact that the subject, the student, is out of focus while the building is in focus, has important suggestions being made concerning transformation at UCT. As a newcomer at UCT, it feels as though it is the image of UCT (top achieving institution on the continent) which is privileged over the students themselves [...]. (Claudia)

In the above story called 'Out of focus', Claudia makes use of a photography technique to blur the student in relation to the university buildings as a way of expressing her feelings of not belonging at UCT. This story is another powerful example of the role that photographs play in conveying meaning beyond words. Claudia is expressing the sense of being alienated or how blackness is present but pathologised (Phoenix, 1987) in the act of representing UCT. One could also infer that the photostory is symbolic of the colonial encounter: how the university, as an institution of knowledge production dominated by ideas of scientific objectivity, became complicit in and legitimised the subjugation of colonial others. It represents the blurred and distorted history of black people in the production of academic knowledge which persists until today in historically white institutions such as UCT.

The fall of CJR and the rise of a black intersectional narrative

Three stories emerging from the photovoice project narrate the experiences of black students through the symbolism of CJR. The first was produced in 2013 before the fall of the statue and the latter two in 2015 at the height of #RMF and after the removal of the statue.

'Power and internalised inferiority'



This picture shows the main statue of Cecil John Rhodes on upper campus. As I took the picture standing in front of the statue, I thought about the internalised inferiority that is imbued in my psyche as a black student at UCT. These are unconscious processes that dictate my relationships with others, my decisions, the way I speak and how I have come to perceive myself and people who are of my race. Standing in front of the statue of Cecil John Rhodes, I still felt the power of the colonisers on my colonised forefathers and myself in contemporary South Africa.

In taking the picture, I was still positioned in a lower position both in relation to the statue and my white fellow students standing next to the statue. This elevated their position in relation to me and the Jammie stairs as a metaphor for the upward mobility of black people, and how that meant that whiteness or the colonisers' position needs to be aspired to. The fact that I adjust my accent and continuously refine my English is a reflection of this and the black person's positionality in this institution. (Sean)

The CJR story presented above was produced in 2013 by Sean, a 'coloured' male postgraduate student who identifies as gay. He describes the affective dimension of institutional symbols through the CJR statue as a daily reminder of the experience of "being colonised" that positions him as a colonised body who occupies a marginal space in the institution. UCT honouring CJR with pride of place is interpreted as a reification of colonial culture and legacy. Sean refers to the unconscious dimension of how this happens by drawing on the Fanonian concept of internalisation (Fanon, 1986). Internalising the culture and values of the oppressor leads to a devaluation of self that not only impacts on one's sense of self-esteem and position in the institution, but also affects one's relationship with others. This unconscious process affected Sean's relationship with other black students who he initially perceived as equally inferior, a manifestation of horizontal forms of violence that Freire (1970) describes as indicative of intransitive levels of consciousness. Sean further explains how this affective experience is replicated in the photograph through his position in relation to white students in the institution who are valued above him and do not need to question their belonging at UCT. In response to his situation, he changes his accent in order to fit it and successfully complete the requirements of his degree, an example of how black students are required to take on the culture of the institution.

His story highlights the responsibility and pressure on black students to change themselves or assimilate into the dominant culture of the institution in order to succeed rather than change it. In becoming conscious of his situation, he reveals the affective dimension of “feeling colonised” and the burden of guilt associated with having internalised the culture of the oppressor; and how that guilt is subsequently transferred onto other black students. Hence, the development of critical consciousness expressed by this student represents a significant shift in how one experiences self and others. It occurs through a profound psycho-social and affective process of questioning the historical and institutional culture that one is located in and the multiple and complex ways that this impacts on one’s daily activities, beliefs and long-term aspirations.

Cecil John Rhodes is Still Here



The above pictures were taken where the Cecil John Rhodes statue used to sit. Now you will find the stand with the words “C.J. was here!” and a shadow of the statue spray-painted in the same area. The #RhodesMustFall movement was an attempt at racial transformation at UCT. However, even though the physical removal of CJR was a great achievement, there are still a lot of racist actions within the institution. In my particular experience, the drawing of the CJR shadow is representative of a lack of empathy for the struggles of black students of UCT. It is painful to think that someone thought it would be funny or necessary to paint this shadow of CJR after students had articulated their struggles during the RMF movement. (Lillian)

This story is by Lillian, an African woman who identifies as heterosexual. It speaks to the continued erasure of the experiences of black students at UCT even after the removal of the CJR statue. It describes the lack of acknowledgement and recognition of the affective experiences of black students on campus. In the project of decolonisation, power relations often shift as the oppressed make claims to human dignity and the oppressors respond with attempts to maintain their privilege. Since the fall of CJR, there have been increasingly violent and desperate displays of authority by the police, students, academic staff and

management. When black bodies in our institutions make unequivocal demands for social justice in the form of shifting institutional values, the relevance of the white male patriarch is challenged and brings to the surface pre-existing inequalities that are manifested through heightened and intensifying racialised and gendered offences.

This can be seen through the recent public attacks on transformation at UCT by white UCT academics claiming that transformation is lowering the standards of the institution. Kenneth Hughes, a Professor of Economic History states that “[turning] higher education into lower education is a really bad idea. And all this is being done in the name of ‘inclusion’” (Hughes, 2016). Tim Crowe (2015), another white professor, publicly discredits the academic credentials of two black professors recently appointed to full professor in the Humanities faculty. These utterances are symptoms of colonial thinking and paradigms that resurface through discourses of white excellence versus black failure (Robus & Macloed, 2006). In such a context, abuses of power are often overlooked in an attempt to maintain the symbolic white male authority figure. This is especially true in the academy where reason and logic have been the epitome of white superiority. The racist acts of white academics in positions of power are largely unaccounted for and defended against under the guise of reason, logic and academic freedom. Through practices of institutional corruption (Taylor, 2015), powerful stakeholders repeatedly hide behind outdated and nonsensical ideas, policies and procedures in attempts to re-establish their superiority and reputation.

Which bodies are valued and the ways in which bodies are policed in an institution are reflections of its institutional culture. Lillian’s story illustrates how the silencing of black bodies and black experiences and the re-inscribing of white male authority are often experienced through violent acts of exclusion and condemnation. She warns us that CJR is still here and that taking down the statue is just scratching at the surface of a deep-seated system of oppression and inequality. The statue is no longer visible but the less visible mechanisms in which racism operates in the institution are still to be addressed. Lillian invites us to confront the more insidious acts of violence and oppression that go unnoticed and unchallenged so that we not only imagine a transformed UCT but also how to get there. Hence, every act of resistance and change is met with another challenge highlighting the multiple dimensions of power and the cyclical nature of the action-reflection model in the development of critical consciousness.

Liberation



This is an image of me sitting on the same plinth that the Rhodes statue stood on. On either side of me is a sign for a cis female and a cis male. I see my body as the in-between, but even more so, something that cannot be quantified and reduced to a physical sign. There is no other stronger indication of my presence than my own body. In this picture, I chose to take off my shirt. This should only be interpreted through a political lens. A poor black trans queer womyn sitting bare where a colonialist was once worshipped is a revolution in itself. I sit facing UCT unlike Rhodes. Rhodes sat there to look down at the

“peasants”. Being one of the peasants, I have a responsibility to confront his empire, hence the choice to face UCT, which is part of Rhodes’ legacy. (Thando)

This final photostory is Thando’s story, an African trans queer womyn student at UCT. It is a story of liberation that disrupts the historical legacies of apartheid and colonisation through an intersectional analysis that interrogates issues of race, gender and class in the decolonisation project. Her body is central to her revolutionary statement as it represents a key site for the affective experiences of oppression and in turn liberation. Thando’s story surfaces and challenges a central strategy of apartheid which was the control over bodies, in particular those bodies that deviated the most from the authoritarian figure of the white wealthy heterosexual male such as that of CJR. Apartheid and colonisation have taught us that the violent disciplining of black bodies is a very effective way of oppressing the ‘other’ and maintaining power over others. This disciplining was enacted through racial, gendered, political, spatial, educational, labour and social restrictions (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011). The law, correctional services and physical violence were used to instil order, fear and submission. Academic research and practices also participated in highly organised acts of violence that stripped black peoples of their land, livelihood, citizenship and dignity through claims to truth and the legitimisation of imperial power.

Thando inquires about what it would mean for our institution to honour the body of a black trans queer peasant womyn, not by way of simply replacing CJR, but by challenging the particular identities he represents as a white, capitalist,

heteronormative male. This is a challenging proposition, as it requires the university to tackle these intersectional dimensions of power and seek transformative practices that eradicate all forms of oppressive power. Originally coined by Crenshaw (1991), the concept of intersectionality emerges from black and postcolonial feminists and critical race theorists. An intersectional approach to transformation is based on the understanding that social identities or social divisions such as race, class and gender intersect and interact to produce substantively different experiences (Collins, 2000) deriving from multiple axes of power. Such an approach would require a deep and necessary engagement with representations of black lives and the diverse range of affective experiences of belonging and exclusion to forge an institutional culture that is fitting of an academic institution invested in intellectual engagement, dialogue and social change.

Juxtaposing these three photostories presents a symbolic and temporal shift between eradicating the colonial past, reflecting on what is still wrong with the present, and imagining a future where the intersecting experiences of the most oppressed are recognised and valued as central to the university. It also highlights how the affective experiences of oppression are catalysts for the cycle of critical consciousness and action to take place. This occurs through a historical understanding of the present, a reflection of self and our relations with others, an analysis of the institutional environment (in particular the intricate ways in which power operates), and the significance of embodiment as a practice of liberation. It is this last point that we believe can contribute the most to the literature on institutional culture and transformation. How to embody the changes we want to see in our lives in general, and in the places where we study and work in particular, is a radical step forward. What would it take for us to confront our internalised oppression and change the daily actions that we may perform, often unconsciously, that re-inscribe relations of power? Modifying our physical appearance, how we speak or who we love, are embodied experiences that suggest a complex mix of internalised and liberatory practices emerging from our affective experiences of belonging and exclusion. The university, as an institution that engages students to develop professional skills and ideological frames of reference, is an ideal space for this process to unfold.

The photovoice process in itself also embodies an important methodological shift in how we conduct transformative research. Photovoice is a powerful tool for decolonising the academy by linking lived experience and academic methods in ways that mitigate the epistemic violence often exercised against those who are researched (Kessi, Kaminer, Boonzaier & Learmonth, in press). The students

described above, who are from diverse categories of race, gender, class identities and sexual orientations, came together to share their experiences and imagine and perform a transformed and inclusive institution. Building solidarity amongst black students offers the potential for reclaiming the principles of Black Consciousness that were fundamental to the student protests of the 1970s and 1980s and that generated a forceful ideology of resistance against the apartheid state (Biko, 1978; Manganyi, 1973); furthermore, fostering an understanding of intersectionality (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991) can renew the principles of Black Consciousness and make them relevant to transforming the culture of contemporary South African institutions.

Transformation, institutional culture and the role of affect

This chapter has contributed to an understanding of institutional cultures as reflections of historical values and ideologies that permeate postcolonial spaces. Not unlike other institutions in South Africa, the university is an important site in which historical relations of power are reproduced in ways that create particular experiences of belonging and exclusion, depending on the social identities and divisions of its members. The students in this project have highlighted the role of institutional symbols and culture, with a focus on the CJR statue as a symbol of oppressive power. Through their engagement with the photovoice process, they have critically deconstructed the impact of white authoritarianism and white liberal thought on their daily lives at UCT. Their affective experiences and insights provide the groundwork on which to build a set of values rooted in Black Consciousness and intersectionality that are relevant to transformation in contemporary South Africa.

An important lesson from this research and the voices of other black stakeholders at UCT is for black and queer students and scholars to take a leadership role in the process of decolonisation and transformation of our institutions. Our affective experiences and embodied practice have the potential to generate research that can reshape our intellectual projects, values, beliefs and ideologies, which in turn will have a bearing on the institutional culture of universities and society at large. By demanding recognition for our lifestyles, knowledges and worldviews through transformational projects such as the one described in this chapter, we can then question the types of institutional cultures that facilitate or limit that process.

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Chapter 10

A 'Home for All':

How gay, lesbian and bisexual students experience being 'at home' in university residence life

Chipo Munyuki, Louise Vincent and Emmanuel Mayeza

Introduction

Taking our cue from the policy context about transformation in Higher Education as discussed in Chapters 1 and 4 in this volume, we argue for the importance of broadening the lens of transformation from a focus on race only to include other and intersecting variables. In this chapter we report on a study at Rhodes University which seeks to encourage voices of students who self-identify as gay, lesbian and bisexual concerning their everyday life experiences in a largely heteronormative space. Their accounts debunk the taken-for-granted features of 'at homeness' which include comfort, privacy, security, acceptance, companionship, support and community.

The particular university campus context that constituted the study site is one in which a variety of formal policies have been put in place to express the university's commitment to creating an environment for all students that is free of discrimination. These policies explicitly mention sexual orientation. For instance, in its policy on Eradicating Unfair Discrimination and Harassment, Rule 15.27 states that:

Any student who utters, distributes, displays, shows, screens or projects any disparaging or derogatory remarks or innuendos based on a person's race, gender or sexual orientation, or any form of hate speech shall be guilty of a disciplinary offence.

In this study we are interested in gaining insights into whether these policies permeate day-to-day lived student experience on this campus and, in particular, whether gay, lesbian and bisexual students experience residence life as comfortable, tolerant, inclusive – in short, as connoting some of the essential characteristics that are conventionally associated with the idea of feeling ‘at home’.

In the South African higher education field, the concept of a ‘home for all’ has been used by a number of educationists, as well as political and social commentators, to depict a vision of what transformed higher education institutional cultures might look like. We take as our starting point the ubiquitous phrase ‘A Home for All’ which has been employed on many occasions to encapsulate a vision of the transformation of South African higher education institutional cultures from the exclusion and discrimination of the past to creating cultures of inclusivity, tolerance and respect for diversity. Taking this mantra at its literal word, we ask, conceptually, what might be meant by the idea of ‘home’; what does feeling ‘at home’ feel like? And then, empirically, we explore whether, and in what ways, gay, lesbian and bisexual students feel ‘at home’ in university residence life.

The study

This study employs a qualitative methodology and the data consists of 18 in-depth interviews conducted with some students who self-identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual and who have experienced living in residence at one particular South African university campus. Bearing in mind the drawback of snowballing as a method of recruiting participants, namely the possibility that the sample will become very uniform, we deliberately attempted to introduce as much diversity into the sample of participants as possible while remaining within the main criteria for inclusion. Seven of the participants were first-year students, two were in second year, three were third-year students, four in their fourth year of study and two were in their fifth year of study. Participants included eight young women and ten young men. The ‘racial’¹ composition of the sample included three white participants and 15 black participants. Four of the participants identified as bisexual. The number of interviews conducted

1 We engage with race as a social construction rather than a scientific term that denotes real differences between groups of people (Montagu, 1997; Pattman, 1998; Dalmage, 2000). Therefore, we use ‘black’ and ‘white’ purely as social categories that marked disadvantage and privilege during apartheid. While the use of apartheid racial categories in the post-apartheid era is contested, such categories continue to be used nationally for purposes of equity, transformation and redress.

was determined by the principle of 'saturation' – the point at which it becomes apparent, during initial coding, that no new themes are emerging from the data (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006; Kuper, Lingard & Levinson, 2008:687; Bowen, 2008:140). It was apparent that saturation had been reached following an initial coding of 13 interviews. A further five interviews were conducted in order to arrive at a degree of certainty that subsequent interviews would not yield significant new insights.

First cycle coding generated 113 codes. A second cycle of focused coding was employed in order to ascertain the most frequent and significant codes among these 113, in order to develop the main categories of analysis (Saldaña, 2009:155). In theorising and interpreting these codes we drew on literature that attempts to distil the idea of what a 'home' means (Thaver, 2006; Moore, 2007; Jacobson, 2009) for two reasons: firstly, residence life has been identified as a significant site for the (re)production of existing relations of domination on university campuses, where day-to-day interactions resist transformation. Secondly, the idea of inclusivity that is the goal of institutional transformation is frequently summed up in the mantra of the transformed institution as providing a 'Home for All' (Badat, 2011).

The (contested) concept of 'home'

There are elements within any institutional culture that create discomfort for some while at the same time others might experience a sense of comfortable 'at-homeness' with those very elements, making it possible for these members to thrive in the existing institutional culture. 'Home' is thus a contested concept. A wide literature drawing from anthropology, history, philosophy, geography, psychology, architecture and sociology has theorised home as a multi-dimensional concept that incorporates social networks, identity, privacy, continuity, self-expression, warmth, support, empathy, and feeling welcome (Hauge, 2007; Moore, 2007; Jacobson, 2009). Cristoforetti, Gennai and Rodeschini (2011:226) argue that to feel 'at home' suggests being in a place of comfort, both physically and emotionally. This comfort arises from a familiarity that is both social and material.

However, as Thaver has pointed out (2006:17), not everyone has the privilege of experiencing home in this way. The idealised conception of home as a place of comfort, nurturing, stability and permanence that comes from caring relationships, support and mutual recognition has been criticised by those who remind us that for many, homes are places for the enactment of gendered and sexual hierarchies, oppressions and violence (George, 1996:9;

Kaplan, 1987:194). It is not uncommon for those who do not share the characteristics that are valued by other occupants – who are unable to, or choose not to, conform to conventional norms – to be symbolically and often literally excluded from the home. The normatively excluded individuals may remain visible in the home however – often hyper-visible – and a perceived threat to the way of life of the other occupants of the home (Wardhaugh, 1999:97). Homes are a delineation of boundaries and this selective inclusivity and strong sense of identity that necessarily inheres in the concept means that home can also be a place of fear, abuse, isolation, dislocation, discomfort and loneliness for those who do not, for some reason, fit in with the prescribed mores delineating the criteria for inclusion.

The fraught idea of ‘the home’ can be contrasted with the notion of feeling ‘at home’. Said (1983) has pointed out that there is a distinction between the physical place as home and the social relations that produce that state of being ‘at home’. It is quite possible to be ‘home’ and not to feel ‘at home’. There is thus a distinction to be made between ‘being at home’ and ‘feeling at home’. For Thaver (2006:18) the distinction has to do, critically, with social relations:

The critical factor here is that it is in social relations with other social actors in a given place that mutual assurances, fitness, belonging, etc. obtain and through which the feeling of being ‘at home’ is ultimately generated. The question is never: Do you feel at home? It is rather: Where, and with whom, doing what, and to what end, do you feel comfortable enough to be able to say, ‘I feel at home or in place in this institutional culture’?

Given that research suggests that it is not uncommon for the minority group of people who identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual to have their first opportunities to express their sexual identity at university (Evans, 2000; Arndt & De Bruin, 2006), feeling ‘at home’ in the sense of feeling free to express and explore one’s identity might be said to be of even greater significance to gay, lesbian and bisexual students than those whose identity conforms to heteronormativity. We approached the interviews with an initial open-ended question that asked our participants whether or not they felt ‘at home’ in residence life on their university campus. Below we explore the responses and the insights they provide about how gay, lesbian and bisexual students in the study experience everyday life in the residences.

'It just doesn't feel right' – being uncomfortable and dislocated 'at home'

As Rankin (2006:113) argues, as much as tertiary education environments might be experienced as places of personal growth, identity formation and flourishing relationships, in many instances campus residences have proven to be places of discomfort and dislocation on the part of non-heterosexual students. If the idea of 'home' connotes comfort, support and acceptance, the contrast is to find oneself 'judged' as Lebo² explains:

Everything is a little bit different in residence. I have friends who are conservative ... I've kinda found it hard to talk to my conservative friends about what I feel and my sexuality and everything related to that. [For example] if I meet someone I can't say I met this girl 'cause I start to think about what they will say and how they will judge me. (Lebo)

Lebo invoked also the idea of home connoting filial bonds which are often explicitly appealed to in university residence environments where those in leadership positions attempt to create a sense of belonging but which can serve to be exclusionary. When a sense, for example, of 'sisterhood' is created among residence members this very act of creating belonging through shared experiences can serve to exclude those who do not share these experiences. Lebo referred to how 'they always say we are sisters at this residence' but went on to comment that 'as sisters we don't do any of these things that makes us sisters'. Shared confidences about relationships become a source of belonging for some while at the same time isolating others because, as Thato explains, to confide in people about one's homosexuality has consequences for being able to 'fit in':

I think the issue is not with the residence. It's the society and the way it handles homosexuality. And it's usually just the fact that we always have to be careful who we tell because it changes how people will view you no matter how open-minded they may be ... For the first couple of months I couldn't get myself to be okay with being who I am in this space. And it's not because there aren't measures in place or anything like that, it's just difficult especially in first year. Trying to fit in and those initial couple of weeks are often very difficult for gay students. (Thato)

In some instances, as Evans' (2000:82) work has found, homosexual students often experience direct hostility as a result of their sexuality which leads to them feeling the need to exercise caution when approaching certain situations. This

2 This is a pseudonym to protect the identity of the participant. Pseudonyms are used throughout the study.

attitude of tentativeness and carefulness is the antithesis of what is commonly associated with feeling 'at home'. Heather illustrates this point as follows:

I have noticed that even here on campus] there isn't a very high tolerance for homosexuality, so it's either you make up your mind to either date people of the opposite sex or face the consequences.

Far from looking forward to going 'home' to his residence, Mandla spends as little time as possible there because he is 'not comfortable':

My coping mechanism is to actually not spend time in the residence. I'm never there [in the residence]. It's because I'm not comfortable ... and the only way I can deal with all the stresses that I encounter in residence is to wake up, shower and come to campus. Even when I do not have lectures I am on campus. The time that I'm supposed to be spending in my room I spend it on campus. I literally go to my residence for lunch then come back to campus. I go to computer labs and go back when everyone is minding their own business in their rooms. I think in the residences they still have a long way to go and I think it's also because the residence is supposed to be home and if I am gay in my house I'm expecting that they are the first core of support more than anything. And if I don't get that, I mean it's not home it's just a place where I shower and sleep.

Rather than the residence being a home where one relaxes and socialises it becomes a place for performing basic functions such as sleeping, eating and showering which might be said to be associated with being 'in' a home rather than 'at' home. While being comfortable and at home requires a sense of ease in a space in which one is able to socialise with friends and engage in a more intimate level of relationships and exchanges, Thato refers to the dilemmas attached to the expression of one's homosexuality in the residence:

I may be able to hold a girl's hand in public but if I'm sober to kiss her? It's unimaginable. I don't know why I would feel uncomfortable with that. Especially in residence, I don't think I could walk in the corridor and make out with my girlfriend or hold her hand. It's not an outward thing; they don't plan the system that way. It's not like someone is watching you and saying don't do that but it just doesn't feel right...

While a young heterosexual couple 'making out' in the residence corridor would attract few comments and minimal outrage, when the intimacy is between two members of the same sex it is amplified and noticed so that it 'just doesn't feel right'. Thato's insight demonstrates how heteronormativity (re)produces itself, not by decree or design or explicit rules, but through the internalisation of anticipated disapproval which acts as a powerful mechanism to produce the same disciplinary effect as explicit prohibition.

When homosexual students feel at home at university, campus can become a place for growth, identity formation and positive social relations and interactions. But when those conditions are absent social ostracism is an ever-present fear, and home becomes a battleground as Olwetu describes:

I hate having to wake up every morning and feel like I'm fighting a battle. Every day I ask myself if I'm dressed too gay or not or if my haircut is too boyish or if I should get offended every time someone makes a mistake that I'm a boy. This can't be my life. I should be stressing about something else like being broke like other students and not about my sexual orientation.

D'Emilio (1990:18) argues that residences are one of the prime places on university campuses where homosexual students experience harassment, discrimination and even physical or sexual violence such as 'corrective rape'. This was the experience of some of our participants such as Kirsty who described residence as a hostile environment in which she felt uncomfortable, a 'place to live' rather than a 'home':

I will say, I know it's supposed to be a home on paper, but it's not really. It is a place to live for all but I wouldn't say it's a home for all. I did feel uncomfortable especially in one of the residences I lived in because for me it was a hostile environment. There was a lot of hostility expressed towards me by the other students and there were a lot of judgments directed towards me...

Taylor (1994:25) argues that people's identities are partially shaped by recognition or misrecognition on the part of those who surround them. For Taylor (1994:26), recognition is not merely a courtesy but a human need. Skeggs (2001:296) argues that "to make a recognition is to participate in a system of judgment and classification". Homosexual students can experience social relations as unaccommodating and hostile when they perceive their heterosexual peers to lack understanding or to 'misrecognise' what it means to be non-heterosexual:

I think a lot of people think I hate men. I don't hate men but most of them really annoy me and as soon as I say men annoy me [they all say] yeah it's 'cause you're gay, [and I try to explain] that that's not how it is and they won't even give me a chance to explain, its just an immediate attack: No Lebo you're gay – just because you're gay doesn't mean all men are bad. They tell me that I haven't been in a heterosexual relationship so I don't know any better. I just wished they understood that I don't hate men. (Lebo)

Fraser (1995:77-78) argued that to be misrecognised is not only to be devalued but to be denied the right to be a full partner in social interaction and homosexual individuals constantly experience this denial. Tully (2000:470)

argued that misrecognition undermines basic self-respect and self-esteem necessary to empower individuals to develop a sense of autonomy and self-worth needed to participate in public and private life. As Taylor (1994:25) points out, an individual or a group of people can suffer real damage if the people around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning picture of themselves. Misrecognition can inflict harm on those who experience it and it can be a form of oppression that imprisons individuals in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being (Chariandy, 2005:147).

While expressing a yearning to belong, participants described at times excluding themselves from social interactions in order to minimise their discomfort. Denied a sense of belonging, Musa choose 'keeping to himself' as a mechanism to protect himself from potential hostility:

[I hope] eventually people will get to a point where they are fine with homosexuals but then not everyone is there yet. And when somebody tells you they are fine with it and then you act as the person that you are they pull back. If somebody tells you look I'm not [comfortable with you being gay] you will respect their space. It's like somebody who is pregnant you can say to them I'm fine with it but then when they start talking about their pregnancy and making jokes about it you pull back. The problem is that people act as if they are fine with homosexuality but then they are not. The only reason why I'm comfortable here is because I keep to myself. I'm naturally someone who keeps to myself but I'm more so because of the environment that I live in. If I was living in an environment where homosexuality is highly acceptable, where even the most Christian of people accept you as you are, I would have been more outgoing and not keeping to myself...

Valentine (1995) argues that homosexual individuals develop a sense of "sexual geography" whereby they may consider migration as an option in order to find "safe zones" where they can find freedom to fully express themselves. Mandla's experience of feeling the need to 'move residences' suggests that rather than being able to generalise across an institution to describe prevalent social relations as entirely homophobic or entirely welcoming to gay members of the university community, campuses are comprised of multiple cultures, some more welcoming than others and that individuals learn to orient themselves in physical spaces in order to minimise experiencing discomfort:

This year I come back to the same residence but I was just fed up to the point where I actually decided to move residences. I moved into a new place that is not the same as my old residence but even worse than the other residences. When I walk into the dining hall it's so awkward because no one wants to sit next to me at the dining table but I really don't care. All I do is put my headset on and I eat my food then leave. This is what I do every day. But even if someone ends up sitting with me it will be a

matter of just greeting each other, no meaningful conversation. When I try to initiate conversation I can really sense that the other person doesn't want to talk to me so I just leave them alone. That's why I never make the mistake of leaving my headset behind when I go to the dining hall.

Scholars such as D'Augelli (1992), Ellis (2008) and Dugan and Yurman (2011) have argued that it is common for adolescents to actively seek out opportunities to explore their sexualities upon arrival at university, away from the scrutiny of childhood friends, family members and relatives. For those who inhabit home spaces that are inhospitable to their homosexuality, going to university represents the hope of finding a new kind of space where the expression and further development of an identity that is stigmatised and devalued at home, might become possible. However, this hope is not always fulfilled. Tom, for example, spoke of his disappointment at not feeling able to 'grow as a gay guy' at university:

Since I've been here it's been difficult to find that gay culture that could allow me to start exploring in a tangible way what it means to be gay – and I don't mean having sex. I just mean social interactions with other gays. I haven't had enough of that. It is a source of insecurity and discomfort for me 'cause I never really got any of that when I was at home because of the nature of my hometown and I'm coming here and in a way I feel like I'm not growing as a gay guy because it's almost a stifling environment right now. It's very disappointing ...

There is a legitimate expectation that leaving home and coming to university will provide a young person with the opportunity and freedom to explore and resolve issues around their sexuality including their sexual orientation (Epstein, O'Flynn & Telford, 2000; Arndt & De Bruin, 2006; Woodford, Krentzman & Gattis, 2012), but for Tom the absence of concrete contact with other students who identify openly as homosexuals makes that difficult. Literature suggests that support groups for homosexual students can aid in the establishment of a sense of universality – the feeling that one is not alone – which is important for identity development (Dietz & Dettlaff, 1997:60). As Bowen and Bourgeois (2001) have argued, contact with a gay community can be a stepping-stone in the social and emotional development of a homosexual student. But, as Dietz and Dettlaff (1997) remind us, many homosexual students experience challenges in this regard. For Josh, continually being in the position of occupying the minority position is trying:

I mean nowadays I don't mean to hate on my friends but they are all straight so a lot of times it ends up me being the token gay guy, which is kinda weird.

Another participant, Tom, spoke powerfully of his isolation and how this had resulted in an internalised feeling of something being wrong with him. Without access to social sounding boards the social world becomes unintelligible to him and the interview provides a rare opportunity for him to 'talk about it'.

It may be that there is something wrong with me to make it possible for me to get into a gay culture and that's why I haven't found one. I just feel like there's something I'm doing wrong. Maybe I'm supposed to do something about my personality, or the way I act, or my body. I'm not exactly sure what it is most of the time. It's very difficult and complicated and actually just talking about this now I've learnt so much more than I thought I knew in the first place because for the most part not speaking about it and having all this in my head makes it all confusing. I don't know how I'm feeling most of the time because there are so many social nuances at play and I don't know where the web is connecting.

Sexual minorities living in communities that are highly heteronormative, often experience isolation and an exaggerated sense of being different (Dietz & Dettlaf, 1997:60). Isolation from supportive peers can hinder the development of a person's identity and cause significant stress. Scholars such as D'Augelli (1993) have argued that this means that young adults who identify as homosexuals experience stress in the management of their sexual orientation. Swank and Raiz (2010:26-27) point out that as a result of living in heterosexist homes and communities where there is a perpetuation of stereotypes and negative perceptions about homosexuality, by the time homosexual youths arrive at university they have internalised homophobia and blame themselves, as Tom does, for their isolation. Some find themselves having to make difficult decisions about when and whether it is appropriate to express themselves and under which circumstances it is acceptable to perform their identity as Mpho explains:

The residence itself was never an issue. Of course the issues were with me. But not external. It was always an internal questioning: should I bring a girl over? If I bring a girl over will they know? And if they know will that change anything? It was all about how I thought they would react. So the interrogation was never external it was always internal but I never had a breakdown.

The social relations that prevail in the home, as Williams (1984:187) argues, play a central role in how a sense of identity is developed or constrained, nurtured or broken down. It is in the home that one either develops a sense of who one is by having the freedom to express oneself or experiences suppression and denial of the opportunity to express one's identity as desired. It is through interaction with others in the home that individuals are able either to confidently

express themselves or struggle to establish a concrete sense of who they are. Dating is a prominent example of how residence life can be an impediment to self expression for homosexual students. Some participants in this study expressed high levels of anxiety – even ‘shit your pants’ – occasioned by the risk of exposure:

It's a fear. It's an innate fear that you will be judged and you will be treated differently and we really just want to be loved for who we are. And it is what it is. Literally shit your pants kinda fear. (Thato)

Leary (2006:2) argues that human beings have a strong need to belong and a wary of rejection and lack of acceptance. Human beings value the establishment and maintenance of positive interpersonal relations with others and failure to have such relations can be emotionally damaging for those who are rejected (Leary, 2006:2). It is often ‘at home’ that one has an expectation of experiencing supportive relationships, belonging, acceptance and, as Thato puts it, a lack of ‘judgement’ but these are the features that might precisely be lacking for a homosexual student living in the university residence.

Implications for higher education transformation: Towards residences that are truly ‘home for all’

While universities frequently have formal policies in place to declare their commitment to inclusion and non-discrimination, there are a number of ways in which institutional cultures do not support the espoused policies. In residence systems, the focus on racial inclusion and non-discrimination mirrors the wider exclusion of sexual orientation from the higher education transformation debate (Obear, 1991:95; UNESCO, 2012:23). The marginalisation of sexual diversity in institutional discussions about transformation and inclusive education is illustrated by one of our participants in the following way:

I think it comes down to the residence system itself ... because when we got here we were told about racial integration but not about tolerance of homosexuality. Homosexuality is not discussed. When we have house meetings it's about other issues ... I think there is an automatic expectation that people will accept that because we are at a liberal university but it's not the case really. It's a liberal university but it doesn't mean that people are tolerant, or liberal when it comes to homosexuality. (Thabo)

We argue that an effective approach to higher education institutional transformation would involve the homosexual student who is not burdened with the duty to transform the environment – the duty is an institutional one to create an environment in which all of its students are equally ‘at home’.

When homosexual students experience hostility, the presence of effective institutional support is important. Support, moreover, needs to be understood as multifaceted, incorporating, firstly, social support, or what Kaplan, Cassel and Gore (1977:50) called “metness” – the sense that a person has all of their needs being met in an environment including the need for approval (Kaplan et al., 1977:50). Secondly, social support needs to be concrete and functional as Glazer (2006) argues, incorporating instrumental dimensions such as access to information, and emotional dimensions such as empathy, being listened to and being treated with compassion and respect (Gottlieb & Bergen, 2010:512). Support is often derived from social networks but institutional mechanisms need to be put in place to facilitate the development of these networks and students’ access to them, rather than simply expecting them to emerge organically and for all students to have equal access to organic networks. The social stigma attached to being homosexual means that not all homosexual students will be equally in a position to take the public step of finding and building their own social support system. This should rather be understood as a duty of the institution arising from its commitment to non-discrimination and inclusion.

As Levine and Evans (1990:8) argue, the presence of a positive social support network is central to the ability of a person to develop a positive sense of self. Social support is considered a coping resource or a social ‘fund’ from which people may draw when handling stressors (Thoits, 1995:64). Evans and D’Augelli (1996) argue that university campus organisations that cater for homosexual students’ needs and interests play an extremely important role in determining how these students experience the institutional environment. They argue that involvement with such organisations opens up new opportunities for homosexual students to increase their friendship networks and gain access to valuable sources of support (Evans & D’Augelli, 1996:212). For homosexual students, the educational function of support groups can play a significant role in the provision of instrumental support. Support groups can also facilitate a learning environment for homosexual students about issues relating to homosexuality in contexts where a person may have had few prior opportunities to openly ask questions related to sexuality which are routinely provided at school and university but take a form that almost always excludes homosexuality, focusing on heterosexual and reproductive sex (Dietz & Dettlaff, 1997:59). The institution therefore has a primary role to play in building these support structures and networks, which have the potential to

provide homosexual students with valuable, practical resources so that they too feel 'at home' in the university residence life.

Conclusion

While interviews with a small number of participants can make no claim to 'represent' homosexual students' life experiences on South African university campuses, or even this one campus, these particular participants, who occupy a precarious social position as a result of their sexual orientation, provide us with a barometer of sorts. By foregrounding the accounts and experiences of those who do not occupy the position of the dominant norm we are able to be alerted to the ways in which our presuppositions and practices might perpetuate relations of dominance and subordination and may not be as incorporative as we would hope them to be. On the other hand, to the extent that the experiences of the vulnerable and marginalised reflect positively on existing practices and social relations, this can be taken as an indication that policies embracing diversity and equality are being put into practice effectively. These participants then, offer a perspective that interrupts the dominant, taken-for-granted, heteronormativity of institutional life and show how, while formal policies provide a framework within which social relations play themselves out, we need to do more than merely legislate non-discrimination. Findings raise implications for transforming transformation in higher education in South Africa: from its preoccupation with the elimination of racial and gendered discriminatory practices to incorporating efforts aimed at challenging the broader heteronormative cultures that cause gay, lesbian and bisexual students to feel uncomfortable and dislocated while 'at home' in the university residence life.

University residences are places where students live. For some they become homes where intimate bonds are formed and expressed and this feeling of 'at homeness' plays a significant role in the well-being and academic performance of individual students. When home is experienced as comfortable it is characterised by a set of social relationships and support systems that fulfil the fundamental human need for recognition, acceptance, acknowledgement and welcoming on the part of others. Comfortable home environments provide their occupants with a sense of belonging, identity and freedom of self-expression. The opposite of belonging is ostracism – being ignored, marginalised, judged or excluded by those whose subject positions represent dominant orthodoxies. In addition to the usual student issues concerning academic performance

and financial constraints, homosexual students can be said to experience a 'double burden' because their sexual orientation creates another encumbrance in comparison to their heterosexual peers who do not necessarily need to worry about their sexuality being misrecognised, misinterpreted or devalued. On the other hand, when students who are gay, lesbian or bisexual encounter acceptance, support, understanding and an environment that normalises rather than exceptionalises their sexuality, they are able to flourish and be happy – they feel, in short, 'at home'. This, we argue, ought to be one of the key transformation goals of every institution of higher learning in South Africa.

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Chapter 11

Feeling at Home or Not at Home:
Negotiating gender, sexuality and race in residences
in an historically white university in South Africa

Megan Robertson and Rob Pattman

Introduction

Jonathan Jansen, who was appointed as the new rector of the University of the Free State in 2007, expressed little surprise about the “unprecedented campus crisis” which had propelled him to his new academic position. This crisis was precipitated by a video which went viral on YouTube. This featured black middle-aged cleaners who were humiliated in a mock initiation ceremony organised by white men students and was intended to parody the universities’ initial attempts to open up the residences to black and coloured students (see Pattman and Carolissen, Chapter 1 this volume).

The residences created spaces and opportunities for close and ‘intimate’ encounters and relations, and the intensity of the opposition of many white students to the introduction of black students into the residences, as exemplified in the making of this video, was motivated, according to Jansen, by fears about black students getting too close and encroaching on their ‘intimate’ spaces. This was in a context in which lack of integration between black and white students was the norm on campus and at home. Jansen argues that a “politics of intimacy was played out” in the residences, “with destructive consequences” with black students responding to the racism and resistance to their presence with anger and retaliation (Jansen, 2014).

Like UFS, Stellenbosch University (SU) is a formerly white Afrikaans University with residences which have been populated almost exclusively by white students until relatively recently. Twenty-four years into democracy, Stellenbosch still has a predominantly white student population. In 2014, 65% of all students were white, and 21 out of the 24 residences are single sex and populated mainly by white students, many of whom are second- or third-generation students with parents or grandparents who not only attended Stellenbosch but inhabited the same residences. Such residences continue a tradition of housing students with strong academic or sporting reputations (who have usually attended relatively affluent and well-resourced schools).

In response to pressures to 'transform', a residence placement policy was introduced in Stellenbosch in 2013/14 which aimed to promote 'diversity' in the residences by stipulating quotas of black/coloured/Indian students. This was in spite of heated opposition from student leaders, alumni and academics, and the local Afrikaans press, before it was passed.

In this chapter, we argue for ways of thinking about and researching transformation which raise questions about quality of relationships and levels of engagement between students from different and diverse backgrounds, mediated by a range of intersecting identifications such as race, gender and sexuality, and which engage with how 'diversity' is experienced, constructed and lived by students.

We explore students' accounts of residence and university life at Stellenbosch, drawing on focus group discussions with students in self-selected friendship groups in single-sex female and male residences. These discussions were facilitated by the first author, Megan, one was 'mono-racial' and two 'racially mixed'.¹

In the discussions, themes of belonging and/or marginalisation were very prominent and were often connected with accounts of what constituted social order in the residences. These were themes which her participants introduced, not Megan, thus signalling the significance these held for the students in their accounts of university and residence life. In analysing these accounts we draw on Judith Butler's understanding of *normative violence* which equates violence

1 The race categories to which we refer in this chapter (white, black and coloured) are ones which were used under apartheid. The question of how contributors to this volume tried to engage with race without contributing to its naturalisation and reification is addressed by Pattman and Carolissen in Chapter 1 of this volume. Our interest was in exploring the significance, if any, that these categories still held in the lives of the students participating in the research.

not with a physical act as such, but with certain kinds of normative prescriptions which are enacted through forms of social control and marginalisation. Do being members of their residences carry normative expectations? Are these normative expectations policed and are they racialised or gendered or sexualised and, if so, how? Do these mitigate against or open up possibilities of mixing across lines of race in what Jansen refers to as 'intimate spaces' in residences?

Researching students

Megan facilitated discussions with students in their friendship groups in relation to broad questions such as: How did you become friends? Why did you come to Stellenbosch? Why did you come to this residence? What do you like or not like about your residence? How did you find the interview?

She adopted a participatory, exploratory approach by picking up on issues and topics which the interviewees themselves raised, in response to these questions, and encouraging them to elaborate and discuss these. In order to facilitate this kind of discussion she tried to be empathetic and friendly, listening hard to her participants and also making them feel relaxed and welcome by conducting the interviews in their residences and offering them food and drink. Her concern was to put the onus on them to set the agenda and to talk about aspects of residence life which they viewed as significant to them. Precisely because these might be taken for granted by the student participants and because they might assume she, as a Stellenbosch student herself, might be familiar with these, she presented herself as an 'outsider' through the kinds of follow-up questions she posed, for example, constantly asking for examples and illustrations (See Pattman, 2015, for a discussion of this kind of participatory interview approach).

Significantly, she tended not to ask participants 'unsolicited' questions which were directly framed around gender and race. As Erwin (2012) argues, participants are more likely to monitor their responses if they are directly questioned about race without them raising this category themselves. However, race (as well as gender) and other social identifications and divisions emerged as significant themes for the participants in the discussions which these broad questions precipitated, and when and where this happened, Megan pursued these with them.

Friendship groups were selected by identifying individuals in the residences who were interested in participating in the research and asking them if they could choose two to five friends from the residence with whom they could be interviewed. We hoped that in these groups, students might feel relatively

free to share accounts of their experiences of residence life and normative expectations associated with this. We were interested not only in posing questions about how friendships and relations with other students came about and were sustained at the university, but also to observe how these relations were performed and played out in the focus groups themselves.

In this chapter, we draw on focus group discussions conducted with students in three self-selected friendship groups, one in Drakenstein and two in Blouberg. Drakenstein is a men's residence and one of the oldest residences on campus. In 2014 (when the research was conducted) it housed in total 287 students, 81% of whom were white, 14% coloured, and 5% black (Institutional Information, 2014). Blouberg is a women's residence and, like Drakenstein, has a long history, with many of its current students related to alumni spanning several generations. It is a relatively small residence, housing 189 students, 73% of whom are white, 15% coloured and 12% black (Institutional Information, 2014).

The Drakenstein focus group comprised two coloured first-generation men students, Wayne and Elton, and three white second-generation men students, Cole, Ian and Lee. Blouberg (1) comprised three white Afrikaans women – Lizhan, Nadia and Karli – who were second- or third-generation students; and Blouberg (2) featured Asie, a black, first-generation, woman student, Sam, a coloured first-generation woman student and Kelsey, a white second-generation Afrikaans woman student.

Reading focus group discussions as ethnographic encounters

We understand the focus group discussions not simply as devices for eliciting information about the (university or residence) 'world outside' the interviews, but as ethnographic encounters. How the participants 'perform' in the context of the focus group discussion, make certain kinds of identifications, invoke certain discourses about gender, culture, tradition and race, position themselves in particular ways in relation to these, and form relationships with other participants, constitute key findings in the research which we present and analyse.

When posing questions about how participants 'perform' in the focus group discussions, we draw on the way performativity has been conceptualised in the writings of Goffman (1959) and Butler (1990) who argue that identities are positions we construct through performances and how we perform and present ourselves depends on the social context. Since, in our view, the focus group

discussions represent one kind of social context, our analysis engages with how our participants 'perform' in these.

How do students perform in the focus group discussions and how do they negotiate their identities and versions of residence life and Stellenbosch with other participants, including Megan, in the focus groups? Do they suggest that there are certain kinds of normative expectations attached to being students in their residences? If so, how do these emerge in the discussions, and are they connected with processes of identity construction going on in these?

Butler argues that normative expectations with regard to gender become naturalised through repetitive and ritualised gendered performances so that they appear to reflect intrinsic features of womanhood and manhood. Gender, she claims, is something we do and perform and construct relationally rather than an essence we have that makes us behave in natural ways. But normative expectations regarding gender are not natural, and are produced through social forms of polarisation and exclusion which Butler characterises as "normative violence".

This concept seems at odds with 'common sense' associations of violence with a breakdown of social order. But Butler turns common sense understandings of the relationship between social order/disorder and violence on their heads. Normative violence is exemplified through informal processes of 'policing' normative categories which restrict desire, and render people deviant for transgressing these. This is clear in her account in *Gender Trouble* (1990) of the construction of social order based on the presumption of heteronormativity which, she argues, entails categorising and marginalising people in reductionist and dehumanising ways as purely sexual and as sexually deviant beings (Butler, 1990).

Drawing on Butler's concept of normative violence we are interested in exploring whether, and if so how, this is experienced and/or perpetrated by students in the residences and in the focus group discussions themselves. If so, what forms does this take, and how does this connect with race, gender and sexuality, and processes of identity construction?

Single-sex residences and normative expectations about gender and sexuality

The division of the predominantly white residences on campus into exclusively male and female institutions normalises and naturalises same-sex

friendships and circumscribes possibilities of cross-gendered friendships and identifications. This tends not to be noticed precisely because it is normalised and taken for granted. But practices of gender segregation in the residences carry particular normative assumptions about women and men which are inscribed and reproduced in everyday activities, such as signing in and signing out visitors.

Reflecting the gendered rules of the residences, Megan had to wait outside Blouberg for her participants to open the entrance door for her, whereas at Drakenstein visitors could come and go as they pleased. In Blouberg, there were also rules that required male visitors to leave at a specific time every evening.

Such rules may be understood as providing necessary forms of protection for vulnerable women from potentially abusive men, but they are also tied up with normative understandings of sexuality which construct men as more sexual than women and apply double sexual standards when assessing student 'reputation'. Thus, in her study of an all-female residence in Stellenbosch, Lorryn Williams (2013) found that women students could earn 'bad reputations' for having men in their rooms a few minutes after the alarm bells sounded, or for returning to their rooms late at night or early in the morning, as if deviating from norms of femininity promoted by the residence.

The division of students by gender in most of the residences in Stellenbosch may contribute, we argue, to forms of gender polarisation and to a fixation with sexuality, by making this the condition for the possibility of developing cross-gender relations between the single-sex residences.

In their study, published thirteen years ago, of the impact of sexual harassment policies at Stellenbosch University, Gouws, Kitzinger and Weinhold (2005:57) provide striking examples of how such relations are played out. These included initiation rituals such as 'panty raids', in which first-year students in male residences were expected to go into women's residences and 'raid' the underwear of women students, the compulsory dating of first-year men and women students, the forced showering of women by men students, and men students 'rating' women students according to their appearance.

Plugging the 'gender gap' through '*skakeling*'

According to the students who participated in the focus group discussions, the most obvious way in which residences today attempt to plug the 'gender gap' (which arguably they help create) is through the organisation of '*skakels*' in

which female and male students are invited to socialise with each other. While these occur in the mixed-gender residences, they assume particular significance in the single-sex residences precisely because the possibilities of meeting and socialising informally across lines of gender are much diminished in these. Like the 'panty raids' referred to above, they are heteronormative events in which men take the lead, but, in contrast to the 'panty raids' these are usually organised on quite formal lines which mimic conventional romantic narratives. Often the men and women are expected to line up facing each other. They then greet each other with a communal pre-arranged greeting, with members of the male residence collectively serenading members of the female residence, and then the men approach the women. Sometimes the males indicate the specific female with whom they have chosen to interact by giving her a gift of a rose, chocolate or other items. A few of these *skakels* take place throughout the first week and continue (although less frequently) throughout the first year and sometimes second year of a student's time in residence. *Skakels* take on different forms of socialising, from picnics, to dances, or simply talking to each other.

While *skakeling* may be understood as a cultural practice aimed at promoting social interaction and therefore social cohesion across lines of gender, our view is it plays upon and contributes to forms of gender polarisation by fetishising heterosexual coupledness as the only or proper space for bonding across gender lines. This contributes to the kinds of gender-polarised identifications the young men in the Drakenstein focus group make in which single-sex bonding and friendships are taken as the norm, and taken for granted. Significantly the topic of *skakeling* emerged in the Drakenstein focus group discussion when Megan asked the young men participants how they met each other and became friends:

- | | |
|-------|--|
| Lee | It just happens basically. You meet everyone at res. I can't really remember how I met these people. |
| Megan | Like what stuff do you guys do? Like give me examples. |
| Ian | <i>Skakels</i> . |
| Megan | <i>Skakels</i> , which are? |
| Ian | We get together. |

'We get together', does not refer, here, to cross-gender forms of socialising but bonding with other men with presumed similar heterosexual desires and roles to play in this choreographic heteronormative encounter. *Skakeling* also encourages heteronormative ways of thinking about gender and sexuality as illustrated in responses of surprise and laughter from students in the Drakenstein discussion, when Megan asked why they *skakeled* with women and

not men. The very idea of *skakeling* with men not only seemed unnatural ('that's how nature works', Ian said) but also un-masculine, as if their very status as men was defined through heterosexual desire and displayed when *skakeling* with women.

How they related to Megan and what this tells us about them

When Megan asked them about the aim of *skakeling*, Ian said, 'It is to be as romantic as possible', and when Megan asked, 'So is it to meet a girlfriend?' Wayne corrected her and said 'Girlfriends', a comment which resulted in uproarious laughter from the group. Their shared laughter, turned on their positioning as 'subjects' of what Wendy Hollway calls a "male sex drive discourse" (Hollway, 1979) which constructs men as having an uncontrollable sexual drive and women as objects of this, and is a feature of patriarchy. Their laughter implied that they were articulating desire in a way they deemed 'naughty' and in some ways glorifying in the transgression. Their shared humour provoked by Wayne's comment seemed to be enhanced by the fact that they were speaking to a woman, on to whom they projected certain assumptions about femininity which contrasted sharply with their own identifications as young men.

This interpretation is supported by their response to Megan's question at the end of the focus group discussion about whether the discussion would have been different if the interviewer had been a man. Their response was a resounding 'yes' and, accompanied by much laughter, they said they would have sworn, drunk beer and talked more about the girls they desired in *skakels*, as if lumping together swearing, drinking (beer) and sexual desire as naughty and surreptitious practices, in which only they, young men, could engage. It seems likely, then, that practising and talking about these became significant for them as resources through which they constructed bonds with other men in their residences. Perhaps this accounts for why they spoke about *skakeling* as something which helped them as boys to bond.

Megan also joined in the laughter precipitated by Wayne's remark, as 'I wanted to show the group that I also had a sense of humour, and I was trying to create a relationship in which they allowed me into their jokes'. Significantly, however, 'my laughter, as a female laughing about males sexually pursuing girls, seemed to make them uncomfortable as they quickly moved on to talk about other traditions in their residence' (Megan's research notes).

The presumption of heteronormativity

The presumption of heteronormativity which informed and was encouraged by *skakeling* was also shared by the participants in an all-female friendship group at Blouberg (Blouberg, 1) who spoke disparagingly about one *skakel* they had with another female residence:

- Lizhan It was 'stupid'
- Megan Why?
- Nadia So obviously we are girls and we want to meet guys. So at the *skakel* with girls' res it was like we already have friends.
- Megan You said obviously, why obviously?
- Nadia Because ... I don't know ... we have ... we only have two weeks so I would rather want to *skakel* with guys' reses than waste time *skakeling* with a girl res because we will just make new friends there. But I don't want new friends because I already have my friends.
- Karli Now that I am thinking about it, what if you are not a straight girl and then you have to *skakel* with a guy's residence.

We see very clearly here how *skakeling*, as it is usually practised, is premised on assumptions about gender and sexuality which sexualise cross-gendered forms of intimacy and construct such relations as special, in contrast to ordinary friendships which are presented as occurring between women or between men and as deriving from presumed similar interests. What is striking about Nadia's contribution is how she takes for granted the categorical distinctions she makes between potential friends, as people of the same sex, and potential girlfriends/boyfriends as people of the opposite sex. In fact her desire to engage with guys in a *skakel* is sexualised and presented (perhaps euphemistically) as 'obvious' by virtue of her being a girl. Interestingly, Megan's question encourages Karli to reflect on the presumption of heteronormativity informing their constructions of *skakeling*.

Black and coloured women raising concerns about *skakels*

What is notably absent from this white group of women and present in groups with black and coloured females participating in Megan's study are *skakeling* narratives in which race discrimination features strongly. Concerns were raised by black and coloured women students about being overlooked or rejected by potential male suitors in *skakels* who were almost exclusively white.

(See Yach Report [2011], which noted similar concerns expressed by black and coloured women students at Stellenbosch).

We focus here on one such story, and the reactions this generated in the Blouberg (2) focus group discussion, comprising Asie, a black woman, Kelsey, a white Afrikaans woman and Sam, a coloured woman. Asie narrated an incident where she was participating in a *skakel* in which all the first-year females in her residence had to throw their shoes in the centre of the room. A male from the other single-sex residence had to choose a shoe, and dance with the shoe's owner:

- Asie One picked my shoe. And then they just looked at me and threw it at me and laughed with their friends. So that was something that was really ... it hurt me a lot ... that's why I hate *skakels*. I hate them.
- Megan Why do you think he did that?
- Asie I think he did that because he was Afrikaans and obviously he didn't want to dance with a black girl. So ja.
- Megan So that experience made you not want to participate?
- Asie Ja because I was like maybe ... I'm not saying every guy in Stellenbosch is like that ... but it's something I am still dealing with and ja.
- Kelsey I think a lot of people who do not attend *skakels* very often are likely to be put off if they have a bad experience. Whereas when you are continually involved, you know it's fun even if you have a bad experience. You have good experiences too so you will come back even if you had a bad experience.
- Megan Have you ever had a bad experience like her?
- Kelsey We went to Stones [a drinking place in Stellenbosch]. And for a certain period of time I was not there. And I put in all this effort and I got there late. So yeah that was not a good experience for me. Because I got there and then nobody was there. So there have been bad experiences but in general I enjoyed it.

In her research notes, Megan describes the moment after Kelsey spoke as 'very tense' and 'quiet'. Kelsey responds in a way which precludes any kind of empathetic identification concerning her violation as a woman, let alone the racialisation of the event to which Asie alludes. She makes light of her story, and presents this as just a bad experience of similar scope and magnitude to the one

she had when she arrived late for a *skakel* and found no-one was there. Indeed, far from showing empathy and sympathy, she implies she should not dwell too much on this bad experience, and attend *skakels* more often, like her, Kelsey, so she can enjoy the generally good experiences.

This focus group discussion seemed to demonstrate how little weight Asie's voice carried when articulating the kind of normative violence she experienced as a black woman given that Kelsey, one of her friends, failed so dramatically to empathise with and take seriously her experiences of discrimination in residence activities. It could be argued, indeed, that Kelsey's response is itself a form of normative violence which effectively silences black woman students.

Sexuality, gender and race and the economy of popularity in residences

Rendering certain categories of people less than human is a feature of normative violence, as Butler (2004:20) elaborates, when she raises questions about the relative worth and status of the lives of people marked as different and *Other*. 'Whose lives count as lives? Who counts as human?' she asks. This, we argue, features in the kinds of racialised practices that particularly warrant recognition and reward, and are tied up in the Blouberg and Drakenstein focus group discussions with particular gendered idealisations of residential practices.

Certain versions of masculinity and femininity became (implicitly) constructed as normal in the focus group discussions which entailed the denigration of people for 'failing' to live up to these perceived gendered norms. In the extracts below we see, for example, how celebrations of residences as imagined brotherhoods or sisterhoods marked by participatory commitments to rugby or dancing and *skakeling* (emphasised respectively in the Drakenstein and Blouberg focus groups) also involved blaming students for failing to participate adequately in these, and how their 'failure' was institutionalised and made very visible.

Imagined brotherhoods, rugby and *sluipers* in Drakenstein

In the Drakenstein focus group discussion much significance was attached to rugby, and watching and supporting the residence team, in contributing to what Ian described as a sense of 'brotherhood'. Rugby was presented not as a sport they as individuals happened to like to watch or play. Rather it was constructed as an important symbolic medium through which members of the residence

demonstrated their commitment to and identification with Drakenstein as an ‘imagined community’:²

- Megan So does everybody have to take part? [in playing rugby]
- Elton Not really take part but rugby is the biggest sport here on res. So when they do play everybody goes to watch and afterwards just sing the house anthem.
- Megan So does everybody have to go?
- Elton No.
- Ian But everybody puts on their sports jerseys and go watch and it’s nice because there is this unity. It’s about brotherhood.
- Cole You do not really want to be that person who does not partake [in initiation activities] because then you will be that person who not a lot of people know.
- Megan So who are the kind of people who don’t take part?
- Ian *Sluipers*. [Laughter from the group]

Megan did not expect to be given a category of person, in response to her last question above, as if the category ‘explained’ the ‘kind of people who don’t take part’. When translated into English, *sluiper* means ‘slacker’ or someone who does not carry his/her weight to continue the work of the community. When asked by Megan to explain *sluiper* they pointed to examples around them. One student, an Afrikaans white male, walked past and was identified in hushed tones, with muted giggles, by people in the group. Clearly *sluiper* was a category which was commonly invoked, and was considered quite taboo.

Their familiarity with the category ‘*sluiper*’ and the significance it holds for these students resonates, we argue, with a culture which places much emphasis on symbolic displays (and tests) of commitment to the collective. Such displays are naturalised, normalised and taken for granted, so that it is deviations from these that attract attention and produce a particular category – the ‘*sluiper*’ – which explains ‘deviations’ by delineating a category of person – asocial, a non-participant, and ‘outcast’, to use Ian’s words. The category ‘*sluiper*’ then contributes to forms of self-policing and policing others in order to avoid being categorised in such publicly humiliating ways.

2 This is a term we borrow from Benedict Anderson, 1983, who argued, that participation in particular ritualised activities may generate a sense of deference to the nation which comes to be imagined as a close community.

The delineation of the '*sluiper*' happens not only on a symbolic but also a material level through the allocation of points for engaging in activities which are deemed as serving the interests of the collective. Points are accrued for supporting the residence in rugby matches and more points are earned by playing for the residence.

Drakenstein has three rugby teams reflecting levels of ability and those who are selected for the first team are awarded the most points, as if students' commitment to the collective came to be measured on the basis of their prowess at rugby. When Megan asked why rugby featured so strongly in the allocation of points at Drakenstein she was told it was because rugby was so 'popular' in terms of the numbers of people who played and watched it. The main beneficiaries of the points system were those deemed the residence's most visible flagbearers, such as rugby players and people who served on residence committees, and the points they accrued entitled them to the best rooms. This was in marked and implicit contrast to the *sluipers* who were presented as peripheral and invisible figures. Yet the irony was that the construction of the *sluiper* played a key role in the imagination of the residence as community, based on an economy of popularity.

In imagining the residence as a 'brotherhood', as Ian does, it may be that the category '*sluiper*', as invoked against boys for their presumed failure to show support for the residence's rugby team, carries accusatory connotations of effeminacy, as if such boys were not only letting down their residence but also were not being proper males.³ In South Africa there is a tradition in white, and formerly white universities and single-sex male schools of associating sport (and notably rugby) with (white) male character building (Morrell, 1995).⁴

Interestingly, '*sluiper*' was usually applied to white rather than black or coloured students. Presumably the assumption is that white students have more in common with each other than black or coloured, and further, that the residence activities are oriented to what are constructed as white interests, such as rugby, so that a white person who is seen as not participating adequately in residence

3 In 2012, a student residence leader in another male residence made it clear that he was 'not a supporter of gays', following a presentation by the Student Representative Council to welcome first-year students to this residence. The presentation addressed issues including sex and sexuality. One of the presentation team, a member of the university's LesbiGay Organisation, was reported as saying that when the student leader made this remark, 'a couple of the first years started clapping their hands. And the next thing I knew all of the boys were applauding and rejoicing this statement.' *The Cape Times*, 5 March 2012.

4 See also Bhana (2008) and Pattman and Bhana (2010) on the policing of white masculinities in schools through rugby.

activities is deemed more culpable than a black or coloured person whose failure to participate could be attributed to cultural differences. But if the presumption of cultural differences may lessen the chances of black or coloured people being called ‘*sluipers*’ for not participating enthusiastically in the residence’s culture of rugby, it still presents this as the norm and institutionalises participation in this as a key source of recognition and esteem.

Imagined sisterhoods, dodgy passages and roommates in Blouberg

Women students were blamed in Blouberg(1) for failing to participate in *skakels* and dances, yet these were heteronormative occasions which *invisibly* excluded or marginalised students who shared same-sex desires. They were also, as it emerged from concerns raised by black and coloured women students, occasions from which students were invisibly excluded or marginalised by virtue of race. The invisibility of these forms of marginalisation and exclusion were highlighted in the presumption that it was ‘natural’ and ‘obvious’ that *skakels* take place between *opposite* sex residences and only women who were non-social or deviated from Western values (as if being non-social and not subscribing to Western values might be linked) excluded themselves, as presented in the extracts below.

Like the Drakenstein students, the Blouberg(1) participants spoke enthusiastically about the economy of popularity which operated in their residence in which points were awarded to individuals for their presumed contribution to the collective, which entitled them to their pick of the rooms. This theme emerged when they were reflecting on the quality of living spaces in different parts of the residence as if there were a symbiotic relationship between these and the type of people living there:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Lizhan | We have a dodgy passage ... that’s for people who are in res but do not want to be in res. |
| Nadia | It’s dark. The porch is over it so the sun doesn’t come in. |
| Karli | And it’s noisy. You have to walk past there to get to the cafeteria. |

This clearly stood out for these girls as an uncomfortable and incongruous space to have a room in Blouberg. When Megan asked them to elaborate on the people who occupied these rooms, they went on to describe their roommates as ‘dodgy passage’ residents of the future, who would end up here in the second year when room allocation became subject to student choice and this would be circumscribed by their failure to ‘earn’ ‘house points’:

- Nadia Like my roommate. She doesn't do the whole res thing. She didn't do one committee.
- Lizhan My roommate as well had a terrible time during welcoming week because we had to be downstairs at the same time. But she didn't care. I had to run up and down the stairs to go fetch her. She doesn't want to get involved.

They spoke about them as if they held radically different values from their own which conflicted with the collective demands of residence life, and this prompted Megan to ask whether they saw their roommates as similar or different in connection with race. This was the only time she introduced the theme of race in a focus group discussion:

- Nadia My roommate is coloured. She did not join any committee but she was very involved in outreach.⁵ And outreach also gets a lot of room points. So she did badly because of the dances we have to go to. But then you also get some of the white girls who don't do anything either.
- Lizhan You get room points for going to *skakels* and my roommate is not particularly social. The *skakels* we have are more like a Western culture.
- Karli It is more Afrikaans.
- Lizhan Yes, it is for Afrikaans people.

These responses, we suggest, offer insights regarding the racialisation of power relations in the residence, but also exemplify how these are played down by the students.

Significantly, when Nadia mentions that her roommate is coloured she speaks about her involvement in outreach for which she indicates she is well rewarded with house points, as if the residence recognised her contribution to this kind of work in poor, predominantly black or coloured communities and that she is not disadvantaged by being coloured. But this seems not to compensate much for points she loses for not attending the 'dances we have to go to'. Nadia then refers to 'some of the white girls who don't do anything either' as if confirming what really counts in terms of marks is participating in 'house' (or residence) dances. In this way she minimises the influence of race in relation to this.

5 Doing voluntary work in poorly resourced institutions such as schools in local predominantly black and coloured townships.

Lizhan does not even mention her roommate's race, and attributes her antipathy towards *skakels*, which she cites as a point-scoring residential activity, to her personality which is 'not particularly social'. She also implies, however, that she does not subscribe to 'Western cultural values', which, she claims, *skakels* embody. Thus Lizhan seems to position herself as an African woman in contrast to a Western or (after Karli's intervention) Afrikaans one, with different cultural values. What is notably absent in such an account is any understanding of the kinds of concerns raised by black and coloured women in Megan's research, including Asie's in the Blouberg (2) focus group, of how racialised and how debilitating *skakels* could be for them. Furthermore, while this account of her roommate may appear to Lizhan and the others in this focus group as a description of what her roommate is really like, it operates, in this discursive context, to render her roommate an outsider.

Concluding comments

In Stellenbosch contemporary concerns about 'diversity' in the residences have focused, not surprisingly, on *race* given Stellenbosch's status as a formerly white university and the significance historically attached to residences as affluent and privileged spaces in the heart of campus for its best students (as judged by academic and sporting achievements and family ties and connections). But our research on diversity and how this is experienced and constructed by black, white and coloured men and women first-year students in exclusively female and male residences, raises questions about gender and sexuality as well as race, and how all three intersect and operate in the social construction of normative expectations and normative violence.

The focus group discussions provided exemplars of how normative orders were negotiated, how certain voices seemed to hold sway and others were marginalised, and how identifications and dis-identifications were made by the student participants in relation to race, gender and sexuality. Race, gender and sexuality were intertwined in the celebration and denigration of particular students and activities in the focus group discussions. In these, the interests of the residences were often framed invisibly in ways which marginalised or excluded students in relation to race, gender and sexuality.

Such activities could be invoked in ways that rendered various people in the residences, who were adjudged as failing to participate sufficiently in these, as outsiders. The effect of this was to contribute to forms of marginalisation and polarisation by race, gender and sexuality. But this was obscured, as exemplified in some of the focus group discussions with mainly white students,

by a tendency to skirt discursively around 'race' or reduce race to 'culture' (see Durrheim et al., 2011; Pattman, 2010; and Steyn & Foster, 2008, for elaboration of such discursive strategies and how and why these are deployed).

The focus group discussions were pedagogic as well as research activities, in which students were encouraged through the kinds of questions Megan put to think critically about relationships and identifications they took for granted. While Megan was concerned not to contribute to the reification of race by posing questions about race unless the participants had already touched on these themselves, she was equally concerned to explore the unarticulated significance race might hold, along with gender and sexuality, in terms of how they categorised themselves and others and made sense of their experiences of residence life.

This meant, for example, asking the Blouberg (1) women students why 'obviously' they wanted to *skakel* with boys, or putting questions to them about the *race* of their roommates whom they constructed as fundamentally different from them, and as 'low point scorers', in terms of conventional measures of residence participation. She felt ethically obliged in Blouberg (2) to intervene in a way which validated Asie's contribution in the face of Kelsey's colour-blind response, but her approach was not to take sides with Asie rather than Kelsey, but to encourage them to listen hard to what they were saying, as she, as facilitator, was trying to do with all of them. This meant, in this case, asking Kelsey to focus on what Asie had said about being rejected because she was black.

Such discussions with students in and outside friendship groups, may offer examples of powerful pedagogic practices in the context of 'transformation', concerned with promoting communities across lines of gender, race and sexuality where students feel a sense of belonging and integration.

This research, we argue, carries powerful pedagogic implications in terms of contributing to ways of imagining what a public university could and should be like in the post-apartheid context. The significance and importance of this research for many students was demonstrated when Megan presented her research in a lecture on a second-year undergraduate course coordinated by Rob on Race. One could hear a pin drop in the packed lecture theatre filled with over 300 students, so absorbed were they in Megan's reflections on her research findings. Not only was Megan 'de-colonising' the curriculum by engaging with everyday social practices in the university and the kinds of subjectivities and power relations these produce, but also transforming the lecture theatre from a

space which often reinforces older lecturers as figures of authority and students as deferential learners, into one in which they were participating by posing questions, making comments, and through laughter and groans, especially when Megan was talking about *skakeling*.

The issues that Megan raised, seemed to resonate with the concerns of many of the students (especially black and coloured women students) in the lecture theatre, though white students, and particularly white women students, also participated and engaged with Megan in very supportive ways. The fact, too, that here was a young coloured woman presenting a lecture based on research which made Stellenbosch and its residences, as experienced and constructed by students, its central focus, made this a particularly enthralling session for many students, and afterwards Megan was congratulated by many students who chatted to her and hugged her.

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Chapter 12

'Everything and the Kitchen Sink': Being 'at home' in South African universities

Jill Bradbury and Jude Clark¹

This chapter explores questions of belonging and alienation in South African universities and traces intersectional lines of ambivalent identification. The entry point for this exploration is a narrative vignette about conflict between South African students and international US students in a University of KwaZulu-Natal residence a decade ago. Although the event was subsequently described as simply a 'clash of cultures' or misunderstanding between the two groups, it reveals a great deal about how university spaces are experienced, who defines the parameters of intellectual and social life, who feels 'at home' and who feels estranged, and why. Focusing on this earlier story from our present vantage point, in relation to the ongoing critical moments of the Student Movement of 2015 and beyond, has two analytic benefits:

1. We find the premonitory signs of our current higher education crisis that were there in clear sight but that we failed to read.
2. The story gives us some temporal distance through which to read current events, disentangling and rethinking dimensions of difference and the intersectionality of the students' struggle.

The chapter provides a narrative account of student experiences of being 'at home' on South African university campuses at two different historical

¹ An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the International Conference of Community Psychology, Durban, May 2016.

moments – before and after the contemporary Student Movement. These moments should not be conflated or equated but offer us different vantage points for meaning-making, enabling us to read the past through the present (the then-future of those earlier events) and highlighting the traces of this past that may be difficult to discern and analytically attend to in the flurry and noise of current events. As Kierkegaard (as cited in Crites, 1986) so pithily observed, understanding is retrospectively generated while we are compelled to live forward. The intergenerational space of universities in general, and of South African universities in particular, underscores the imperative to ‘live forwards’ *with understanding*. Narrative meaning-making entails back-and-forth oscillations in time (and in the spatialised time of text) and Ricoeur (1981:144) argues that far from presenting an obstacle to interpretation, this “distanciation is the condition of appropriation”. We have written this narrative from our viewpoints of then-and-now and from our different perspectives. We are both academics in the discipline of psychology, both grappling with questions of transformation in the learning-teaching process and more widely in the university context and beyond but differently positioned by race (Jill is white, Jude is black). In addition, in this recounted experience, we were engaging with students in different roles and spaces (Jill, as lecturer in the formal teaching and learning frame of the lecture theatre; Jude, as facilitator in the context of a student meeting in the residence.)

The kitchen sink: Jill’s story

One morning, I stood at the front of a third-year class, ready to begin the lecture, when I noticed in the doorway at the back, a student agitatedly trying to catch my attention. She was a US exchange student, let’s call her Amy, spending a semester in South Africa, broadening her education and simultaneously enriching my students’ engagement by bringing another perspective to debates. I went to speak to her and she hurriedly explained that she couldn’t attend the lecture as there had been an ‘incident’ in the residence. She was distraught, and going to see a counsellor. I gave my lecture.

After class, the Class Representative came to tell me her version of events. Both students were staying in the same residence, as were the full cohort of American exchange students, and the Class Rep was also the House President of the residence. The Class Rep, let’s call her Busi, told me that the previous evening the American students had been “doing their hair in the kitchen sink”. She told me this with disgust, contempt and shock, “Can you believe it?” I was rather puzzled, agreed with her sense that this was extremely strange, and asked why they hadn’t been using the bathroom ... was there a problem with the water or ...

“Not at all”, she said, “they just choose to do this despite the fact that we have told them not to.” She expressed absolute exasperation and told me: “We chased them out from the kitchen.”

A little while later, Amy appeared in my office, extremely anxious, and told me that her parents were considering flying her home. I asked why, as this seemed an over-reaction given a simple disagreement in the residence. Wide-eyed, she said she didn't feel it was an over-reaction given the violence of the event. When I seemed surprised, she told me how she and her fellow American students had been chased by South African students through the residence passages, running to lock themselves in their rooms, with the South African women banging on their doors and shouting in Zulu – the only word she understood, angrily repeated, “*Shaya!*” “But no-one was hurt”, I said. “Not the point”, she said, “we were threatened, threatened with violence, and that's not ok.” I had to concede that indeed it was not and I would talk to Busi.

My conversation with Busi started with this ‘violence’ to which she responded by giving me back what I had told Amy: “No-one was hurt.” She explained that “[t]hey wouldn't listen when we told them nicely so this was our only option”. And she then told me that “the American students keep insulting us, keep telling us that things are ‘backward’ here, that they don't do it like this at home and then they do something so uncivilised, using the kitchen sink to do their hair!”

A university residence is not home and for many young people it's the first time they have lived ‘away from home’. It is, however, a place where the right to be there, to live there, is defined by the status of student identity, belonging to the university community, providing a new place of belonging and a new network of people. Students should feel ‘at home’ in residence, safe in residence. Even when they feel discomfort or alienation in classrooms (which is another topic) they should feel relaxed and at home in residence – a home away from home. The kitchen sink story alerts us to the unevenness of such feelings of belonging. It was a women-only residence so the conflict did not seem to be related to questions of safety or gender-based violence. The most obvious dimension of difference in South African universities, race, is *ostensibly* not at play in this story of the kitchen sink: all the students were black. But neither is this story best understood in relation to national identity or in the analytic terms of xenophobia, happening before the xenophobic attacks of 2008 and significantly, the ‘others’ were American rather than African, not typically the targets of the subsequent waves of heightened xenophobia on or off campuses. The dimension of class did seem to be central to my initial attempts to understand the event, or get a sense of the experience of the event. In comparison with

family homes, South African university residences are probably experienced by the American students as ‘roughing it’ although perhaps not unexpectedly so for a ‘safari trip to Africa’ and offset by the novelty and temporary nature of the exchange programme. By contrast, for some South African students, residence accommodation is luxurious by comparison with home, perhaps for many the first time that a young woman finds herself with a ‘room to call her own’.

The ways in which these students experienced the living space of residences, challenge us to think about who is defined as belonging, and conversely, who is defined as ‘foreign’, who is alienated and how wider social (even global) processes play themselves out in the intimate spaces of personal interaction. The American students were visitors (despite the hyphenated self-definition of African-American), the South African students, hosts. Each group has attendant obligations and expectations, niceties and politenesses requisite for sharing intimate space with those who are not family: hosts are bound to try and make visitors feel ‘at home’ (certainly safe and not threatened); visitors are bound to treat with respect the patterns of life in the home that they visit. In the kitchen sink story, it was the foreigners who felt entitled to use the space in ways that aligned with their own taken-for-granted cultural practices, South Africans who felt displaced, disregarded and disrespected in multiple ostensibly minor ways; like a kind of “repetitive stress injury that eventually hurt too badly to ignore” (Bradbury, 2017:22).

But I was pretty stuck: each version of events seemed reasonable in its own terms, both groups of students were in some sense ‘my students’ to whom I was accountable but I felt lost in translation between them. I called Jude Clark (the co-author of this chapter) as it was clear that we needed skilled intervention and conflict resolution if these women were to continue to live together!

Everything and the kitchen sink: Jude’s story

As I sat with this group of young black women students trying to figure out how things had got to that point, the first thing that became clear was that although these young women were obtaining new knowledge and skills as part of their university curriculum, they were really at a loss when trying to speak and listen to each other across the divides of their different histories, experiences, assumptions and positions. Furthermore, when they got close to naming the ‘thing beneath the thing’ that was triggering their anger, hurt or shame, these very emotions seemed to become another obstacle to speaking their truth and hearing another’s, with common responses being either retreating into silence or loud explosions of emotion. They (and most of us) had not been taught how

to engage in dialogue aimed at getting to the root cause of a problem. Any authentic transformative conversation in which speaking one's personal truth leads into truth-telling about power, privilege, dominance and oppression, is a "courageous conversation" (Singleton & Curtis, 2006). We are never taught how the work of these conversations is invariably emotional labour, and involves discomfort and non-closure as necessary elements of the process.

The first part of our uncomfortable courageous conversation focused on the issue of the kitchen sink and notions of culture. The South African women were shocked and horrified by the use of that particular space for that particular practice. The American students were nonplussed saying that they did not see what the big deal was and that the South African students were over-reacting and creating a drama when there was none. The South African students in the first instance described their shock at the practice in terms of culture – "in our culture we never do that". However that explanation shifted as they voiced their disbelief that there could be anyone (here alluding to anyone *black*), who would not know that it was totally inappropriate to use a space used to prepare and deal with food to clean parts of the body. They then said that the persistence of the African American students in response to their request that the 'sink practice' stop was an intentional act of disrespect. Bringing the issue of respect into the conversation moved us away from the discourse of a simple difference in culture and a little closer to the nub, as the South African students described the cause of the tension as being linked to the fact that they experienced the American students as "thinking they are better than us", as "looking down on us". As a way of naming this, the South African students described the American students as "acting white". One example that South African students cited as proof of how the American students embodied and performed a "white" sense of entitlement and dominance within the university space had to do with dress. They described how the American women dressed casually (in track pants and t-shirts) to attend lectures, making no effort to look 'decent', wearing the kinds of clothes that the South African students said they wore inside the house, usually when *cleaning* the house. What the South African students were alluding to however, had to do with much more than dress, it had to do with embodiment and performativity – it was about how easily and casually (literally) the black Americans seemed to be navigating the university space and place (and system), without showing any obvious signs of marginalisation or alienation, discomfort or unease. They were performing a sense of being 'at home' rather than displacement in stark contrast to the South African students' own sense of alienation on the university campus. Even the phrase 'making an effort' is a powerful descriptor, articulating the huge emotional, physical, psychic, financial investment ('effort' or 'toll') it takes on black South

African students just to move within the university space on a daily basis. More recently, in another context, someone described her experience of being black at a historically white university in South Africa as represented by the isiZulu saying: *'sengihleli ngesinqe esisodwa'*, literally, 'feeling as if you are sitting on only one bum/half of your arse'; metaphorically, not being encouraged to get too comfortable or too settled, feeling unwelcome, knowing this is not your place and always tentatively poised to move on or ready to get out of the place in a hurry.

Belonging is about worth, about feeling that a space is yours to claim and there was something in the American students' performance of cultural dominance and privilege and ownership of the space that held up a mirror to the South African students' experience of subordination in a space that was supposedly theirs. The American students could not understand the South African students' description of their experience of being made to feel 'less than' and they denied the assertion that they had rejected South African students' attempts to befriend them, choosing to 'stick to themselves'. One of the young American women very strongly asserted her individual right to befriend and 'move with' whomever she chose and said that she felt more comfortable with other American students who were 'like her' and to whom she could easily relate. She pronounced very clearly that she would not be pressured into contact with others she wouldn't normally mix with. This triggered a strong reaction in the SA students and a profound moment in the conversation where South African students used a thinly veiled threat of retaliation against the U.S. students if they didn't make an effort to 'belong' with them (what I read as a request for a recognition of their common humanity). The threat was a very specific one. They said things along the lines of: "You are only safe here because we allow you to be safe – anything could happen to you ... you know things happen on this campus, guys do things ... we could just say the word, and you would not be ok." This was a clear allusion to having the power to orchestrate an attack of violence, presumably sexual violence, appropriating the trope of the threatening black male body as a sexual weapon. This moved our conversation back into heated polarised positions and we needed to almost start again, trying to hear each other and speak our truths in order to work our way out of the deadlock. Of note was the fact that despite the American students' commitment to be part of the conversation, to work towards a non-violent resolution, in their privilege and dominance they had the luxury of obliviousness, unable to see how they were moving in the university space with a relative degree of comfort and cultural authority. Furthermore, by not fully hearing the experiences of South African students (and in fact negating

some of these as unfounded), they left their peers feeling as if they had no option but violence as a response.

The African American author Zora Neale Hurston (1990/1937:21), in her book, *Their eyes were watching God*, says: "There are years that ask questions and years that answer." Perhaps that year of 'everything and the kitchen sink' was a year that asked questions and warned us to pay closer attention to how we see and hear and name these spatialised articulations of struggle and daily lived experience within the hallowed walls of tertiary institutions. Certainly in the last few years, student protest on South African campuses has provided a critical response to questions that have been simmering just beneath the surface, questions about historical continuities and discontinuities in systems of dominance, privilege and power, questions about belonging and being at home within residences and beyond.

Mapping this story to the student movement, 2015 and beyond

Retrospectively, it is quite evident that the key analytic concept of *intersectionality* (Crenshaw, 1991) was necessary to unlock the impasse of attempting to rationally assess the incommensurable rights and wrongs by sticking to the surface facts of the matter, and for engaging the students' affective experience of events. "Intersectionality" has been a defining feature of both action and analysis in the current Student Movement. What has also been a defining quality for many of us, students and academics alike, is the difficulty of analysis when immersed in action. How does one make sense when you are in-sensed? The embodied moments of elation and anxiety, hope and despair, resonate with the conceptions and experiences of 'violence' in the kitchen sink story: What are the options for action in the face of institutional deafness, in the face of the blindness of the political establishment? It is interesting that although this story is one that we knew was important to write, it has surfaced so strongly and insistently as a visceral memory, now, in this context. Retrospectively, we are able to read what was at the time illegible. But this cameo also enables us to analyse what is happening now, gives us a new vantage point from which to see the emerging moments of something that is still in process, still happening. In the same way that the kitchen sink story was about *everything*, not just the kitchen sink, the current student movement is about *everything*, not just the big critical questions of financial access and decolonising the curriculum. However, it is helpful to disentangle moments in the Movement for analysis, separate out the threads that make up this 'everything'.

#RhodesMustFall

Black South Africans' citizenship (and the rights that come with citizenship) despite being constitutionally and politically certain, remains experienced as precarious, and black students, despite legitimate student status, in many respects continue to experience their rights within universities as conditional, contingent, marginal, circumscribed by the terms of the other, overshadowed by foreign fossilised products of knowledge and petrified statues celebrating their conquest, and alienated by the languages of instruction, the languages of knowledge and power.

It is worth noting (and deeply saddening) that after months of shared living space at the University of KwaZulu-Natal where the lingua franca is isiZulu, the only Zulu word recognisable to American ears was 'Shaya!' The Open Stellenbosch movement and the 'Luister' video (Contraband Cape Town, 2015), alerts us to the importance of language and power, the way in which colonial history is not only spatially inscribed, but literally spoken into being, enacted on a daily basis. The feeling of being 'at home', of belonging, is formed in our talk, in our stories and histories, and in our practices, the taken-for-granted habits of our 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 2000), the ways in which our bodies occupy space and are positioned within space or the particular 'fields' (Bourdieu, 2000) of cultural life. These stories are told and retold, these practices are made and remade, both within families, or within 'private' homes, and circulate in public or social worlds, particularly in the construction of geographical location and physical landscapes in the making of the national 'home' or 'homeland'. University campuses are shot through with power, traditions of knowledge that literally buy graduates a spot on the upper rungs of the socio-economic hierarchy. The Rhodes statue on the steps of UCT may have been toppled, but the inequalities that it symbolised remain in place.

#FeesMustFall

The next critical moment was initiated in Johannesburg, not incidentally, the place where arguably the economic inequalities of the country are most concentrated, at Wits where discrepancies in wealth between students are quite evident, there in plain sight for all who have eyes to see. The attainment of 'Zero Percent' increase agreed to at the end of 2015, while a victory and serving to highlight students' financial difficulties for the nation, did little to change these inequalities. Universities everywhere, whether they admit to it or not, are involved in the business of reproduction, remaking the next generation along the same hierarchical lines. The reproduction of knowledge or

cultural capital (Bourdieu, 2000) serves to reproduce the world as we know it, in which some forms of labour are more highly valued than others, and where some forms of knowledge have greater exchange value in the marketplace. The advent of democracy in South Africa has meant that access to university education has opened up dramatically in the last couple of decades, with generational educational mobility accelerated, albeit for only a few. However, this has happened in a way that conceals the inequalities of schooling and class backgrounds from which our students come, re-inscribing notions of meritocracy based on innate intelligence and hard work, erasing historical (dis)advantage and assuming that the increases in university fees (which some analysts have argued have increased by 30% in real terms in the last decade)² affect us all equally. The financial precariousness of the majority of South African students runs like a raw nerve beneath the surface of ostensible community. Financial access to university study is only partially resolved at the point of registration. The South African students' objections to the 'kitchen sink practice' and the casual clothing of the American students are an articulation of anxieties about their own onerous performance of belonging in what is, by definition, a middle-class space.

The links between the student movement and the campaign to end the outsourcing of workers who perform tasks such as cleaning or gardening on campuses, make it clear that this is not so and that at least some students fully grasp the integrated economic system in which higher education is situated. The struggle is about class in its particular South African manifestation, raced and skewed by our history *and* tied to global scapes of capital and culture that continue to widen these gaps internationally. While some concessions were made around student funding, much of what happened at Wits and around the country in 2016 was about settling back into notions of non-racial, colour-blind 'fairness'. At the heart of this construction of 'fairness' is that education is a commodity to which you have rights by virtue of being able to pay or through 'earning' a bursary/scholarship in recognition of your innate talent. This notion of merit is naively abstracted from both class and race, and it seems that the toppling of statues or renaming of buildings, as symbolically important as these acts may be, has done little more than dent the edifice of the myth of meritocracy.

2 "The cost of a BA degree at Stellenbosch University had increased 30% in the decade between 2006 and 2015, and now requires 44% of average adult income, reminiscent of the time when higher education was a luxury good reserved for the elite" (Calitz & Fourie, 2016:6).

#RU Reference List

While the Student Movement is about ‘everything’, it is also very specifically about class as historically constructed in colonial peripheries and particularly through the recent raced history of apartheid social engineering. The 2016 articulation of the movement saw the spotlight fall on the third structural dimension of difference: gender and, importantly, sexuality. From the outset, although perhaps not always in very overt ways, the gendered nature of the struggle as reflected in the conceptualisation of particular forms of action and leadership styles, was contested. At the first public gathering on the Wits campus at the start of the #FeesMustFall campaign, women students came dressed in white shirts and doeks, singing competing struggle songs to signal to the male leadership that they had their own agenda. The leadership at Wits in 2015 included women in the key roles, the acting SRC president and the incoming president, and several images of the protests show these women at the front of marches alongside male leaders. The now infamous ANC doeks were donned by women at the front of the protests, simultaneously signalling political loyalties and a gendered position, highlighting the particular struggles of women. Resistance to this came not only from men but from women too, who argued that this would detract from common cause and the critical focus on fees.

The #RU Reference List, naming and shaming rapists at the Rhodes University, and subsequent defiant bare-breasted protest actions on campuses around the country (for example, in 2016 at Wits), has insistently centred the female body and the ways in which campuses continue to be experienced as not only alienating but dangerous, for all black bodies but, particularly, for female and queer bodies. The demands for the inclusion and centring of gendered sexualities in the transformation project return us to considerations of the intimate, relational, embodied and ostensibly ‘private’ spaces of the ‘home’. The ‘kitchen-sink’ story reverberates with these gendered intimacies and the potential violence of life in communal spaces that should be protective and secure. The task of transformation entails engaged responses to these provocations that alert us to the ways in which university spaces are experienced not only intellectually, but viscerally and affectively.

Conclusion

Narrative meaning-making is retrospective but always from the vantage point of the present with an interest in the future (Crites, 1986), enabling us to see the significance of past events in the light of the present, and helping us to distinguish the interwoven threads of the present picture. By re-reading

the past and using it to read the present, we can hopefully find ways to act responsively towards imagining and constructing alternative futures. We offer this recollected narrative towards this imaginative transformative project. The use of a kitchen sink to wash and straighten hair may seem to be of little significance in the light of the current powerful Student Movement. But it reminds us of the ways in which multiple lines of difference and alienation reinforce each other, generally consigning women's experiences of race and class to the margins. Re-centring them, as women and transgendered students are doing now, enables us to see the intersectional nexus of power that continues to alienate those who belong and deserve to feel 'at home'.

The earlier story of interpersonal or intergroup conflict encapsulates and crystallises key aspects of the contemporary broad-based student movement. The stalemate between the students over the kitchen sink instantiates our current failure to talk to and listen to each other, our failure to imagine the position of the other. The dominant simply seem unable to "read the world" (Freire, 1973) and perpetually interpret the signs and practices of contemporary life only in relation to what is already known or ways of doing things that are familiar to them. They cannot hear or refuse to listen and are then surprised by and condemnatory of 'violence'. Those who are oppressed are exhausted by repeating themselves, repeatedly trying to make themselves understood in the language and on the terms of the other; feel themselves to be running out of options, with no imaginable alternatives; only violence or the threat of violence seems capable of waking the sleeping deaf and rending the veil of civility that conceals systemic structural violence, interrupting the repetitive strains and stresses of injury.

It is now perhaps commonplace that places are created not just through borders or walls or other markers of physical space, but through politics and history. This is what the social geographer Doreen Massey (1994) referred to as "time-space compression" or what Bakhtin (1981) calls the "chronotope" where these dimensions of experience are inextricably intertwined. Being 'at home' on universities' campuses and particularly in residences entails entering spaces imbued with meaning through intergenerational, temporal formulations, where "belonging and alienation" (Yuval-Davis, 2011) are perpetuated through the 'power geometry' (Massey, 1994) of how we inhabit space, in the distribution of both material capital and cultural capital in the 'habitus' of Bourdieu (2000).

We need to find ways to support students who are alienated by universities despite the fact that they legitimately belong. We need to change the contours of space, create alternative storylines and histories, new modes of life, even

while the historical “weight of the world” (Bourdieu, 2000) makes this feel impossible. It is imperative that we understand the dynamics of belonging and alienation, particularly as experienced and articulated by black women students, to transform learning and living spaces on university campuses and create new forms of intellectual community.

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Chapter 13

'We Have no Faces': The intersectional positionality of black South African women in STEM fields

Sabrina Liccardo

Introduction

Under the system of traditional law and culture which was reinforced by apartheid ideology, black women were situated at the lowest and most disadvantaged position in the racial and classed structure of society as the denial of their rights to custody of their children, own land, travel, seek employment and be elected as chief, locked them in a cycle of dependency on men for their livelihood (Andrews, 2001).

The subordination of black young people, and especially black young women, in universities in contemporary South Africa is reflected most conspicuously in their under-representation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects in higher education in South Africa. The racialised gender gap in STEM fields raises critical concerns surrounding the country's socio-democratic transformation efforts and the advancement of science and technology. Scientific knowledge increases social mobility and contributes to class and wealth formation. Black women will not be able to achieve equity in society if they are marginalised from society's power structures, including STEM fields and associated economic empowerment. Accordingly, the inclusion of black women in STEM fields is not only important for socio-economic development – as has been widely reported, there is an increasing scarcity of skills in South Africa, particularly in computer science, engineering, pharmaceuticals and physics (Council on Higher Education, 2009;

Department of Labour, 2006; Kraak, 2008) – but also for new intellectual and political possibilities.

This chapter focuses on how black South African women students who study STEM subjects experience this, and the ways in which they navigate institutional and disciplinary spaces that have historically been dominated by white masculinities and specific privileged forms of knowledge production processes. It is part of a wider qualitative study, which utilises a “biographic-narrative interview method” (Wengraf, 2011) to inquire into the lives of graduate students who were recipients of a STEM scholarship programme implemented at the University of the Witwatersrand, a historically white university. The goal of this programme was to provide first-generation, academically talented black¹ South African women from poorly resourced families with the necessary academic, social and financial support to graduate with STEM degrees. All the participants in my interview research were postgraduate students, graduates or dropouts in the fields of Science, Engineering and Architecture at the University of the Witwatersrand.

In the interviews I conducted with these women I asked them about their experiences of schooling as well as higher education, because I was interested in exploring whether schooling had or had not prepared them for being STEM students in university, in terms of the provision of social and cultural capital as well as intellectual resources. (On the role of schooling in South Africa in contributing to race and class inequalities in access to and qualitative experiences of higher education, see Chana Teeger’s and Adam Cooper’s chapters in Section 8 in this volume.) I also asked those who had graduated about their experiences of employment working in STEM fields following their graduation.

I interviewed 14 women, and while I quote below from only a few of them, these quotes are emblematic of recurring themes that arose in the interviews I conducted with the participants when discussing the transition from school to university, experiences at university and post university.

Findings

The findings indicate that there are four dominant themes that may partly explain how black women’s science² identities have been constrained within

1 I use the apartheid-era racial categories as redress measures. ‘Black’ is utilised as in the Employment Equity Act (1998) to refer to African, Coloured, and Indian individuals.

2 In this chapter, the term “science” or “scientist” is used broadly and includes the physical sciences, life sciences and applied sciences.

the intersecting locations of race, class and gender (Crenshaw, 1989) in relation to their past secondary schooling, present university or working life and projected futures.

Secondary schooling: the articulation gap

These women alluded to the “articulation gap” between their secondary schooling and preparedness for the academic demands of university (Department of Education, 1997). This was particularly wide for those who had attended poorly resourced predominantly black rural and township schools as opposed to Model C schools. These are formerly white schools that tend to be much better resourced than township and rural schools, largely because they are not only publicly funded, like rural and township schools, but charge fees, their main source of income. (For elaboration, see Chana Teeger: ‘Transformation as a Matter of State rather than Degree: Thinking beyond desegregation’, Chapter 27 in this volume.) Their contrasting experiences of attending former Model C schools versus rural and township schools demonstrate how class and racialised structures continue to create inequalities within the schooling system.

For instance, Naila likens her former Model C high school to a private school as “we had everything ... from academics and you know cultural activities to sports”. She believes that her exposure to the learning resources and recognition for her academic work instilled the “confidence [that she] can do anything” and the background knowledge that prepared her for academic success at university.

However, the women who attended high schools in rural areas and townships reported several challenges in obtaining basic learning resources, the unavailability of particular subjects, gaining the “proper background knowledge” and, as noted by Mamoratwa, insufficient career guidance:

And that’s [after graduation] when I actually noticed that there’s a huge disadvantage in being in small rural areas, where there aren’t people to tell you about or who actually give you career guidance. They, you know, you just get assumptions from people; you never get told the real thing. And still even in Applied Maths, I was probably the first one in my entire village who has ever done such a degree, and I didn’t know what I was going to do with it.

They also experienced difficulties with the English medium of instruction at university, which is not the mother tongue of the majority of students, particularly from rural and township schools. It is noteworthy that of the six scholarship students who were academically excluded or dropped out of

university, four attended high schools in township or rural areas.³ English proficiency is associated with ‘whiteness’ in South Africa and is the most highly valued form of linguistic and cultural capital (Mckinney, 2007). In South Africa, English is cypher for class. In the following extract, Takalani explains that she would only speak English at university “if [she] was requested to” as it would decrease the likelihood of people questioning her academic ability when she “mixed up English terms”:

But now at Wits you have to speak in English so I think, it got ... I had to keep quiet ... like ... I’d only speak if I was requested to ... what if I make a mistake? What if I don’t say it right? What if like my friends who used to laugh me at [high] school are now ... they’re laughing at me here and this is university, it’s not even school. They would feel like I was unfit to come here.

It is evident that the educational and socio-economic backgrounds of these women have manifested in unequal levels of background knowledge and preparedness for university, even though the STEM scholarship awards was welcomed, at least initially, by all the recipients I spoke to from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds, as a vehicle for upward social mobility which might enable these women to shift their family’s class positions.

University life: non-recognition and misrecognition

These women experienced racial and gender discrimination through the perceived preferential treatment that white and male students received from academic staff members. For instance, Welile mentioned that black students in science need to develop a “tough skin”:

It’s very hard, it needs you to have a tough skin ... all the white counterparts get all the help and all the assistance and then you need to just do things yourself and it’s a good thing, because it helps you to be independent but sometimes you just, you do need that same love that the others get ... the relationship between lecturer and [white] students became more intimate.

Instead of challenging these power dynamics, she converts it into a value for herself by proposing, “it helps you to be independent”.

Similarly, Alala felt ignored, invisible or non-recognised when comparing her interaction with the lectures to that of her white (male) counterparts:

3 Regarding the throughput rate of the scholarship programme, fourteen (70% of) students failed a year of study. Of these fourteen students, five students were academically excluded and one student dropped out of university.

I use to watch their [lecturer and white male students] interaction ... I used to watch the interaction with, maybe it's us, black students or whatever that weren't friendly enough or whatever but some, some students when they got greeted [by lecturers] they got handshakes, like 'hi Donald, hi Peter, how you doing? How was your weekend? Did your father fix that?' ... and I'm like, I'm thinking but you don't even remember my name ... it wasn't nice.

These extracts illustrate how non-recognition can be a form of oppression that is experienced by these women as “very hard”, “tough” or “not nice”. Thus, Welile and Alala are left with the task of dismantling the burden of covert racial and gender discrimination because they experience the institutional culture in science at Wits as being aligned with the cultural orientations of white and male students (Erasmus & De Wet, 2003).

After her matriculation from a former Model C high school for which she received a bursary Alala was awarded a STEM scholarship and subsequently enrolled for a BSc in architecture. After failing her repeat year of study, she recollects her struggles at university by providing an example of how her background was inextricably tied to the way in which she viewed architecture which did not conform to ‘Eurocentric’ norms and pedagogies:

The problem is they [lecturers] try and shape us into ... what ... they ... want ... us ... to be. And we can't, because, I think that's why we struggle. And also as a black woman, you're coming from a different background, you know. I remember there was a discussion in 'Schooltalk' about how, for example, it was about the whole Eurocentric teaching and ... I remember a key point was that in English houses or whatever you have, when you enter you have an entrance hall, with, I don't know mirrors or whatever, but with us – with black people – you have to go around the house, you don't enter in the front of the house. Those are the differences – I mean you grew up going around the house and for you, when you go in that design is imprinted in your mind. So when you put down stuff like that, that's what you have and if people won't hear you, hear where you come from, then obviously they won't understand ... And architecture was set, well, the curriculum was set in a certain, in a different way from what your background is ... so you've got your ideas – you're from a different background and you come, and you present these ideas that are real to you, that it's, it's about culture, it's about creating.

Instead of “hear[ing] [that] you're coming from a different background”, Alala feels that her lecturers “try and shape us into ... what ... they ... want ... us ... to be [through] Eurocentric teaching”. This was notable as point of contention which was shared between black women participating as recipients of scholarships on the same STEM undergraduate programme, as we see in the extract below in which Alala refers to her fellow student, Busisiwe, and her concerns about the programme.

In housing, she [Busisiwe] was upset about something, about people creating housing and not understanding what people need, so all these housing, these housing projects, they are just sort of – I don't remember what she said – like white architects, or architects that don't understand or don't, are not in tune with that sense of humanity ... her point was that you can't, you can't make our housing elitist especially when you're designing for a certain type of people that don't need elitist or that fancy stuff.

As illustrated in the extract below, Takalani is subjected to overt racism and sexism through misrecognition as her lecturer and peers do not view Takalani as a competent engineering student but rather as a black woman 'incapable' of understanding engineering work:

[B]eing the only black lady [in my third and fourth year class] ... I think lecturers lack to trust me, they didn't trust me and also the, because the lecturers couldn't trust me the kids in class also couldn't, cause the thing is while he's busy lecturing there, he would keep his eyes on me and he'll always ask if I understand, he'll never ask the whole class if they understand, he'll just bring it to me like, 'do you understand?', and then after the class, he'll be like [call my surname and say] 'please stay behind', then I would stay behind and he would be like 'did you really get that?' and I was like, 'yes I got it', 'you can come to my office if you need more lessons and stuff' he said and it was like 'why me?' [and then] the other kids starting seeing that I was the only black lady in class, so when we had to do groups ... I would be there left with no one and then the black guys as well would be like reluctant to work with me as well, so sometimes I find myself with no group ... some would even say 'no', like just say, 'no we can't work with her' ... so it was like 'what?'

It is clear that Takalani becomes a subject of misrecognition or 'disrupted recognition' because her race and gender have obstructed her lecturer and peers from recognising and trusting her academic abilities (Johnson, Brown, Carlone & Cuevas, 2011). These kinds of everyday incidents become vehicles through which lecturers, in positions of power and influence, reject black women's bid to be recognised as legitimate students in STEM fields. Instead, black women are ascribed academically deficient identities, which delegitimises their membership in a community of practice (Johnson et al., 2011). As a result, Takalani fights against her lecturer's sexist and racist stereotypes because she is placed in a position in which she needs to convince her peers that she will not be an incompetent team member.

In the following extract, Alala demonstrates how black women's raced and gendered identities are further complicated through the lack of encouragement offered to her by her lecturers and the patronising ways they related academically to her:

They [lecturers] would say, 'you're just, you just not there yet' ... I had, I had over designed it, or over thought it' [a class project in architecture], that's what he said and I had, I mean there was a simple solution but I couldn't find one so I worked on it, I worked on the detail and I tried to figure out different ways to make sure that the water doesn't go into the building, it worked, it was expensive, I understand, but it worked, and he said to me 'I had over designed it and that's why I would fail'. I mean if I'm over designing then doesn't that mean that I'm thinking about this and that I'm trying, and I actually got a solution, even though it wasn't an ideal one, it wasn't ideal, it would have been expensive, but then I had tried you know. I don't think overthinking is a problem, I don't think you fail a person for overthinking.

Alala believes that her lecturers did not “try and help me grow” when she had “overthought” possible solutions to a problem. The feedback she received from her lecturers was that “you're just not there yet and that's why you failed”. Ahrentzen and Anthony (1993:98) propose that the “master apprentice model that is reinforced in the design studio is highly patriarchal”. As a result, these ‘misters’ or ‘men as masters’ might occupy their positions of power without much reflection on the assumptions that inform their critique of different designs.

Similarly, Odirile maintains that her lecturers in architecture “don't give me a chance to explain myself or you don't explain to me [then] how am I supposed to learn?” Here, Alala and Odirile experience limited “epistemological access” (Morrow, 2007) to their discipline because they feel that they were not given an induction into the “epistemological activities underpinning a systematised form of inquiry” in architecture (Slonimsky & Shalem, 2006:37). These practices in the design studio within architecture may explain the “sense of self enclosure within the discipline, a closed circle of conversation where only architecturally trained researchers, themselves inculcated and encultured into the discipline, are seen to truly understand the identities, motivations, and idiosyncrasies of architects” (Stead, 2012:32).

hooks (2000:217) concludes that black women's “spirits have been broken again and again through rituals of disregard in which we were shamed by others or shamed ourselves”. These incidents of nonrecognition and misrecognition as experienced by Welile, Alala, Takalani and Odirile, could be viewed as rituals of disregard which have made these women feel “emotionally depressed” or “inferior”:

The lecturers that didn't, that always made you feel like, inferior and just put, put you down and just make you feel like you're not supposed to be there, or you're not worth you being there ... all I wanted is a fair chance and fair treatment, don't discriminate against me because me being female, me being black. (Odirile)

These women may have internalised the ascribed inferiority that “you’re not worth you being there” and thus, ‘not worth’ becoming legitimate members of a scientific community. It seems clear that classroom relations and mundane practices are marked by racialised, gendered and social class intersections that serve to ‘other’ and exclude black women students by devaluing their contributions, cultures and knowledge in ways that disempower them and compound the barriers that block their pathways through STEM fields. As a result, these women negotiate simultaneous feelings of belonging to and marginalisation from social and professional groups.

The racialised, gendered and middle-classed disciplinary and institutional cultures in STEM fields at historically white universities could be viewed as a form of “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 2004) in that it simultaneously provides black women access into a system that rewards those who possess particular forms of cultural capital (i.e. predominantly white men) as well as blocks their progression within this system, thus creating ancillary feelings of inferiority for black women students. The injustices of misrecognition are captured in a poem Alala wrote: “We have no faces, just scars and our delicate insides ... we must wear the face of a hungry lion ... let us find our way back to our race. Who is man? Human.” Here Alala alludes to how black people are treated as if they “have no faces”. As a result, they need to “wear the face of a hungry lion” to affirm their identities and humanity in defiance of racialised (gendered and class) intersections that mark their everyday spaces.

Working life and unemployment

Many of the women in this study struggled to find employment despite being chosen for a prestigious scholarship programme at an elitist university and graduating with postgraduate degrees within the notoriously difficult STEM fields. Kaiya notes: “And I was depressed a bit this year [my job applications] being rejected is a sad thing but I think I now know how to handle my emotions.” This sense of disappointment extended to their families who had expected these women, as first-generation students, to become the primary financial providers upon completing their education.

Alala, the only participant in this study who failed a year and was excluded from university⁴ refers to the impact this had on her and her family, raising

4 Alala was the only person who was academically excluded to voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

expectations only for these to be dashed. This seemed to be manifested in her mother's anxious and recurring dreams about "my situation right now [unemployment], me right now, and me doing nothing at the moment." Her mother dreamt of pulling out a bunch of carrots from the soil, however, she realised that the carrots were missing, and what she was holding were the stem and leaves:

Oh, my mother had a dream the other day, she's she so worried, she's so worried, and my situation right now, and she had a dream, she had, she had of carrots being, she was, I don't know, she was ... I don't know what to say, but she was getting carrots out of the soil, and then when she looks at them, there is no carrots, you know, there is no that orange part of it, it's not there – and she was so devastated by that dream ... we plant, we water it, and, and the farmer next door, and everyone his putting in hard work and sometimes we don't always, we don't always get the same, you know it's, grow underground, you don't know, putting in the effort and it's, it's a faith thing.

Alala's mother plants and waters a seed in hope that she will reap a harvest which is symbolic of her investing in Alala's education with her middle-class dream that Alala will distribute the harvest to their family. Cooper and Subotzky (2001:231) have noted that the main driving force for transformation in South Africa does not reside in institutional policies but rather in "the middle-class aspirations of black students and their families". The "farmers next door" (other families) also nurture their seeds (their children's education) with the expectation of a harvest (their children becoming the financial providers for their families). (On black families' investments in the children's futures as first-generation students at historically white universities, and how their children manage these high expectations in a university context in which they feel estranged, see Shabangu and Currie, 'Out of Sight: Beyond these walls, inside this machine'.)

While striving to be an independent professional was a shared aspiration which was held by all the black women STEM students with whom I spoke, many also expressed concerns about the lack of control they had over the outcome. This was powerfully expressed by Alala who claimed that in spite of "working myself to near death state", she could not control the outcome. It would seem that the current and increasing shortage of critical STEM skills in South Africa would guarantee employment opportunities for science students and graduates. However, these women quickly realised that "this is not a future that is guaranteed to all, but is rather racialised, classed and gendered toward white males and white women in our labour-market context – one that is still keen to exclude black graduates" (Qambela & Dlakavu, 2014:para 8).

For some of the black women I spoke to, the difficulties and hardships they experienced had motivated them to support and prepare high school learners for university studies more generally and STEM programmes more specifically:

[W]hen I start working and I have time and stuff, I think I'll, I'll go to schools, to like schools especially the school from where I come from because there have been a couple of kids who are coming from my school to do Aeronautical Engineering and I see them failing, going through the same struggle that I went through ... it's, very hard if you don't have like a proper background. (Takalani)

Here, Takalani views her scientific knowledge, engineering skills and life experiences as inseparable from her altruistic ambitions and desire to be of service to humanity. Through the cultural production of science, these young women are able to begin creating new “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1991) by re-appropriating what it means to be black women and scientists in post-apartheid South Africa. In addition, the category of scientist is also shifted and reinterpreted.

Conclusion

Although scientific knowledge increases social mobility, it continues to be distributed unequally, which perpetuates social inequalities. As I have argued and illustrated in this chapter access to and engagement with scientific knowledge in South Africa is highly gendered, racialised and classed. The student participation, graduation and dropout rates in higher education remain extremely racially skewed. In particular, black women in STEM fields continue to be grossly underrepresented. The exclusion of black South African women in STEM fields will continue to limit socio-economic development and new intellectual and political possibilities. This chapter thus challenges the political nature of scientific enquiry as difference and diverse perspectives serves as an impetus to problem solving activities, scientific explanations and innovation in science and technology.

Although scholarship programmes contribute to changing the demographics of STEM fields and assist black women who come from relatively poor socio-economic backgrounds to access STEM fields, the academic practices that exist at historically white universities and within STEM disciplines serve to exclude black women (see also Liccardo, Botsis & Dominguez-Whitehead, 2015). The findings suggest that the processes which enable the racialised gendered gap in STEM to persist include the “articulation gap” (Department of Education, 1997)

from secondary to tertiary education, the poor quality of student–lecturer relationships, limited “epistemological access” (Morrow, 2007) to STEM disciplines and hostile working environments.

For black families who reside in rural areas and townships, the “choice” of which schools to enrol their children in is determined by social class (see, for example, Ndimande, 2006). Accordingly, the scholarship programme was viewed by these women as a vehicle for upward social mobility as it offered an opportunity to break away from their disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Covert racial and gender discrimination was experienced by these women in the form of non-recognition in which white and male students supposedly received preferential treatment from academic staff members. Whereas overt sexism and racism was experienced as misrecognition in that their gendered and raced identities had obstructed their lecturers and peers from recognising and trusting their academic abilities. Instead, black women in STEM fields experience incidences in which they are ascribed academically ‘deficient’ identities by their lecturers’ sexist and racist practices. The challenges women face in penetrating white- and male-dominated fields, coupled with power relations that emanate from traditional gender hierarchies and norms, make the working environment hostile and unattractive for retaining young women. Most of the women in this study could not find employment on completion of their postgraduate degrees. The depressive affects of unemployment were extended to the families who had expected these women, as first-generation students, to become the primary financial providers upon completing their education. Furthermore, incidents of non-recognition or misrecognition could be viewed as a form of “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu, 2004) because it creates ancillary feelings of inferiority for black women students in STEM fields.

The university needs to acknowledge the discrepancies between Model C schools and under-resourced schools in rural areas or townships and be responsive to eliminating the “articulation gap” (Department of Education, 1997), which is wider for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Universities should also assess its institutional cultures and implement strategies to improve relations between students and lecturers to combat the negative effects of non-recognition and misrecognition. In addition, gaining entry into university and established bodies of knowledge is not enough; “epistemological access” (Morrow, 2007) needs to be widened so that students are inducted into STEM disciplines.

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4

SECTION

Doing Gender and Heterosex
on Campus

Chapter 14

Constructing Heterosex:
Examining male university students' depictions of
(hetero)sexuality in their talk of rape in South Africa

Brittany Everitt-Penhale and Floretta Boonzaier

Introduction

In February 2013, spurred by the brutal rape and murder of Anene Booysen, the issue of rape in South Africa gained much media attention, with a clear representation of public outrage about the issue. Referring to the perpetrators, the South African Minister for Women, Children and People with Disabilities, Lulu Xingwana, stated: “We are saying to the court today there must be no bail for these criminals and monsters” (quoted in Miller, 2013:para 20). The rapists were represented as non-human outliers that needed to be purged from our midsts. Yet, more than one in four men in South Africa admits to having raped a girl or woman (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell & Dunkle, 2011). These statistics demonstrate that rape is not an anomalous behaviour.

An important feature of Booysen’s case and the resultant public outcry is that it was not ‘only’ a rape but also a brutal murder. It is unclear whether such a response would have occurred if Booysen were ‘only’ raped, but such stories receive far less media attention. Where such outrage does occur, it is often when the harm done to the victim extends beyond sexual violation or when the victim is an infant, child or elderly woman. The commonality here is that the rape is perpetrated outside of the boundaries of ‘normal’ heterosexual encounters. One of the reasons why male-on-female rape in ‘unexceptional circumstances’ does not lead to such an outcry may be because of public perceptions of what constitutes ‘rape’. In a context where highly problematic views exist on what

constitutes acceptable (hetero)sexual behaviour, the line between rape and consensual (hetero)sex may become communally and selectively blurred. Furthermore, in such an environment, even those who actively position themselves within the outcry may be participating in rape culture through expounding problematic discourses surrounding what constitutes consensual heterosex.

In this chapter, we discuss some of the ways in which constructions of rape and heterosex were demonstrated in the talk of male students at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Six focus groups were held with volunteers on the topic of why some men rape in South Africa. Within higher education institutions in South Africa, Collins, Loots, Mayiwa, and Mistrey (2009) have stated that confronting the levels of gender-based violence (GBV) on campuses is one of the biggest challenges for South African academics. There have been several studies which indicate that GBV is a pertinent issue amongst South African university students, as was demonstrated in *Agenda's* 2009 special issue on 'Gender Violence in Education'. Based on focus group research with students from the University of the Western Cape, Clowes, Shefer, Fouten, Vergnani, and Jacobs (2009) described the highly sexualised space of the university campus, furthermore finding coercion and inequality as normalised within heterosexual relationships on the campus. Additionally, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, a 2007 Safety Review exposed "the pervasiveness of sexual violence in residences" (Collins et al., 2009:34). Commentaries within *Agenda's* special issue highlighted the inefficacies of university responses to GBV: solely focusing on physical security and neglecting the social and gender issues involved; difficult institutional sexual violence reporting processes; inadequate structures to deal with such issues; and a lack of support from universities for prevention initiatives (c.f. Bennet, 2009; Collins et al., 2009; Hames, 2009). More recently, the widespread student protests on sexual violence across university campuses in South Africa have called stark attention to the issue. In this chapter, we focus on some of the discourses used by male UCT students to construct the rules and parameters of 'normal' heterosex in their talk on (hetero)sexual violence, and the meanings and implications thereof.

Heterosex and 'the cultural scaffolding of rape'

Gavey (2005) underscores the notion of normal heterosex being related to rape by illuminating the vast 'grey area' between what we consider normal heterosex and what we call rape. This grey area includes problematic coercive practices, such as how women experience coerced and unwanted sex in many ways apart from being physically forced. Similarly, Walker (1997) found that many women

consent to sex for reasons other than desire, including needing to please their partner; the perceived 'uncontrollability' of male sexual excitement; and the pressure of constant arguments about intercourse. Gqola (2007:117) notes of the current situation in South Africa that, "those who pretend to be stunned by the statistics are lazily not making the connections between the various ways in which what is 'normal' heterosexual 'play' contain codes that inscribe feminine passivity and masculine aggression". These factors within heterosex can be seen as the "cultural scaffolding of rape" (Gavey, 2005).

A demonstration of this 'grey area' in the South African context is that, contrary to legal definitions, a distinction is often made between 'forcing' a person to have sex and 'rape' (Jewkes, Vundule, Maforah & Jordaan, 2001). In a national study of South African school students, 58.1% agreed with the statement that 'Sexual violence does not include forcing sex with someone known' (Andersson et al., 2004). Accordingly, Wojcicki (2002) found that some conceptualisations of rape did not encompass non-consensual sex within a relationship or marriage. This is problematic, as framing rape as 'sex' minimises the trauma of rape and normalises sexually violent behaviour (Anderson & Doherty, 2008). This is often the case in romantic heterosexual relationships, which are the sites of many problematically normalised coercive and aggressive sexual practices (cf. Boonzaier, 2008).

Studies in South Africa (e.g. Campbell, 2001; Jewkes et al., 2005; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Shefer & Mankayi, 2007; Wojcicki, 2002) and elsewhere (e.g. Farvid & Braun, 2006; Hird & Jackson, 2001) have demonstrated a widespread acceptance of what Hollway (1989) has termed the 'Discourse of the Male Sexual Drive' (DMSD). Herein, men are constructed as biologically needing to pursue heterosex. This uncontrollable sexual drive has been argued to lead to rape (e.g. Wojcicki, 2002), with adolescents in Hird and Jackson's (2001:36) study describing rape as the "'natural' outcome of [a male's] overpowering sexual need". Alternatively, female sexuality is often constructed as both passive and for men's pleasure. This discourse has been demonstrated in local and international literature concerning heterosex (e.g. Gavey, 2005; Gqola, 2007; Hird & Jackson, 2001; Shefer & Foster, 2001). Fine's (1988) seminal work exploring sexual education in schools has been highly influential in this area. She found that a discourse on female sexual desire was relatively absent and instead girls/women were positioned as the subjects of male sexuality, with their only agency being their ability to say 'yes' or 'no' to male sexual advances. Farvid and Braun (2006) found that even in certain women's magazines that at face value support female sexual agency and desire, ultimately male sexuality is prioritised.

This body of research highlights the necessity of considering how masculinity and femininity are constructed in the context of ‘normal’ heterosex, as well as how it might influence the acceptability or normalisation of rape and other sexually coercive practices.

Constructing ‘normal’ heterosex and its relation to rape

Research findings highlight the importance of acknowledging discourses surrounding ‘normal’ heterosexual practices when addressing sexual violence. Particularly in the South African context, where it has been demonstrated that behaviours which would legally be considered ‘rape’ come to be perceived as acceptable sexual behaviour – provided the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim can be moulded to fit within a narrative of a ‘normal’ (hetero)sexual encounter. Below, we examine extracts which construct men and women’s differing relationships to heterosex, the importance that is placed on one’s sexuality in relation to one’s value as a man or woman, and how this relates to rape culture.

Men resorting to rape

“To serve their desire, what they have to do is to rape.” In line with other literature, the dominant way in which male sexuality was depicted was through the DMSD. One way in which the DMSD is represented in the text is through the idea that when men are unable to have consensual sexual intercourse they “resort” to rape:

- Z They’re going to break, any law, it doesn’t matter, if you ... are sexually deprived,
- [M Oh ...]
- you will rape. [Group 1]
- J Or we can even, like, chalk it down to a direct ... correlation where, the guy doesn’t know how to talk to the girl. And so rape is the only outlet. If ... through socialisation he learns ... how to ...
- [M Mm]
- connect ...
- DD Emotionally ...
- J And ... and spe- And have a normal conversation with her, a girl ...
- [EE ‘Cause-]
- and not rape.

- DD I've come across a couple of guys who'll, they'll come and talk to me, like, we'll be just like me and him like, we'll be *talking* about things and, we'll be like, 'hey, you know there was a guy who came to me the other day who's really complaining that he, can't talk to girls, you know?' And this thing is frustrating, it builds – like it builds up and ... he finds rape as ... the only ...
- U Option left?]
option left, you know it's like ... [Group 5]
- K [...] there are thugs, there are people who are criminals, outside there, so sometimes you know that, they, are being feared, you see, so sometimes, as a girl you won't ... be in love with such, people, so maybe they don't have the chance of ... being in relationship so, to serve their desire, what they have to do is to rape, in order to help themselves you see [...]. [Group 3]

The rapist in these situations is constructed as a man who is driven to rape by his inability to have consensual sex. The man is not seen *choosing* to rape—rather, the circumstances lead him to 'resort' to rape, rape is his 'only option left'. Similar to Campbell's (2001) findings on South African mine workers, the idea that a man can go without sex is not entertained. This construction of the male sexual drive as a need is consistent with Hollway's (1989) articulation of the DMSD, and because this need for sex is seen as uncontrollable, the culpability attributed to the rapist is diminished. Reducing the culpability of rape perpetrators is one of the central ways in which the DMSD functions in this data.¹

'Guys' and heterosex

"The first question they always ask, 'Have you had sex with her?'" In the focus group discussions, having sex was depicted as an important part of achieving masculinity for boys/men, in their social sphere and for their self-worth. They were constructed as resorting to sexual aggression to fulfil this criterion. The notion of male peer pressure influencing sexual aggression aligns with the argument that male homosocial bonds are often essential components in how men shape their sexual relations with women (Flood, 2008; Gross, 1978). For instance, the discussions reflect findings that some boys' primary motivations

1 On a closely related note, another dominant theme in the data involved blaming girls and women for causing men to rape them by wearing revealing clothing (see Everitt-Penhale, 2013), the premise of which is based on the DMSD and the idea of men not being able to control themselves sexually.

for engaging in heterosex are to gain esteem from peers (Gross, 1978). The pressure men exert on each other and the importance of (hetero)sexual activity for their self-esteem is in accordance with the dominance of the DMSD. If sexually aggressive behaviour is constructed as being a typical or desirable behaviour for men, this puts pressure on all men to exhibit such behaviour.

- A And the thing, I want to add, is like, us as guys, we give each other pressure. Like—
[Laughter from group]
- E Like if you *didn't* go for someone—
- D Ja—
[Laughter]
- A Ja for someone else ja and like, *everything* is fine, the girl is okay but they just not ready to have sex with you like, at that particular point, but, just 'cause your boys like you just wanna like, get it actually
- IE Ja]
like boast that you got it all
- IE Ja]
you just ... push the whole thing.
- D Ja, pressure.
- A 'Cause then —
- E It's true, it's true.
- O Even last year I was working in a spaza shop in [unclear] in P.E.,
- IA Ja]
a township in P.E., and then I noticed something there 'cause, anytime I like sat inside the shop so, people came to me and then chi — people just chilled there and then I could see the interactions, and I could see the, like guys,
- IA Mm hm]
twelve-, twelve-, thirteen-year-olds,
- IA Mm hm]
and if a guy's saying 'I have this girlfriend' and what not, the *first* question they always ask, 'have you had sex with her?'
- A Mm, ja... [laughingly]
- E Mm hm [affirmative]
- O If he says 'no', they'll be like 'aaaah' [dismissive] they won't be interested they'll be ... talking to someone else

- IA Ja]
O so-
A Ja that's actually-
O I always noticed the guy ... 'oh I have a girlfriend'.
'Have you had sex?'
'No'.
He'd always feel down, so, now ... and I think like he's under pressure
- IE Mm]
to go to that girl and have sex
- IA Mm!]
and imagine that girl refuses.
- E So then he'll [unclear].
- O Ja ... Now the girl refuses and won't have sex with you ... He's gonna feel like he's an outcast to the guys so he's gonna, *forcefully* take her, like forcefully have sex with her, the girl, and then go back to the guys and say 'no I had sex with her'. And then they will accept who I am 'okay now you can come'.
- IA Ja]
It's there ... And that's where I noticed that it happened, *all the time*.
- A Ja, true.
- O 'Cause the guy who had sex with the most girls who'd be like, 'ja like we had sex', then they'd be looking up to him.
- A Mm hm.
[Group 4]

Reflecting findings from both South African and international literature, heterosexual activity was constructed as an important element of masculinity, encouraged by male homosocial groups. Having sex was seen as a way for men to gain self-esteem and peer respect. In the above extract, a collaborative narrative is told about the pressure placed on 'guys' to have sex to feel accepted by their peers and feel good about themselves. Sexual intercourse is depicted as the most important thing about heterosexual relationships. Having multiple sexual partners is also constructed in this extract as being desirable for a man, reflecting other research findings (e.g. Shefer & Mankayi, 2007). These constructions reflect the 'heterosexual imperative'. Herein, men are seen as needing to demonstrate heterosexual activity and sexual virility in order to be socially accepted and/or fulfil masculine ideals (e.g. Campbell, 2001;

Hunter, 2005). Heterosex is therefore constructed within the data as a positive thing for males, through which a boy can earn respect from his peers, to the extent that he may rape a girl to be accepted.

Whereas the above extract pertains to an experience in a township in Port Elizabeth, some participants posited that coming to UCT (and residence, in particular) exposes certain males to pressures and norms around heterosex that they may not have previously experienced. Such pressures were argued to potentially influence them to engage in sexually aggressive behaviour.

Girls and heterosex

“Girls who are virgins, actually have that respect.” In direct contrast, a girl or woman having sex is constructed as a negative thing, and as shameful, regretful, and devaluing. While men are seen as gaining respect and confidence for sexual activity, women are seen as losing respect and feeling unworthy for the same activities. Girls/women were depicted as more relationally/emotionally invested in sexual encounters; as feeling ashamed of having sex (and as likely to lie about being raped in order to avoid such shame); as losing their value when they have had sex and as having questionable moral characters if they have had multiple sexual partners. Some of these themes were reflected in the data through talk on why women might lie about being raped, as well as in discussions depicting the meaning of participating in heterosexual activity for girls.

In several of the discussions on rape in South Africa, women were represented as being likely to make false rape accusations, primarily because of their gendered experiences of heterosex. Statistics, both locally and internationally, indicate that only a fraction of rapes perpetrated are reported, and yet the belief that women are likely to make false accusations of rape still received strong support within the focus groups. This notion of false reporting has been demonstrated elsewhere in South Africa: The men in Sikweyiya and colleagues’ (2007:51) study argued women often lie about being raped after they had agreed to sex because they “changed their minds” or “to protect their reputations”.

The participants gave various reasons why a woman might lie about rape, including if she feels regret and/or shame; wants revenge; has psychological problems; wants sympathy; and if her romantic aspirations with a man are thwarted after she has had sex with him. It was also argued that poorer women were more likely to make false rape accusations, with wealthy or powerful men seen as the likely victims of these accusations.

Below, N had just described the Jacob Zuma rape trial and his accuser's subsequent humiliation:

- N It's difficult to prove, yes, like I said also, and earlier on women are humiliated in the whole, in the whole process, [...] if a woman goes to report that in the police station, but when they press, a rape case, it's a it's it's it's like it starts this kind of debate, and sexism ... uh say uh, and the people start being sexist and stuff like that, so, it humiliates her in a demeaning way, so that there are two things that prevent her from, from from actually reporting it, first it's the humiliation, then the second one it's the possibility of, of, of actually not winning the case, so...
- Researcher And, why do you think, like you said why do you think people are more likely to ... believe, the ... male? In those circumstances, than the woman?
- X Because ... I think women are ... um ... a lot more – sex is a b-um ... If I can put it, in a way like, a bigger *deal*, for women, you know like, women, would often ... remember in detail their ... their first time having sex and even, even though, um ... you know he said that ... that the people thought the woman made it up, um I think in some cases some women *do* make it up
- IN Mm]
because they have sex, with a man, and then afterwards they feel ... ashamed, maybe, and really, really *terrible* about it, and then the – sort of the *only* outcome they can think of is to ... say 'rape', you know to shout 'rape'.
- Researcher Y?
- Y I think, from another point I think uh, like no woman would like to come out in public to be humiliated in public and, I don't think any woman would lie that 'I was raped', to get anything from anyone. No one wants to be raped, and I think uh ... it's just uh, it's the society we live in that ... that is partially still, patriarchal, that, sees women, as being lower, than men or everything, so like, I think that's the problem like, the society we are living in, is *still*, partially, patriarchal and, the emancipation of women has not taken place like, wholly, a hundred percent it is not yet a hundred percent that's why, we ... first have to *ask*, we first have to investigate, that is it true that the woman was raped, or what, but ... if it's a *male*, we'll

say he's, maybe ... something happened or what, if it's another way, the other way round, we ... quickly ... like agree, but if it's a *woman* we have to first investigate if she's saying the truth you have to take DNA tests and what what, so I think, it's just a society we live in that we think, first of all, maybe the women are lying or, the woman was lying or something like that.

X But, on the other hand ... we're saying that men have ... you know have psychological reasons and what not, and I think a lot of ... women they also they have just as much they're also human beings they also have psychological ... reasons for everything they do, and ... people, would would constitute rape as, you know ... something sick ... But if you get sick, men, why ... can't you say that you also get sick, women? You know. So ... um ... and some women really enjoy ... sympathy from others, they really enjoy ... like, receiving sympathy ... and ... also if ... a woman feels that she was wronged by a man, she would ... maybe be likely to accuse him of rape in order to ... get him back, for something?

N Also what he [X] said, earlier on, about women, being like very emotionally attached to the whole ... to to to to sex, right, so if if, like one thing is that wo- women, are not ... they not, they not like, why, the society, doesn't ... easily believe them when they claim rape is that, *if*, let's say a male ... Okay, male are much more ... are much more ... cool, while on the stands and everything like that, they they they fine with stuff like that, so if, if like since if, a woman falls, falls victim of, of of something like that, and then, where a male ... just has sex with her and then in the morning, he is like 'I'll never ever call you again, I never want to see you ... like I want nothing to do with you' whereas a women is of- of- of- or the lady was actually thinking that ... they would have a relationship for a lifetime kind of thing 'cause they like painting those pictures into their heads and stuff, a relationship and like lifetime and that, so once it's in the morning, just so silently or rudely the male shows no respect for the women, no value, and then, they break it off. And then the woman ... would would would most likely ... like, feel like, they would hate them first and then, would feel like they need to get back to them, and ... and even *though*, rape never actually occurred, like at the time of having sex, woman actually gave the consent, but then, because of

what happened eventually, she is regretting ever giving, giving that consent. But then she claims it's rape I think that's one of the reasons ... people actually use logic like that, to to to re- to re- to to ... to not believe, women, as easily as they should.

[Group 2]

In this extract the arguments are presented that women do not want to report being raped to the police because they will be humiliated, and yet that women are likely to make false rape accusations. These arguments can be seen as contradictory, which is elucidated by Y's comment, which alternatively explicitly attributes the fact that women are often regarded as lying about rape to patriarchal bias. Both N's comments about sexism and Y's comments about patriarchy demonstrate the use of a feminist discourse to explain why women are not believed, which challenges the argument that women are prone to making false rape accusations.

Burt and Estep (1981:20) found that there are primarily three cultural assumptions people utilise for why women are likely to lie about rape, each of which is drawn on in the data: the first relates to "the cultural stereotype [that] women are vindictive and malicious"; the second is that women "like and want sex, but don't like to take responsibility for having it"; and the third relates to women's perceived emotionality and potential for hysteria, maintaining that "women are prone to imagine or fantasise sexual encounters, especially rape, and therefore make up the whole thing". In South Africa until 1998, a bias against the veracity of women's accusations in rape cases was part of legislation in the form of the 'cautionary rule'. This rule, "stated that women who laid rape charges were particularly unreliable witnesses [...] and that their evidence thus needed to be approached with caution" (Vetten, 2007:440). Although it no longer exists in South Africa, the underlying assumptions were clearly drawn upon within the discussions to discredit women's reports of rape.

The arguments made for why some women are seen as likely to lie about being raped were related specifically to their gendered experiences of heterosex. X describes sex as being a "bigger deal" for women, and N describes women's motives for sex as being closely related to having a relationship with her male sexual partner. In both of these accounts women are depicted as using rape accusations as a means of revenge against men who have wronged them, possibly through thwarting their romantic ideals. These descriptions of women's sexuality are very different from the DMSD, and reflect the Have/ Hold discourse (Hollway, 1989), wherein women's sexual activity is seen as being primarily motivated by romantic relationship intentions (see also Farvid

& Braun, 2006). These differences in emotional involvement with sex have also been demonstrated in the South African context (e.g. Shefer & Mankayi, 2007). That a woman's reasons for lying are constructed as being specifically related to women *in general's* gendered experience of sex (that they are more emotionally attached and connect sex more closely to romantic relationships) means that all women are therefore open to having their accounts questioned using such reasoning. As is aptly put by N, this is problematic in that the risk is that "people actually use logic like that [...] to not believe, women, as easily as they should".

Apart from being emotionally attached to sex, women are also described as lying because they feel "ashamed" or "really, really *terrible*" (X) about having had sex. In X's description, no reason is given for this regret, besides the fact that sex is a "bigger deal" for women, and this lack of explanation may be because it is regarded as "common knowledge" that women often feel regret after sex. This is likely to be a reflection of the ubiquity of the 'sexual double standard', wherein men are praised for having multiple sexual partners and women are denigrated (Mankayi, 2008). In this extract, because this sexual double standard is not explicitly referred to (it is instead simply an underlying assumption of X's argument), there is no opportunity made available in which to challenge it.

Transactional heterosex or rape

"There's no such thing as a free lunch." Another construction of heterosex in the data was the notion of heterosex as a transactional contract. Herein, a woman is obligated to have sex after receiving gifts from a man. This notion has been highlighted by several researchers in South Africa (e.g. Dunkle et al., 2007; Wojcicki, 2002). Contrary to popular perception, Dunkle and colleagues (2007) found in their study of young men in the Eastern Cape that the direction of the transaction was roughly balanced between men and women. They also found that men's participation in transactional sex of either variety was strongly correlated with both intimate partner violence and the rape of women other than their main partners. This led the researchers to argue that transactional sex "can be viewed within a broader continuum of men's exercise of gendered power and control" (Dunkle et al., 2007:1235).

The transactional nature of heterosex also arose in the current study. In the following extract, the group were discussing men buying women drinks, which lead to the issue of gift-giving:

- G Well, I think, sometimes ... Like, the *girls know* what they're in for.
 So, um ... Like, I have sisters, and, my mother is always telling them,

'there's no such thing as a free lunch', if, a guy is buying you, lots of nice clothes, lots of things, he wants to sleep with you.

[K Ja]

G So, as a girl, if ... Let's say I'm a girl, and I'm *accepting* from the um ... expensive gifts, from this guy. I essentially know what's coming next, and ... in in terms of that culture, then ... you you *knew* what was coming and what was expected of you. And for you then ... You can't say 'oh, he convinced me to sleep with him' and then call that rape. You saw it coming. And you'd find that like, in ... in that *instance*, if a girl doesn't want to have sex with you, she doesn't even *accept* your gifts ... and ... she makes it very clear. So, I think part of the problem is ... there's one ... type of person making the law, and ... the *majority* ... are from, a different different culture, which looks at things differently, and the *law* is so ridiculous to them that they're like 'okay you know what, *screw the law*' because it's just ridiculous.

[Group 3]

Within this extract, young women are depicted as knowing "what's coming next" if they accept gifts from a man in terms of an accepted social practice, and G argues that if a girl does not want to have sex with a man then she "doesn't even accept [his] gifts". Inherent in this argument is that if a girl accepts gifts from a man, she is knowingly entering into a transaction in which having sex will be required of her. This construction of heterosex was also used to depict rape accusations of wealthy or powerful men as likely being false, as demonstrated in the following extract:

G [...] Okay, most of the rape cases that I know of ... um ... You – It's not let's say maybe, you work at a good company, and you sleep with your colleague when she's drunk, and she decides to sue you. The bulk of the cases, that you find in terms of rape are ... this very, high up guy ... like let's say a minister or a big businessman ... um, sleeps with this girl from the township, and then ... *she* decides, she wants a lawsuit, because ... um ... according to some definition, he raped her. So why is it *only*, in such um–

H It's *not*, it's not *only* in such instances and you have to think of it in terms of the glass is half empty and half full, because, *yes* there's an avenue for women to exploit, men and ... and ... get some sort of ... legal ... type of, verdict against a man, but a man can also exploit his authority in the same way that a woman can so ... it's ... it's on *that* that's kind of ... it's ... that's the *pivot* almost that we want to *define*

what rape is 'cause ... it's ... it's *true* what you're saying that many women have ... can ... or have *wrongly* said that they were raped to get some sort of something out of it, especially like um, instances of high executives but, then ... like something controversial is Jacob Zuma, and um ... Having had raped, someone, having been alleged to have raped someone but ... *within* that platform there's also an avenue that, it's *possible*, that he *could* have had raped someone or it's *possible* that she lied but ... the thing is ... currently like, *inherently* men are favoured still ... to a certain degree more than women.

G But what I'm saying is... you are *also* failing to acknowledge that, these laws are le- leaving, men, exposed to, um ...

IS Exploitation]

IK Mm]

ja, exploitation, and it's, it's *very* easy, for a man to get exploited, because I think ... that is leaning more towards prostitution, and *not* rape. Because, okay ... if let's say, most ... And I think that this happens even in the States, like most, um ... big businessman, if you want a girl, what are you gonna do? You are gonna express your love by buying, expensive gifts, and stuff and ... girls *know* this, and ... you don't have to be from a specific culture or specific background, if ... I buy, a girl something, if I *keep* buying her expensive gifts, she *knows* ... like ... um ... I'm either after a relationship and ... it's going to get to that point where ... um ... where I sleep with her, so-

H I don't think she would know *anything* [...] Because some people readily accept stuff like, sometimes if you go out and, you're buying a girl drinks, there are a lot of girls that would just accept the drink and they're not bothered with you it's like you're giving them something it's no different from getting something for free so for them it doesn't mean something and that's like, that's the addition of female consciousness like ... they're *empowered* now so you can *give* them something and they can *accept* it, and that's that so ... It's ... the assumption that, thinking that, in *giving* something to someone they have to *give* you something in return, it's their way of a definition of rape and of the occurrence of rape.

[Group 3]

Within this extract G constructs wealthy or powerful men as particularly vulnerable to accusations of rape by women who wish to use the law (derisively

referred to as “according to some definition”²) to their advantage to exploit such men. This once again depicts women as easily making false rape accusations, and H concedes that “many women have [...] *wrongly* said that they were raped to get some sort of something out of it”. This construction implies that when a woman accuses a wealthy or powerful man of rape she is likely to be lying, a construction which thereby serves to undermine the rape victim’s credibility. H mentions the Jacob Zuma rape trial, where the construction of women as likely to make false accusations against powerful men was demonstrated by the aggressive actions of Zuma supporters towards the complainant and her supporters, giving the impression that it is incorrect to lay a rape charge against a powerful man (Suttner, 2009).

Another issue within this and the previous extracts is the idea that women are aware of the rules of transactional heterosex. By accepting gifts/money from a man, a woman is seen as entering into an informal contract that will require her to have sex. Within this context women’s knowledge of the rules of the transactional contract positions them as either blameworthy for their rapes or as not being raped if forced sex occurs. Simply based on the dynamics involved, G argues that in the situation where a wealthy and/or powerful man is accused of rape, “that is leaning more towards prostitution, and *not* rape”. This indicates that if a woman has sex (consensual or not) with a man who is wealthy, her accusation of rape is invalidated by the fact that she is assumed to have received ‘compensation’ for the sex. Thus, not only is the woman depicted as making a false accusation, but her experience cannot be labelled as ‘rape’. By conflating sex work with a situation whereby a woman is forced to have sex after receiving gifts from a man, G’s argument renders both sex workers and other women in such dynamics as ‘unrapeable’ (see Gqola, 2015).

H alternatively draws on a feminist discourse and argues that because of “female consciousness” women are “empowered”, and they are therefore able to accept gifts without giving “something in return”. H thus positions G’s argument as being incongruent with women’s empowerment, and by saying “they’re *empowered* now” he also implicitly distinguishes “now” from the past, indicating that, given women’s changed status, G’s argument no longer holds. In such a way, H positions G’s argument as outdated and his own as progressive. G however rejects this liberal/outdated binary, instead constructing the issue as being a racial one (H self-identified as coloured whereas the other participants in this group identified themselves as black or African):

2 This refers to the fact that G sees it as being written by “the white man” or “the minority culture”, as he mentions elsewhere.

- G But um ... I think that, that also comes to a point where ... you can already see that the person making the law, is seeing something different to you ... I thi- I think most guys would agree – For a *black* girl, if you haven't bought her something, I mean ... You're not like ... you haven't really ... Not to say the gift *proves* your love but I mean, she would like 'how can you say you love me when you've never even *bought* me anything or ...'
- Q [to H] Okay you buy a girl expensive gifts, and then walk away?
- F Never.
[Much chatter and laughing]
- H Firstly like – Like also it depends on the type of girl because obviously the type of *girl*–
- K Okay any type of girl, would *you do it*?
- H Buy her an expensive something–
- K And then walk away?
- H I *can* if I have the ... Because you see, I have the faculties and the wherewithal to do that,³ so it's different for me so it's ...
- K Maybe you are too rich man, to do that, but, because like me I won't like – only my girlfriend. Even a friend
- [H Yeah but I know like–]
I won't [...] I *can't* buy something that is like, a phone maybe something that is
- [Q Less expensive]
you see, I can *only* buy her something that she can eat and it's over, I can't see this eish, you see this thing reminds me of what what, you see.
- H But like, you see like, what I'm struggling now to understand is like, are we *just* defining rape in terms of buying things or are we saying ... are we saying that, that like, that you give a girl incentive or a gesture of what your intentions are ... are we saying that if you buy someone something that it justifies rape.
- F No all we're saying is, buying someone something is one of the factors which lead to rape.
- K Sometimes.

3 This point can also be seen as a rejection of accounts of rape which draw on the DMSD.

- H Okay.
- G And I'm saying well that defence, in understanding, of, um ... the culture ... Because the person making the law, sees it, as sensible, but you can already see that from ... this discussion already, 'cause let's say you are making the law, and we are supposed to follow it, even within this, this context ... by the time you make the law, most of us are already like 'okay you know what, we don't even *care* about this guy's law', because, it's just so ridiculous.
- F Also like you are trying to enforce modern laws on ... us
- IQ *Indigenous* people]
they are, we ... we're not at the same stage as ... whatever people who are applying laws and you are trying to enforce those laws on us.
[Group 3]

By referring to “black girls” and then later to “culture”, G changes the course of the discussion by representing the arguments as being different, because H is from a different ‘culture’ and/or race to the other group members. Black people are represented by G as being made to follow laws which are incongruent with their culture, made by the “minority culture” or “the white man” (G, earlier in the discussion). Earlier he argued that rape laws should rather be made by someone who understands black people, “like let’s say Jacob Zuma”, and suggested that a possible reason why rape is so high in South Africa is that black men are rebelling against laws made by the “minority culture” by raping women. F also states that “you are trying to enforce modern laws on ... us”, yet “we’re not at the same stage as ... whatever people who are applying laws”, implying that black people are less modern or behind white people and thus should be held to different standards. The issue of culture was thus highly politicised in this discussion, with the laws made by “the white man” seen as being inappropriately enforced onto black men, disadvantaging them and leaving them exposed to exploitation by women. Alternatively, K depicts the issue as potentially being related to money, saying “maybe you are too rich man”. In such ways, the group therefore reframes the issue so that H’s arguments about women’s empowerment are depicted as irrelevant. Through drawing on cultural and socioeconomic explanations for the rules of transactional heterosex, the issue of women’s rights is effectively silenced.

The way in which heterosex has been constructed as transactional within this data is therefore clearly problematic. It can be seen as contributing to the ‘grey area’ between what is considered rape and what is considered consensual sex.

Although neither G nor F explicitly describe what the ‘culturally appropriate’⁴ law would look like in this situation, from the rest of the statements made in the discussion it is implied that such a law would not consider it rape if a woman is forced to have sex with a man she has accepted gifts from. From both a feminist and human rights’ perspective such an allowance would clearly be highly problematic.

Concluding remarks

Lisak (1991:242) conceptualised rape as “a concrete acting out of culturally normative beliefs and images [in which] normal men [...] act out in individual dramas what their surrounding culture perpetrates institutionally”. If we agree with this perspective, depicting rapists as ‘monsters’ – as Xingwana did in relation to Booysen’s attackers – is misleading and serves to distract from the societal factors which have led South Africa to having such high levels of rape. De Vos (2013) argues that one of the dangers of such expressions of outrage is that we distance ourselves from the problem, thereby neglecting to question those beliefs and practices in our own environments which form a part of South Africa’s ‘rape culture’. Conversely, it is argued that to work towards confronting the current rape epidemic, we need to examine the root of the problem as residing within those ‘accepted’ practices and beliefs within our society which support male power and women’s oppression and serve to normalise and legitimate sexual violence (Gqola, 2015).

In most of the discussion groups, the first responses to the question ‘Why do some men rape in South Africa?’ reflected feminist ideas about rape being related to power, demonstrating the pervasiveness of this explanation in contemporary times. However, despite most participants’ overt opposition to rape, many of these same participants utilised discourses which blamed women for being raped and normalised male sexual aggression. Additionally, in relation to what has been focused on in this chapter, their constructions of heterosex were problematic in that they can be seen as encouraging sexual aggression in men; removing responsibility from male perpetrators by shedding doubt on the credibility of female rape complainants; and contributing to oppressive discourses around female sexuality. This demonstrates that simple opposition to rape is insufficient, and that many people who are explicitly ‘against’ rape may nonetheless be contributing to views which excuse and condone men’s

4 There is insufficient space to fully engage with this issue here, but elsewhere (Everitt-Penhale, 2014) it is argued that such ‘cultural’ accounts of rape can be both flawed and undesirable, misrepresenting culture and feeding into racist discourses.

raping behaviour and support victim-blaming (Gqola, 2015). This highlights the necessity of demonstrating to such individuals how their own arguments form part of a system of meaning which is contributing to the problem of rape, a process which perhaps universities could contribute to more.

In one group discussion, a participant commented that he thinks certain problematic beliefs regarding rape exist “mostly ... in those *rural* places”, which he contrasted to the “*more civilised*” city of Cape Town (Group 4). He went on to say, “I wouldn’t *imagine* someone who thinks like that ... *at UCT*”. And yet, contrary to this depiction of rape, supportive beliefs existing only in some presumably ‘uncivilised’ places outside of UCT, the current study supports the importance of interrogating the everyday discourses on heterosex, including at universities. Although universities may provide a space for critical dialogue on issues of sexism and gender inequality, like other institutions in South Africa, UCT does not exist as separate to the cultures, practices and ideologies of both the rest of South Africa and the broader global context, including problematic gendered practices and beliefs (cf. Barnes & Mama, 2007).

Despite discourses to the contrary, given the research from other South African universities on the levels of GBV (including rape) on and around campus, it is not surprising that UCT students reproduce the problematic discourses around gender and sexuality that are normalised in their broader cultural contexts. Simply attending university clearly does not provide immunisation to these. Moreover, within the current study it was suggested by participants that attending university can be an important site of exposure to such discourses.

Past research and experiences around gender-based violence and sexual harassment policies at higher education institutions in South Africa overall do not cast a positive light on the policies and structures of these organisations, and demonstrate some of the institutional challenges and resistance that academics and activists have met with in attempting to improve these (e.g. Bennet, 2009; Collins et al., 2009; Hames, 2009). Such challenges and resistance can further be located within broader issues surrounding gender and sexuality at universities in South Africa, where it has been argued that feminist progress has been hampered by various factors within these institutions (cf. Bennett, Gouws, Kritzinger, Hames & Tidimane, 2007; Barnes & Mama, 2007). Based on research regarding policies at multiple universities in Southern Africa, as well as personal experiences of being involved in the disciplinary processes of a rape allegation at the University of Cape Town, Bennet (2009:20) commented that “the politics of gender, race, class and sexuality are organised within higher education cultures in ways which continue to render invisible the trauma of violence possible

within the vast webs of human relationships on every campus". The current research emphasises the need for the University of Cape Town, and all South African higher education institutions, to move beyond simply focusing on the physical security of their students, and put into place programmes and structures which work towards targeting the problematic discourses reproduced on campuses concerning sexual violence, as well as around the issues of gender and sexuality more broadly.

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Chapter 15

'Doing Gender' on Campus:
Students' experiences of normative practices of
heterosex in South African higher educational contexts
and some critical reflections on dominant responses

Tamara Shefer

Introduction

While South African universities have been engaged in a long project of transforming higher education, the last few years of vocal calls by students, staff and workers to 'decolonise' South African higher education encapsulated in #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall and #Fallism, and other related *Fallist* activism, have shifted higher education into a renewed urgency to re-think 'transformation' efforts (Mbembe, 2015a, 2015b; Badat, 2016). Higher education in South Africa remains characterised by multiple forms of discursive, social and material difference and inequalities which shape exclusionary and unequal practices both inside and outside the academy. Student activism since 2015 has poignantly flagged the significance of the material and symbolic realm and how the geographies, spaces and territorial contexts of higher education, together with the curriculum itself, may be implicated in discomfiting, alienating exclusionary and marginalising experiences and outcomes for many students and staff. In spite of over 24 years of attempts to 'transform' higher education and develop a curriculum and space for critical thinking and socially relevant action, student protests are testimony to the many silences, gaps and failures. Arguably, valuable effort has been put into both curriculum and entry into the university in order to challenge *epistemological access*, a term coined by Wally Morrow (2009, and see Muller, 2014, for review). This is more than evident in the emphasis on teaching and learning, and pedagogical practice, together

with a proliferation of scholarship in this area (e.g. Bozalek & Carolissen, 2012; Bozalek, N’gambi & Gachago, 2013; Bozalek, N’gambi, Wood, Herrington, Hardman & Amory, 2015; Leibowitz, Swartz, Bozalek, Carolissen, Nicholls & Rohleder, 2012). Where there has been a focus on the lived experience of students beyond the curriculum, much of this has been channelled through a neoliberal project of ‘diversity’, indeed a critique that is taken up by this book project and others (see, for example, Tabensky & Matthews, 2015).

The focus on ‘decolonisation’ of the curriculum has however extended to a concern with larger frameworks of bodily, material and subjective un/belonging in the academy and called attention to the intersectionality of exclusionary practices (Gachago, Ivala, Condy & Chigona, 2013; Ngabaza, Daniels, Frank & Maluleke, 2013; Ngabaza, Bojarczuk, Masuku & Roelfse, 2015; Tabensky & Matthews, 2015). Notably, the activism of young South Africans in particular has surfaced the material and bodily in challenging continued inequalities in South Africa. Through widespread activism against sexual violence at many of the universities over the last few years and the activism of queer, decolonial, feminist students in particular, such as the trans-collective,¹ the intersectionality of racism and class inequalities with gender, sexuality, and other marginalities and subalternities, has been powerfully foregrounded (Gouws, 2017; Shewerega, in press; Shefer, in press). Such emphases, in particular the lived material and affective experience of being at a university, have perhaps been neglected in the social justice emphasis on classroom pedagogy and curriculum in the ‘transformation’ project. Students’ use of bodies, in semi-dress and activist performance, remind higher education social justice projects that it is not only curriculum and institutional ‘cultures’ that require decolonising but also the lived and bodily experience of ‘doing’ higher education. It is precisely the intersectional gendered, sexualised, embodied experience of living and studying on a university campus that this chapter takes up through a critical review of research and practice related to sexual practices, HIV and young people in higher education.

As part of the larger national attention to high rates of HIV and gender-based violence identified in the early 1990s as a key imperative for the new democracy, there has also been a focus on sexualities, specifically heterosexual practices (given the identification of the epidemic in South Africa as predominantly heterosexual), at universities. The development of policy and programmes, such as HIV units at universities, was a key feature of the early post-1994 landscape at universities and considered part of the larger transformation of

1 <https://mobile.facebook.com/UCT-The-Trans-Collective-973444259388957/>

the university. Over the last decade in particular, a number of high-profile cases of sexual harassment at South African universities have brought a renewed national focus to the challenges of gender inequalities and gender-based violence in higher education as they are played out in lived experiences on campus. A plethora of contemporary empirical studies similarly highlights how gendered norms and power inequalities, intersecting with a range of other markers of difference and dis/advantage such as class, 'race', nationality, sexual orientation and age, amongst others, are reflected and reproduced in tertiary educational campus life in South African contexts.

This chapter presents a critical review of contemporary research on student experiences of practices of heterosex as emerges through a range of qualitative studies. Key themes emerging in this literature that speak to intersectional gender inequalities as manifesting in student relations are discussed. A key concern of the chapter is to think critically about current responses, both research and practice, on university campuses to challenges of gender-based violence and unsafe, inequitable sexual practices. In particular I argue the importance of more rigorous scrutiny of our foci, rationale, investments and actual practices in both research and practice with young people more generally, and specifically in higher education. The chapter concludes with a critical reflection on some of the constraints, problems and challenges inherent in the dominant response and effect of such research for the larger critical and social justice project in higher education and more broadly.

Universities as a site for the reproduction of heteronormative gender and sexualities

International literature shows how university campuses are constructed as spaces of sexual exploration (Adam & Mutongi, 2007; Ergene et al., 2005; Page, Hammermeister & Scanlon, 2000; Seloilwe, 2005). That sexual intimacy, mostly problematically assumed by participants in local studies (not to mention the researchers) to be heterosexual, is normative to campus life, has been illustrated in Southern African studies as well. Yet much of the research has focused on unsafe and exploitative sexual practices on campuses given the emphasis on HIV-related research. Thus, much of this growing body of local work documents and analyses how normative binaristic gender roles shape sexual relationships between men and women which, intersecting with other forms of social difference and inequality, such as age, poverty, rurality, citizenship, dis/able bodiment, manifests in unsafe, inequitable, coercive and violent relationships on university campuses (Bradbury & Kiguwa, 2012; Clowes et al., 2009;

Gukurume, 2011; Masvawure, 2010; Shefer, Clowes & Vergnani, 2012; Shefer, Strebel & Jacobs, 2012; Shefer & Foster, 2009).

Underlying many of these studies and their findings is evidence of the salience of normative gender in shaping heterosexual practices, and always intersecting with other forms of inequality including age and/or years at university, rural versus urban backgrounds, class and material inequalities, citizenship, sexual preference or orientation. Local work with young people in general has similarly deconstructed how heterosexual sex is founded on oppositional gender norms and roles in which women and girls are assumed to be passive, submissive and responsive to dominant and controlling men and boys (Bhana, 2007, 2016; Bhana & Pattman, 2009; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010, 2012). The discursive construction of women's sexuality as centred on love and relationship (classically coined the 'have-hold discourse' by Wendy Hollway, 1989) while men are centred on sexual pleasure within a 'male sexual drive discourse' (Hollway, 1989) has been well documented in research that focuses on heterosexual negotiation and highlights constraints on women's and girls' sexual agency (Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010, 2012). Similar findings emerge in research on student experiences of heterosexual relationships (see, for example, Shefer, Clowes & Vergnani, 2012; Clowes, Shefer & Ngabaza, 2017; Shefer, Strebel & Jacobs, 2012; Shefer, Strebel, Ngabaza & Clowes, 2018). Notably, some of these practices are ritualised and passed down through generations in some universities which have complex rites of passage within their residences which reflect these discursive constructions of male and female sexuality (see, for example, Robertson and Pattman, Chapter 11 in this volume).

The double standards in terms of which men are rewarded for active sexuality and multiple partners while women are punished and stigmatised for being sexually active have emerged regularly in such studies, mirroring the lack of a positive discourse on women's sexual desires and a silence on women's sexual pleasure that have been more widely noted in local research with young people (Lesch, 2000; Harrison, 2008), including studies at universities (Clowes et al., 2009; Shefer, Clowes & Vergnani, 2012; Shefer, Strebel & Jacobs, 2012), which, researchers argue, constitutes a challenge to women's agency and capacity to negotiate safe and equitable sex. Research with young people has shown how even revealing sexual knowledge or talking about sexual desires and practices is stigmatised for young women (Pattman, 2005; Shefer, 1999) and while some research on campus shows women resisting the denial of sexual desire (Shefer, Clowes & Vergnani, 2012), the continued discomfort around women's sexual agency is noteworthy. Further, discourses of essentialised

culture, where notions of 'tradition' are drawn on to legitimise risky and unequal sexual practices (such as resistance to condom use and multiple sexual partner practices) have also been reported by some students at South African universities (Shefer, 2002).

Research at local universities has particularly foregrounded the way in which gender heteronormative practices and desires intersect with age and/or years of study to facilitate potential abusive experiences for a younger woman student. In a study conducted at one historically disadvantaged university in South Africa, participants argue how first-year female students, particularly those from rural areas, are particularly vulnerable to inequitable sexual relationships, even sought out by the older male students and non-student men who play on such intersectional precarities, as in this quote:

Yes, you'll see at the beginning of the year now 1st years, these kids come, they're vulnerable. A lot of seniors and people from off campus and the seniors are like lions they come to our residences. And you know you feel flattered, like oh he likes me, I'm gonna have a boyfriend. Then they go into it for a short term relationship. And not knowing that this guy's got a steady girlfriend ... he's been here for ages and done this before. And so they use the girls.

(Woman student, focus group,
Shefer, Clowes & Vergnani, 2012:439)

There has also been a growing focus on transactional sexual practices on South African campuses in the light of concern about multiple inequalities that may facilitate coercive and unsafe sexual practices and violence. Studies report on the salience of the material and transactional basis of some relationships among students at diverse campuses (Clowes et al., 2009; Gukurume, 2011; Masvawure, 2010; Shefer et al., 2012; Oxlund, 2009). Such research shows how sexual relationships framed within a materiality of love and sex appear to be common and normative on many campuses and involve sexual exchange for the purpose of status and material gain (including access to fashionable clothes, cell phones, driving in smart cars, and so on) and how such relationships may facilitate abusive and risky sexual practices. Thus a number of local studies report on the widespread nature of 'sugar daddies' and 'ministers of finance' on campuses in which exchanges are built around a variety of currencies, some of which are peculiar to an educational context, such as exchanging sex for assignments or engaging in a relationship with the SRC member in order to ride in the SRC vehicle. Thus, while money and financial need emerges as important in some studies, especially those whose students are most disadvantaged, exchanges hinging around other forms of benefits linked to the particular campus context are also commonly reported (Masvawure, 2010; Shefer et al., 2012; Oxlund, 2009).

A salient indicator of hegemonic masculinity that has been widely documented internationally and locally, also termed the breadwinner discourse or ‘provider masculinity’ (Hunter, 2009), is also evident in the research on transactional sex on campuses. Thus for a male student, proving one’s ability to provide also appears to a rationale for engagement in transactional relationships. For the most part, transactional relationships on campuses are constructed as involving a more resourced, older male with a poorer, younger and socially disadvantaged woman. Stories of ‘sugar mommies’, while not totally absent, are not commonly reported. Transactional relationships on campus are generally constructed negatively by both student participants and researchers and seen to be strongly associated with violence and abuse as articulated by this participant in one such study (Shefer et al., 2012:438):

I, I, I might be with a guy who hits me all the time, and I just want to be with him because of what you’re saying, because of his car...

Gender-based violence within heterosexual relationships and sexual harassment on campus has been another key concern in the literature and in gender justice projects on campus (Bennett et al., 2005; Clowes et al., 2009; Hames, 2009; Ngabaza, Bojarczuk, Masuku & Roelfse, 2015). Importantly, local research also foregrounds women’s fear and lack of safety on university campuses, characterised by a sense of sexual violence as inevitable for women and also raced and classed at multiple levels (Shefer et al., 2017; Gordon & Collins, 2013; Dosekun, 2007, 2013). Women report how they engage in a range of self-regulatory practices, termed ‘rape schedules’ in order to feel safe, in this way, inadvertently constructing themselves as responsible and/or to blame if they are raped or sexually harassed (Collins, 2014; Gordon & Collins, 2013). Gordon and Collins (2013:104), mirroring arguments that have been made in the larger national context (Dosekun, 2013; Gqola, 2007, 2015) in their campus-based study, argue that ‘women’s lives are structured by the fear of gender-based violence’.

Critical thoughts on higher educational responses to gender (in)justices

This brief review of research findings on gender and heterosexual practices at local universities highlights the importance of an intersectional feminist lens together with insights from critical masculinities theoretical and empirical work, to inform any strategic goals for gender justice in higher education. Importantly, these understandings should be drawn on to guide policy and

programmatic work with students and staff in challenging continued unequal practices of normative gender and heterosex and associated violences. On the other hand, there is clearly a need for more critical reflection on current research and policy and programmatic responses in higher education directed at young people's sexualities. Arguably, while not wishing to undermine the project of scholarship and practice that challenges unequal heteronormative practices, the dominant response to the challenges of sexual violence, HIV and young people's practices of intimacy in general and on campuses in particular, has been shaped by disciplinary and punitive responses within a moralistic, bureaucratic, hierarchical and symptom-driven approach, also shaped by neoliberal institutionalised frameworks. While this is an argument that requires further research towards substantiation, a number of concerns related to current responses to young people's sexualities and the political and ideological effect of such research and practice in higher educational contexts are raised here.

Firstly, it could be argued that much of the dominant approach to young sexual practices in higher education, for example through sexuality and HIV education, the dominant channel for such messages, but also through some of the research and policy, are founded on binaristic and gendered stereotypes of masculinities and femininities. Assumptions of heteronormativity reflect and reproduce a rigid and unitary picture of men as inherent perpetrators of violence and women as inevitable and passive victims. Responses are arguably driven by gendered narratives on 'correct' practices for young men and women that are also ageist, classed, raced and located in particular sets of moralities that are increasingly apparent in work with young people on sexuality, gender and violence, both at schools and also in higher education (see, for example, Shefer, Macleod & Baxen, 2015; Francis, 2013). Research and practice may also in many instances be underpinned by a particular set of hegemonic moralities related to youth, sexuality, family and relationships that are gendered, raced and classed. Thus, for example, the critique of any sexual relationship that is materially based, such as those described above in studies with students, and the assumption that it is inherently problematic, has been called into question by local authors who argue for a more nuanced approach to transactional sex and the materiality of sexual relations (see, for example, Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Hunter, 2002, 2012; Masvawure, 2010; Oxlund, 2009). Such authors call for a more nuanced approach to the complexities of material-based intimacies, arguing that dominant representations of transactional sex in both popular and scholarly contexts may have reproduced racist, classist and gender binary discourses (Crewe & Brouard, 2013; Shefer & Strebel, 2013).

In this respect, as some authors have pointed out in reflecting on the larger body of work directed at young people in South Africa, there is a danger that such research in higher education may similarly serve to bolster racist and classist othering practices (Shefer, 2016; Boonzaier & Kessi, in press). Thus, in spite of global research that indicates that transactional relationships are common in many higher education contexts including affluent northern contexts (for example, recent reports of ‘sugar daddy’ sites at universities in Norway²), there is a tendency to ‘outsource’ unequal, coercive and violent sexual practices to global Southern contexts and minority communities in the global North (Grewal, 2011). In South Africa, research at historically disadvantaged universities may further stigmatise these universities and students.

Further, much of the research and the responses offered tend to operate within a heteronormative framework which serves to further silence and ‘other’ alternative gender and sexual identities and practices within a dominant heterosexist and homophobic context of higher education (Donaldson, 2015; Hames, 2007; Henderson, 2015; Jaggesar & Msibi, 2015). If not adequately interrogated, such responses may serve to reproduce and legitimate heteronormative genders and sexualities, rather than act as a challenge to the erasure and othering of diverse sexual and gender practice and desire.

Secondly, much of the response in higher education is arguably geared towards a disciplinary and regulatory emphasis, rather than towards a more fundamental challenge to the underlying dynamics of intersectional gender inequality and normative gender binarisms that make such violences possible and imaginable. Thus the focus is primarily on policy and putting in place bureaucratic systems that ultimately emphasise a range of disciplinary and punitive procedures for dealing with sexual harassment and violence, thus addressing the end point of normative gender roles rather than attempting to engage the institution in re-thinking the multiple layers of inequality, both material and discursive. Nor is enough attention arguably directed at providing the space for young people to challenge the inequalities that they face in their relationships and to reflect critically on their subjectivities (and subjugation), relationships and practices (Hames, 2007). To cite a relatively recent example, in a case of sexual harassment at a local university (un-named for confidentiality purposes) a few years ago, that university and a range of others began developing or reviving their sexual harassment policies. While the report generated at the university in question following this case was impressive in its

2 <https://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/sex-og-samliv/oppfordrer-kvinnelige-studenter-til-aa-date-rike-menn/a/24133513>

comprehensive interrogation of events, many of the recommendations devolve into disciplinary responses such as making it compulsory to report any intimate relationship between a student and staff member. This begs the question as to whether the regulation of all student–staff relationships serves to challenge the power relations that may facilitate an exploitative relationship between a male staff member and a female student or will it simply and indiscriminately criminalise relationships between staff and students whether unequal and coercive or not? Local research suggests that the dominant disciplinary response put in place to address sexual violence on campus is also fraught with problems and may result in secondary victimisation. Studies at two different local universities found that women participants distrusted university services and consequently rarely reported incidents (Collins & Gordon, 2013; De Klerk, Klazinga & McNeil, 2007). Collins and Gordon (2013:104) argue that “while ‘rape schedules’ may provide some reduced risk, and reporting may increase humiliation and retaliation for the particular individual, they maintain a social system which puts all women at risk of assault, and all survivors of gender-based violence at even more risk of victim blaming at precisely the points at which they are most vulnerable and in need of support and understanding”.

Thirdly, further evident in many of the responses on campus is the tendency for initiatives to be triggered by particular high-profile and dramatic events rather than by a longer-term concern for a more comprehensive response to gender justice on campus. Underlying such a response and also serving to rationalise this dominant discourse is a sensationalised construction of gender-based violence as something outside of the commonplace. Thus a violent act such as ‘date rape’ is set up as non-normative, as anomalous, as a pathology or a crime, thus de-linking this violence from the normalised contextual discourses and practices in which they reside. The way in which violence and coercion is bound up in normative heterosexual practices has been widely argued internationally (see, for example, Gavey 2005, Jackson, 2001) and well illustrated in South African contexts (for example, Bhana & Anderson, 2013; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010, 2012; Shefer, 2009; Strebel et al., 2006; Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Wood, Maforah & Jewkes, 1996; Reddy & Dunne, 2007). The fact that many universities have primarily responded by developing sexual harassment policies, arguably a reparative or punitive rather than preventative measure, as mentioned, is also indicative of this.

Also of related concern is the way in which universities appear to continue to operate within a framework that passes moral judgement on young people’s sexual desires and practices. While messages have become more nuanced and apparently more accepting of young people’s obvious engagement in unmarried

sexual relationships, a moralistic and heteronormative response is still evident at universities. To cite an anecdotal example from a local university (un-named for confidentiality), which is not alone in such policy: a few years ago a policy was passed which forced pregnant women students to leave the residence and move to other living quarters before giving birth. While the argument made was that the university did not have resources for birthing, nor adequate family units, it is safe to assume that the policy was fuelled by a rejection of pregnancy and parenting among students and assumptions of what are appropriate sexual and familial moralities for those at universities. In research at schools, similar responses from teachers and principals have been documented (see Bhana et al., 2010; Morrell, Bhana & Shefer, 2012; Ngabaza & Shefer, 2013). Reasons provided by school authorities for forcing pregnant learners out of school from the moment they 'show' were that it may be dangerous for the pregnancy, and that the school does not have any medical resources for the birth if she should go into labour (begging the question whether supermarkets and homes do?). While there is not much research documenting the experiences of pregnant and parenting students, one local study provides evidence for an experience of unsympathetic responses from lecturers and a general sense of being marginalised in the university, both from peers and staff (Funiba, 2011). As Macleod (2011:5) has theorised with respect to both popular and scholarly discussions on teenage pregnancy and abortion, responses 'for the most part, construct a threat of degeneration, in which young women are positioned as contributing, through their sexual and reproductive status, to social decline'. The discourse of 'degeneration' is also located in racist and classist discourses as well as an adult-child binarism in which youth and childhood are constructed as 'in progress' towards developing 'mature' adult identity, and therefore, requiring constraint and didactic guidance. At the core of this popular representation of teenage pregnancy and pregnancies outside of the nuclear heterosexual family are a range of normative assumptions about what young people should or should not do with respect to sexuality and reproduction, infused by dominant moral, cultural, gendered and ideological positions on pregnancy, parenting and families. Such notions, while not evident in public discourse and institutional operational plans, for example, no doubt persist in higher educational practices and discourses.

Finally, following on from the above point, it should be acknowledged that much of the work directed towards young people, both in communities and at the university, is founded on a notion of adults as expert authority and frequently involves top-down didactic interventions involving adults as agents for 'educating' or 'guiding' young people. Narratives of work with young people tends to be framed in a protectionist and patronising discourse that focuses

on ensuring young people can protect themselves from danger, rather than working on agentic forms of resistance and change (Shefer, in press; Boonzaier & Kessi, in press). While much of the work in HIV/AIDS has moved towards engaging peer educators, such programmes are still led and conceptualised by adults. Further, anecdotal evidence suggests that while universities all include HIV/AIDS information in their orientation programme, they tend to use didactic approaches and often exclude discussion about sexualities, genders and other forms of inequality, not to mention pleasure and desire, rather focusing on risk, danger and damage; in Sylvia Tamale's (2011:30) words the '*tired polemics of violence, disease and reproduction*'. Many of these interventions are also founded on a model of expert knowledge, whether provided by an adult or a peer who is knowledgeable (and trained by an adult). Reflecting on research with young people, Pattman (2013:121) makes similar critiques of the way in which knowledge production in areas of challenge for young people has tended to silence young people themselves, and argues the value of participatory research that 'may offer models of good pedagogical practices in sexuality education'. It is encouraging that the turn to more agentic, participatory and more creative forms of research and pedagogical practice through methodologies such as photovoice and memory work, are indeed proliferating in relation to HIV, sexualities and social justice education in general (see, for example, Mitchell & Sommer, 2016; Boonzaier & Zway, 2015; Kessi, 2011; Shefer, Hearn, Ratele & Boonzaier, in press).

Concluding thoughts

The themes related to heterosexual engagement and practices outlined here are not new in the South African and international literature on gender, heterosexual practices and HIV/AIDS. However, campus life, while also varying across South African contextual and historical differences, clearly represents a specific location shaped by localised micro contexts that serve to both reflect and reinscribe a range of social inequalities and divides. Thus life on a university campus both mirrors outside norms and practices and is shaped by existing inequalities, and may include particular contextual aspects, such as a lack of accommodation, pressure to perform academically, certain norms on particular campuses that may exacerbate existing contexts which facilitate unsafe, inequitable and coercive sexual practices and particular vulnerabilities of certain persons. A focus on the challenges that young people in higher education face as a result of the complex intersections of race, class, gender, age, sexual preference, citizenship, dis/ability, and so on, and how this is played out in the university, shaping their possibilities to thrive or not, is also key to the

larger social justice project in higher education. A better understanding of such contexts, with emphasis on social change directed by and for young people on campus, themselves is required.

I have also argued, however, that the way in which the dominant response to the challenges of HIV and young people's practices of intimacy in general has been shaped by predominantly disciplinary, regulatory and punitive responses is equally unhelpful. Indeed this may link to the way in which responses to HIV and gender-based violence have been entangled with and arguably powerfully shaped the post-1994 national project of gender justice (see Vetten, 2018). The reproduction of gender binaried, deterministic discourses and the bolstering of racist and classist othering, argued to be a problematic discursive outcome of the larger scholarship, practice and policy directed at young sexualities (Shefer, 2016), is also evident in campus-based research and practice. The few anecdotal examples of current responses that deal with issues related to gender, sexuality and associated violences presented here, highlight the dominance of a constraining, disciplinary lens which is underpinned by an erasure of bodies and sexualities. In this way, young people's activism raises a challenge to centuries of the civilising and humanist project in higher education that privileges a disembodied intellect, still salient in everyday practices in the university. Arguably, students in their everyday engagements on/with their campuses, such as troubling narratives of subjective experiences, and public demonstrations against material representations that are discomfiting, are gesturing to 'how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life' (Soja, 1989:6), thus not only articulating anger and resistance to a system relatively unchanged in two and a half decades, but also poignantly reminding us that bodies and materiality matter.

In the project of social justice in higher education, and in line with student activist calls, it becomes increasingly important to rethink the colonial and patriarchal heritage that continues to shape both the material and discursive terrains of higher education. This means re-thinking 'the university' at multiple levels including the curriculum, institutional stories (Vincent, 2015), the geographies of the campus, as well as appreciating that bodies, materiality and affect matter. Such arguments foreground the importance of working with young people in higher education, both in the curriculum and in the wider space and place of the university, in a more reflexive, nuanced way that accounts for the multiple, intersecting and complex dynamics of gender and sexual norms and power, and that destabilises both the researcher and educator authority, rather foregrounding students' experiences and agency in leading and shaping processes of change.

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5

SECTION

Engaging with Disability as
a Transformation Concern
in Higher Education

Chapter 16

Disability and Higher Education in South Africa: Political responses and embodied experiences

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Introduction

Over the last two decades, there has been a radical shift to traditional ways of teaching disabled¹ children and students worldwide. Previously, the expectation was that institutions of learning would remain unchanged with disabled students adapting to these environments; the onus now rests on schools and universities to be flexible enough to fully accommodate these pupils on their campuses (Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2008; WHO [World Health Organization] & World Bank, 2011). Howell and Lazarus (2003:61) capture this neatly when they write, “increasing access and participation is not about trying to make ‘others’ fit into an existing system. Rather it is about changing the system so as to accommodate a larger and more diverse student population”.

Reframing education in this way refers to learning environments that promote the equal participation of all learners. It means a move away from exclusionary practices where learners are taught in separate venues, but rather embraces the

1 There are various, and highly contested, ways of referring to disabled people. The preferred usage in the USA, for example, is through what is termed ‘people first’ language – so the term would be ‘people with disabilities’. Within the social model, prominent amongst disability activists in the UK and in South Africa, and discussed later in this chapter, the preferred usage is ‘disabled people’ as people with impairments are argued to be disabled by society. (For a longer discussion on this question, see Goodley, 2016.)

idea that disabled students should receive adequate support to enable them to learn alongside their nondisabled peers (Bantjes et al., 2015). In addition to the provision of support, institutions of learning should be interrogated to identify barriers that may hinder the full and equal participation of disabled students (Howell & Lazarus, 2003).

What we have described in the previous two paragraphs is the well-known ideology of inclusive education that gained momentum after the United Nations conference in Salamanca in 1994 (Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin, 2006; Lourens, McKinney & Swartz, 2016; UNESCO, 1994). During this conference, 92 countries adopted the Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education. Hereby 92 governments formally agreed to take action by drafting and implementing inclusive policies within their respective countries. Institutions of learning now became accountable to implement inclusive policies (Hadley, 2011; Hadjikakou & Hartas, 2008; Reid & Knight, 2006; Tinklin, Riddell & Wilson, 2004). As Taylor (2004:46) writes, “the number and experiences of students accessing higher education will invariably be influenced by changes in legislation”.

In South Africa, there has been an increase in the numbers of disabled students accessing South African universities since the mid-1990s (DHET [Department of Higher Education and Training], 2012, 2013; FOTIM [Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the northern Metropolis], 2011). However, when measuring the progress of transformation and diversity in higher education in South Africa, it is not sufficient to count the numbers of disabled students in the system. It is also important to include the experiences of disabled students, since it is only through their voices that opportunities and barriers to their full and meaningful participation will be illuminated (Denhart, 2008; Fuller et al., 2004; Lourens & Swartz, 2016a; Vickerman & Blundell, 2010). While much research has been conducted on questions of race, and to a lesser extent gender, in higher education, very little has been conducted in the area of disability (Matshedisho, 2007; McKinney, 2013).

This chapter will give a broad overview of the developments regarding disabled students within South African tertiary institutions over the last two decades. The chapter will start with a short glimpse into the history of education within South Africa, since “The progress made in South Africa must be measured against its own unique political, social and legislative background” (FOTIM, 2011:14). Thus, following a brief outline of the educational divide prior to 1994, initiatives aimed at correcting the inequities of the past will be highlighted. This will include an overview of government policies on disability

in higher education, as well as a critical appraisal of services that tertiary institutions currently offer.

The second part of the chapter will place the day-to-day lives of disabled students under a microscope. For this review, we will draw on previous studies, as well as the doctoral dissertations of Lourens (2015) and McKinney (2013). Exploring the experiences of disabled students is valuable, not least because this can give an indication of how effective policies and practices are.

Lastly, the chapter will conclude with a brief overview of recent policy developments, 2010–2013, in the field of disability in higher education. Through the goals of these policies, it will be possible to determine whether the experiences of disabled students, as reflected by research, have been considered.

Background to disability and education in South Africa

In South Africa, as in the rest of the world, relatively few students with disabilities could obtain a tertiary qualification prior to the 1990s. In those rare instances where they progressed to higher education, they were confronted with numerous obstacles that impeded their full and equal participation on these mainstream campuses. According to the literature, two aspects should be considered when talking about limited access and participation for South African students with disabilities. These are: (a) the schooling system; and (b) the structure and functioning of tertiary institutions.

The first factor that played a major role in the restricted access to higher education for disabled students was the multiply divided schooling system of South Africa. As in most other countries, disabled learners did not attend the same schools as their nondisabled peers. Instead, they were segregated in special schools where professionals were employed to care for them (Swart & Pettipher, 2011; Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel & Tlale, 2013). Since these schools were often far removed from their parental homes, disabled children were often placed in residential/boarding schools. Here they were segregated from their families and communities which increased their separation from society. What is more is that the majority of these special schools did not offer academic subjects at a level necessary for entrance into tertiary education. Some disabled children were placed in mainstream schools, but these environments typically were not examples of true inclusion. In these schools, disabled children received no support and, as a result, often dropped out of the education system completely. Consequently, all these factors had a direct and negative impact on

the ability of disabled students to be accepted at higher education institutions in South Africa (Howell, 2006; McKinney, 2013).

In addition to the exclusion of learners with disabilities from regular classrooms, the South African schools were also divided along racial lines. In other words, black and white learners, including those with disabilities, did not attend the same schools (Bantjes et al., 2015; Chataika, McKenzie, Swart & Lyner-Cleophas, 2012; McKinney & Swartz, 2016). This separation reflects the reality of the people of South Africa under the apartheid regime where black, coloured and Indian citizens did not enjoy the same material privileges, safety and rights as did their white compatriots (Howell, Chalklen & Alberts, 2006; McKinney & Swartz, 2016). The apartheid system did not start school segregation by race – racial segregation in schools in South Africa and many other countries has a much longer history – but it entrenched and formalised segregationist practices on an unprecedented scale. In short, the apartheid division imposed inequalities between white and black citizens, where black people were treated as subordinate to the privileged white minority. And so, black children had to learn in educational environments with very few resources, compared to the relatively well-resourced special schools that served white learners with disabilities (DoE [Department of Education], 1998; McKinney, 2013; Naicker, 2005; Peel, 2003). Even more disconcerting was the estimation that, in 2001, more than 80 per cent of learners with disabilities were not attending any schools (DoE, 2001a). Unsurprisingly, the majority of these learners were black children from rural areas (FOTIM [Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the northern Metropolis], 2011; Swart & Pettipher, 2011).

Moreover, as stated before, the educational system was not the only factor that prevented disabled students from accessing, participating in, and tasting success in higher education. The structure and functioning of universities themselves were often to blame for the limited number of disabled students crossing their borders. In many instances, disabled students were not selected for certain academic programmes, because they were believed to be incapable of meeting course requirements (Kasiram & Subrayen, 2013). In this discriminatory selection, the dominance of medical ideology² was evident.

2 In disability studies, a key distinction is made between medical and social views, or models, of disability. In the medical model, the problem of disability is seen to reside within the body of the disabled person. The social model, by contrast, emphasises the key issue that the environment plays in enabling or denying access. If, for example, a blind student is not permitted to enter university because there is no Braille or other technologies to allow access to course materials, the problem is not in the body of the blind student (medical model) but in the lack of accommodation. See Watermeyer (2014) for a discussion of these issues.

In other words, the universities did not adapt to accommodate disabled students in certain programmes, which left the student as the possessor of the “problem” of a disability. Moreover, physical barriers, such as limited access to information, also made some universities unwelcoming environments for disabled students who were there (Howell, 2005, 2006; Howell & Lazarus, 2003).

It is thus clear that, before 1994, universities remained out of reach for many disabled students. But the question as to what happened after 1994 still needs to be answered, along with the question of whether the educational system changed at all.

Policy responses in the period 1994-2001

The year 1994 marked an important turning point for the previously marginalised citizens of South Africa. This was the first year, after the decades of apartheid, that everyone over the age of eighteen had the right to vote. Following the democratic elections, the African National Congress (ANC), under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela, was introduced as the new governing party of South Africa. The ANC, comprising mostly previously disadvantaged citizens, took on the liberating yet challenging task of correcting the ‘wrongs’ of the past (Naicker, 2005). Hereby they wished to establish a country where everyone, including people with disabilities, would be free from discrimination and would enjoy the protection of equal rights for all (Swart & Pettipher, 2011). The new constitution, which was approved in 1996, was clear: “The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth” (Republic of South Africa, 1996: Article 9[3]).

In this regard, the educational domain was not forgotten. As a baseline, the Constitution stipulated that all people, including those with a disability, have the right to education: “Every person shall have the right to basic education and equal access to educational institutions” (Republic of South Africa, 1996:16). What manifested from this were policies that were specifically tailored to disabled people in all levels of education.

In 1996, the new government of South Africa appointed the National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS). They were required to conduct research and, based on their findings, make suggestions on ways to benefit disabled

South Africans over the whole spectrum of the educational domain. Their final findings were contained in the 1998 report, “Quality Education for All: Overcoming barriers to learning”. Regarding higher education for disabled people, this report was clear:

The primary challenge to higher education institutions at present is to actively seek to admit learners with disabilities who have historically been marginalised at this level, providing them with opportunities to receive the education and training required to enter a variety of job markets. Alongside this is the challenge to develop the institution’s capacity to address diverse needs and address barriers to learning and development. This includes not only learners with disabilities, but all learners. This requires that adequate enabling mechanisms be put in place to ensure that appropriate curriculum and institutional transformation occurs, and that additional support is provided where needed. (DoE, 1998:126)

The report therefore clearly pinpointed two main challenging aims for the inclusion of disabled students in higher education, namely, (a) to admit more disabled students, and (b) to facilitate their full participation (Howell, 2005; Matshedisho, 2007). And so, in response to these challenges, policies were developed to facilitate equal access and participation for disabled students in higher education (Howell, 2005, 2006; Matshedisho, 2007). These policies included: *Education White Paper 3 on The Transformation of the Higher Education System (EWP3)* (DoE, 1997), the *National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE)* (DoE, 2001b) and, directly flowing from the NCSNET and NCESS report: *Education White Paper 6: Special needs education: building an inclusive education and training system (EWP6)* (DoE, 2001a).

These three policies clearly indicated that students with disabilities should have fair and equal opportunities to access and succeed in higher education (DoE, 1997, 2001b). EWP6, in particular, provided guidelines to meet these goals. Regarding higher education these guidelines could be summed up into two main proposed strategies namely, (a) removing all obstacles that hindered access and participation, and (b) strengthening the ability and capacity of tertiary institutions to respond to the diverse needs of students with disabilities (Howell, 2005).

In EWP6 the South African government also addressed the schooling system of South Africa. With this White Paper, the then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, committed South Africa to an inclusive education system (Naicker, 2005). This entailed a 20-year plan in which time the divided education system had to be transformed into a unified system for all. In other words, he stipulated that regular neighbourhood classrooms should accommodate learners with and

without disabilities in a welcoming environment where difference would be celebrated and accommodated (DoE, 2001a).

It is therefore clear that the new government post-1994 considered the situation of disabled students in all spheres of the educational landscape. However, while on paper, these policies may seem impressive and efficient. The real question is whether it was effectively put into practice, for even the most well thought out policy will lose its power if it is not echoed in the day-to-day lives of disabled students. For example, while on the surface EWP6 might seem sufficient, critical appraisals suggest that it was too vague and broad, more symbolic than practical, and that it left no room for accountability (Jansen, 2001; Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Donohue and Bornman observe that EWP6 “give little guidance on how to effectively implement this policy in practise” (2014:7). Let us now turn to the literature on the experiences of disabled students and reflect upon what it says about the current strides towards inclusion.

The experiences of disabled students in South African universities

This section will shed light on some of the experiences of disabled university students in South Africa. In particular, we will discuss issues around entrance into university campuses, disability disclosure, general support (including disability units and lecturer attitudes) and issues of accessibility.

Entering university campuses: Who is allowed to enter?

The first day I went to university for registration the security guards blocked me in the gate and they said that I am not supposed to be there. One said, ‘This is not a place for people like you.’ That statement does not leave my memory. It keeps flashing and it hurts. (Ngubane-Mokiwa, 2013:200)

Even though the Constitution of South Africa clearly prohibits discrimination against disabled students, it is disturbing to note that perceptions towards these students still have the power to steer, and thwart, their career paths in subtle and more overt ways. Perceptions of incapability often have very real consequences for the students, especially regarding their future. Studies showed that they are denied places on certain courses because of the belief that they would not be able to meet the course requirements and/or that they would not be able to follow their chosen career path (Kasiram & Subrayen, 2013; Mayat & Amosun, 2011; McKinney, 2013; Ngubane-Mokiwa, 2013). Some visually impaired students in the studies by Kasiram and Subrayen (2013) and Ngubane-Mokiwa (2013), expressed the desire to study social work. However, they were

informed that they would not be able to pursue this career path, since they were unable to travel or read body language. The fact that they could make their own travelling arrangements or sense the emotions of others through other means were not considered. In this way, the agency and initiative of visually impaired students were overlooked.

In the study by McKinney, a student shared a similar story:

I had a meeting with a professor and I showed him my results, but he wasn't happy with me being deaf. I will not be able to fit in, and he won't be able to accept me. We had to fight. (2013:174)

In the end, this particular student was given six-months' probation, something that was not given to nondisabled students. She was told in writing that she had to obtain above sixty per cent for all of her subjects in order for her to remain on the course. Even though she felt that these requirements did not reflect fair practice, she remained determined to prove him wrong:

I didn't have a social life, nothing. I was studying, studying and I got in the seventy percent. (2013:174)

In this same study, some disabled students still experienced attitudinal barriers after they clearly proved their capabilities (McKinney, 2013). Even after she obtained distinctions for her undergraduate degree, Thuli was not allowed to enrol for a postgraduate programme. She was informed that she would not be able to cope with the demands of the course. Subsequently, she completed her studies at an international university where, once again, she graduated with a distinction:

I said to myself these people can't even appreciate if I had my degree with distinctions. Here they feel I cannot do it. (2013:174-175)

At times, negative perceptions towards disabled students and the consequent narrowed career paths are exacerbated by their race. As one participant in the study by Ngubane-Mokiwa (2013:196) proclaimed:

They said a blind person cannot do Maths and Science. When we reasoned with them that the blind white learners were allowed in their school for the blind to do Maths and Science, they said we should remember that we are black. That was the most painful experience for me; we had to stop doing Biology.

Clearly, there are crucial intersections between disability and other forms of exclusion.

These perceptions of incapability of disabled students seem to reflect traces of an ongoing medical ideology in some tertiary institutions. Contrary to inclusive

policies, disabled students still have to adapt to their environment by selecting academic courses according to the institution's discretion. These attitudes may narrow their options and, as a result, keep them at the margins of society. Furthermore, it threatens the full inclusion of students in higher education and, even more disconcertingly, it may jeopardise their emotional well-being. It should therefore come as no surprise that some students did not declare their visual impairment on the university's application and/or registration form (Lourens, 2015; McKinney, 2013; Ngubane-Mokiwa, 2013).

Disclosing a disability: More than securing accommodations

To display or not to display; to tell or not to tell; to let on or not to let on; to lie or not to lie; in each case, to whom, how, when, and where.. (Goffman, 1963:42)

In their diversity policies, South African and international universities encourage disabled students to disclose their disabilities before or soon after entering their tertiary campuses (Konur, 2006; Lovett, Nelson & Lindstrom, 2014). Since disclosure is often their gateway to receive much needed accommodations, it is easy to assume that disabled students will not hesitate to declare their needs. However, despite the potentially grave academic implications, many students may decide not to disclose their disability (Lourens, 2015; Lourens & Swartz, 2016b; McKinney, 2013).

As previously mentioned, some students may choose to keep quiet about their disability because of the fear of not being accepted into a university or their desired area of study. Even after enrolling for an academic programme, they may choose to continue hiding their disability for fear of stigmatisation by peers and teaching staff. This is not an ungrounded fear, as many previous studies confirm discrimination against disabled students, especially towards students with psychosocial and learning disabilities (McKinney, 2013). One student recalls:

[Lecturer] told me that I must pull my weight and that it is not that bad. Saying those hurtful things doesn't make it easier. (McKinney, 2013:178)

Some students decide not to tell their peers or lecturers that they have a disability, because they simply want to blend in with their fellow students and they do not want to risk being rejected by their peers. A student with a very visible visual impairment remarked:

Many people want to hide it [visual impairment]. And if I could, I also would've done it. I mean, uhm, I don't know, people just find it easier to accept you if you are like them. (Lourens, 2015:185)

Yet, when lecturers are not aware of disabled students in their class, they will in all probability not be able to provide adequate support. But the feeling of normalcy and fitting in is so valuable for some students, that they are willing to sacrifice their right to reasonable accommodations:

The problem is I don't want to be like treated differently from the other students. The help that you get in class ... I don't want special help. I must get the help that all the other students get. (Lourens, 2015:188)

For one student, this decision is not very straightforward, but rather something she grapples with on an ongoing basis:

So I'm always between a rock and a hard place: whether I should tell my lecturer in order to try and make my life easier, or whether I should keep quiet and try to fit in. Because sometimes you really just want to fit in. (Lourens & Swartz, 2016b)

Disclosure may not be equally difficult for all disabled students. In some instances, students may find it easier to have a visible disability – in these instances the choice has already been made for them (Lourens, 2015). Other students may find internal resources, like self-confidence, useful when disclosing:

I do it in a clear and bounded calm way that names the issue. I think that in my favour is my confidence. Many aren't that confident which can create an anxiety which I think would have compounded the disability aspect in my case. (McKinney, 2013:178)

Evidently, deciding whether to disclose is not an easy choice, since either choice may result in exclusion. If they remain silent about their needs, they are left without reasonable accommodations. When they decide to disclose, they face the very real threat of being rejected on their desired academic programme or being excluded from the university altogether.

General support: Disability units and lecturer attitudes

The sparse literature on the experience of disabled students in tertiary education in South Africa indicated that disabled students largely depend on disability units and lecturers for academic support (Crous, 2004b; FOTIM, 2011; Matshedisho, 2007; Naidoo, 2010; Swart & Greyling, 2011). As will be evident from the following section, these experiences are not just positive or negative, but rather hinge upon the simultaneous mixed realities of gaps in provision and strides towards inclusion.

Disability units

The true inclusion of disabled students will be possible only once they receive adequate and appropriate support. Nowadays, support services are offered to disabled students in tertiary institutions across the globe (Collins & Mowbray, 2005; Getzel & Thoma, 2008). These services are mostly offered through disability units. Typically, these units provide support, advice, assistive devices and reasonable accommodations for disabled students. Some of the staff members at these units mediate between disabled students and faculty members, advocate for these students and help them with day-to-day challenges on campus (Howell, 2005; Matshedisho, 2007). Some disability units also consider the social context and history of their students. For example, at one university, the staff at the disability unit noticed that their students rarely had computer literacy skills. The university therefore employed someone who could assist students with disabilities in adjusting to technology. For the first two weeks of a disabled student's arrival at this university, orientation to computers and assistive technology is compulsory (Lourens, 2015).

In general, the experiences of disabled students are more positive in institutions where there are designated and coordinated support services available to them (FOTIM, 2011; Matshedisho, 2010). In a study a few years ago, the only 25 per cent of disabled students who reported feeling welcome and comfortable on their first day on campus were those students who had the support of their respective disability units (Matshedisho, 2010).

Disability units often provide more than mere academic support to disabled students (Matshedisho, 2010). For some students, there is emotional value in disability units; it is even a place where they feel at home: "Being part of the disability unit is like knowing that I have a place; I have people who care" (Lourens & Swartz, 2016b). Finding new friends and forming a social network is sometimes a fortunate by-product of these units (FOTIM, 2011). This often happens since disabled students spend a considerable time at these units and therefore often meet other disabled students there.

Unfortunately, the opposite is also sometimes true. Without support, many disabled students feel isolated and find it difficult to cope. Not all universities offer adequate support services to their disabled students:

...the moment when you register for that course you are alone. It is very difficult to get someone to read for you. People are not even willing to do such kind of thing.
(McKinney, 2013:176)

Psychosocial support and knowledge regarding different disabilities are lacking at some institutions, which is particularly needed in instances where students have a newly acquired disability:

I had to find out about Epilepsy on my own and what it's all about. It would have been good for their own education if they have found that out as well. (McKinney, 2013:176)

International literature has shown that the provision of reasonable accommodations for students with psycho-social and learning disabilities are lacking in general (Collins & Mowbray, 2005; Szymanski, Hewitt, Watson & Swett, 1999).

Encouragingly, the growing recognition of disability units as an important vehicle for inclusion has been mirrored in the establishment of HEDSA (Higher Education Disability Services Association), a body that represents disability units in South Africa. HEDSA is concerned with matters around the achievement of equity, diversity and inclusion of disabled students on tertiary campuses and therefore were involved with the Green Paper on post-school education of 2012 (discussed later in this chapter) as well as the expansion of funding for these students. What is more is that HEDSA's board includes two student representatives, which leave room for students to inform policy decisions.

Having said this, disability units are restricted in the services they offer. Firstly, they are commonly not autonomous, as they often fall under student counselling or student affairs. They are therefore often unable to develop and implement programmes, since they are bound by the restrictions of their overseeing departments (FOTIM, 2011). The nature of these departments, for example counselling centres, is also problematic since their focus on pathology and rehabilitation may reinforce the notion of the medical model of disability (Lyner-Cleophas et al., 2014). The disability unit model, paradoxically, also plays a role in keeping disability separate from other transformation and diversity issues and therefore out of the mainstream (DHET, 2012, 2013; FOTIM, 2011).

In addition, financial constraints continue to be a very tangible reality for these units, especially for those in historically black institutions (DHET, 2012, 2013; FOTIM, 2011; Howell, 2005; Matshedisho, 2007a). These financial realities sometimes result in too few staff members, insufficient equipment and delayed course materials (Naidoo, 2010; Sukhraj-Ely, 2008). In many instances, disability units therefore have to raise external funds to make the environment more accessible for disabled students (FOTIM, 2011; Howell, 2005; Matshedisho, 2007a).

Lecturer attitudes and support

The 'gatekeepers' to full participation in higher education often are the lecturers and staff who interact directly with disabled students. In many instances, these interactions are even more important and influential than the management procedures and policies of the institution, since they could determine the success or failure of disabled students (Lourens, 2015; McKinney, 2013). It is worrying to note that lecturers still make discretionary decisions regarding reasonable accommodations.

Literatures suggest that there are four main reasons why lecturers do not provide reasonable support to disabled students. These are:

1. not enough knowledge/awareness regarding disabilities;
2. forgetting about disabled students in their classrooms;
3. negative attitudes; and
4. not knowing that disabled students are attending their lectures.

Here, we provide a short overview of each of these contributing factors.

Disabled students often do not interpret the failure of lecturers to provide support as malicious, but rather believe that it is born from a lack of awareness around disability-related matters (Crous, 2004a, 2004b; Lourens, 2015; Matshedisho, 2010; Swart & Greyling, 2011). It is therefore suggested that lecturers should attend workshops and/or similar training to make them aware of the needs and rights of disabled students (Crous, 2004a; Matshedisho, 2010). Currently, it seems as if awareness-raising is directed mostly towards nondisabled students rather than university lecturers (Amosun, Volmink & Rosin, 2005).

In some instances, lecturers simply forget that they have disabled students in their lectures (Lourens, 2015; McKinney, 2013). While this may be seen in a positive light in one sense (disabled students appearing to be fully integrated and not being treated in a different light), the individual needs of disabled students may not be met. For many students this can result in feelings of despondency, stress, exhaustion and anger:

I was in a position where I had to get the courage to re-explain to the staff what and why I needed something to get some credibility. This was met with mixed responses some were accommodating some were not. It was very stressful. It was just such a difficult time and such an amount of wasted energy. Not just in terms of time and real work but also anxiety energy. (McKinney, 2013:177)

Sadly, some lecturers are unwilling to provide reasonable accommodations to disabled students and display negative attitudes towards them (Maotoana, 2014). For example, a student who studied social work disclosed his disability to his lecturers and requested that he be placed near public transport systems as he was not allowed to drive. He recalls:

They didn't have any empathy. I asked them how I was supposed to get there and they said 'well that's your problem. You wanted to study here'. (McKinney, 2013:178)

Similarly, Mia, a student with a severe visual impairment, recalls her lecturer's unwillingness to provide accessible study materials:

And the lecturer simply said that she was sorry, she was not going to give the book to us, because there are plenty of books in the book shops, I must buy myself one. And when she came to class she told us that she didn't give out slides. Nothing. You have to take notes, otherwise you will fail. So, we went to her and we said, 'I am in class every day'. I just wanted to know whether she had something on paper that I could use, because the others could take notes. She said, 'no'. She simply said no. (Lourens, 2015)

Lastly, lecturers sometimes do not accommodate disabled students simply because they are not aware of the fact that these students are attending their lectures. As seen previously, there are various reasons why students may elect not to disclose their disabilities. Additionally, some students do not disclose their disabilities because they are not aware of the support services offered by universities (Crous, 2004b; FOTIM, 2011; Lourens, 2015). In some instances, disabled students "stumble" upon disability services purely by chance (FOTIM, 2011). This suggests that disability units should make a greater effort to market their services and to make them visible for disabled students.

Despite these negative experiences, there are also plenty of accounts of lecturers who go out of their way to accommodate disabled students (Lourens, 2015; McKinney, 2013; Swart & Greyling, 2011). An example of a positive response:

It really all came about from my supervisor. He really drove and opened the debate about me becoming a [professional in field of study] in the first place and was very supportive of that. (McKinney, 2013:176)

If disabled students feel valued and supported, they are more likely to approach lecturers and staff and request the accommodations they require. This, in turn, will place them on an equal footing with fellow nondisabled students and

enable them to participate in and obtain a meaningful education (Lourens, 2015; McKinney, 2013).

Concluding reflections on support

Where disability units and lecturers fail to provide the necessary support, the students may have to be creative to procure much-needed assistance. For example, in the study by McKinney (2013), visually impaired students felt “forced” to befriend sighted students in order to access the campus, lecture venues and readings. However, this was not sustainable, often forcing disabled students to turn to family for assistance or face falling behind in their studies.

Clearly, students still sometimes have to adapt to an unchanging higher education system. While there has been definite progress in the support provision to disabled students over the last two decades, there is still much room for improvement. Probably most worrying of all is the seemingly loose manner in which policies are treated, leaving the lecturers and disability units with the power and agency to decide whether they “want” to provide these students with reasonable accommodations.

Issues of accessibility

The issue of access is multi-layered and contains physical, attitudinal and curricular aspects that may permeate every part of a student’s life (Hanafin et al., 2007; McKinney, 2013). Since the issue of discrimination/negative attitudes was previously discussed, we will focus on physical access and curricular access in this section.

Physical accessibility

The physical lay-out of a university campus is often challenging for visually and mobility impaired students (Engelbrecht & De Beer, 2014; Lourens, 2015; Lourens & Swartz, 2016a; Maotoana, 2014; McKinney, 2013). Initially, visually impaired students may find it challenging to get to know the new, unfamiliar routes to their residence and class venues (Lourens, 2015; Lourens & Swartz, 2016a). While mobility impaired students typically do not mention the unfamiliarity of the university campus, they refer to architectural barriers, such as buildings with no ramps that hinder their entrance into lecture venues

(Engelbrecht & De Beer, 2014; Maotoana, 2014). Disturbingly, some students would rather stay in their rooms than confront inaccessible tertiary grounds (Maotoana, 2014).

Some mobility and visually impaired students make friends with nondisabled students in order to access the campus and lecture venues (McKinney, 2013). Thuli recalls:

I had to make friends with other sighted students, so that I could get assistance there, it was very strange for them to help a person who is blind. (McKinney, 2013:176)

Piet, a wheelchair user, expresses his frustration at having to rely on other people to assist him to get to inaccessible lecture venues:

The campus was not accessible at all. I had friends, people that I met there, that fetched me and took me there and back. I remember one class was on the first floor, and they had to lift me around. (McKinney, 2013:175)

In addition, he notes his lack of energy to pursue the matter further:

Maybe at the time my main objective was to get an education. I just said, 'I know one has to fight for the issue of the disability but now is not the time.' It wasn't possible. (McKinney, 2013:175)

Clearly, navigating the physical environment is emotionally draining for many students (Lourens, 2015; McKinney, 2013):

It takes a bit of my energy to find my way to places. Each time it's like, okay, okay, I pluck up the courage, here I go. Uhm, so I, so I get by, but each time it's a bit of an emotional experience. (Lourens & Swartz, 2016a)

Evidently, students still have to adapt to fit an unchanging environment. They have to make friends purely with the purpose of procuring assistance, they have to miss lunch, stay in their rooms and deal with fatigue. Elsewhere, Lourens and Swartz (in press) recommended orientation and mobility training for visually impaired students once they enter university gates.

Curricular access

In this section, curricular access refers to access to course information. There are many reasons why disabled students do not have access to all the information provided by lecturers. Students with hearing and visual disabilities experience barriers with lecture venues that are not always accessible due to poor acoustics

and lighting. In addition, some students find some lecturers unwilling to accommodate their needs during lectures. Tess, a participant with a hearing disability expressed:

...in terms of hearing it always came back to whether the person faced me or not. And that would always come back to me lip-reading. The hall was very important. A big lecture hall would echo. The echo was always a problem. That is horrible.

(McKinney, 2013:175)

Ashley, a participant with partial sight, recalls:

When they are using the projectors and stuff they switch the lights on then they switch the lights off then they dim it. So, I said, 'my eyes can't handle it'. (Lourens, 2015:212)

Technology is generally experienced as a barrier when used by lecturers in their classrooms. For example, lecturers often used PowerPoint presentations or other visual aids in their lectures, forgetting that visually impaired students could not see them (Seyama, 2009; Sukhraj-Ely, 2008). As one participant in the study by Seyama (2009:56) said:

...some lecturers forgot that some of us could not see, they kept on saying as you can see this and that, pointing at something, maybe a chart ... one felt lost and definitely not benefiting anything.

A number of students, including those with visual, physical or learning disabilities, may benefit from recording lectures and having them transcribed or replayed at a later stage. However, McKinney (2013) discovered that some lecturers objected to requests for recording by students as they were perceived as getting 'special treatment' which would not be 'fair' to nondisabled students, while others simply did not seem to understand the need. While many disabled students find recording lectures useful, others find this problematic. A student with a hearing disability in McKinney's study, was unable to hear what was being said during the lecture and therefore he was not able to contextualise the subject matter:

At one stage I took a recorder into class and record the lectures to record what was happening and so when I got home my mother would try transcribe it. But it didn't work because when it was written down it was out of context like if the guy was pointing at the book or a drawing was something like that. So, when you get back home we cannot put it together. (2013:176)

Apart from the information that disabled students miss in lecture venues, they also sometimes have difficulty in accessing course materials. Often, visually

impaired students received their course material late, due to the time-consuming nature of conversion, compounded by the inadequate number of staff at disability units (Ngubane-Mokiwa, 2013; Seyama, 2009). So, whereas sighted students received their materials immediately, visually impaired students had to wait for the conversion of their materials, yet they were still expected to submit assignments at the same time as their sighted peers (Crous, 2004b; Seyama, 2009). A participant in the study by Seyama (2009:55) captured the domino effect of this dilemma in the following way:

Unfortunately one was expected to submit on the same date as the sighted students ... extension of time for submission was the only option for us, but then it meant putting up with a backlog as the assignments are not from one module.

Having said this, the FOTIM report (2011) suggested that there might have been other reasons for this delayed access to course material. In this report, staff from disability units stated that, at times, visually impaired students failed to bring their printed material to the disability unit on time. For example, they might only bring a textbook to be scanned one week before a test.

Once again, some disabled students are forced into relying on family, friends or other students to assist with the transcribing and reading of materials if the institution will not make accommodations (Lourens, 2015; McKinney, 2013). A student with a visual disability shared:

My mom would wake up very early about four or five in the morning and read into tape for me and then I would listen and work from that tape in the afternoon. (McKinney, 2013:176)

Another disabled student expressed:

My friends from my class, they would read onto tape for me. (Ibid.:177)

Some also tried copying notes from their sighted classmates, but didn't find this helpful:

I copy from the other students what they've written down. Sometimes I find they don't understand what was written down. And if you ask them, you find that they don't really understand what's going on with that problem that was taught. (Lourens, 2015:222)

Where we are now and the way forward

Many children and learners with disabilities are still segregated in South African schools and universities (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Despite various inclusive

policies and the positive strides towards supportive structures for disabled students, their experiences revealed that practices did not change overnight. In some important ways, some students are still excluded from full participation in all spheres of campus life (Chataika, 2007; Dalton et al., 2012; DHET, 2012, 2013; DoBE [Department of Basic Education], 2010; FOTIM, 2011). In part, this slow move towards inclusion could be ascribed to the initial focus on the inclusion of other previously marginal groups, such as racial groups and women (Chataika, 2007; FOTIM, 2011; Howell, 2005, 2006; Howell & Lazarus, 2003; Matshediso, 2007b). As previously mentioned, the vague nature of important policies like EWP6, might also have prevented its appropriate implementation (Dalton et al., 2012; Human Rights Watch, 2015; Jansen, 2001).

It seems that the DHET, in their Green Paper (2012) and White Paper (2013) on post-school education and training, identified the gaps in provision very accurately. We will highlight the two most important issues here, namely, funding and awareness.

Firstly, the DHET recognised the lack of funding for disability units, particularly at previously black institutions. Apart from being the result of the apartheid regime, they stated that this problem was a result of the way in which institutions were funded. In the past, the state did not provide subsidies for disability grants; disability units had to raise funds from external sources. But, in the Green Paper of 2012, the DHET responded to this issue. In this paper, they made a commitment to determine the financial needs of various disability units and, hereafter, to allocate resources based on the needs of each unit. In their White Paper of 2013 it became clear that this commitment was not empty. In fact, the DHET provided funding for infrastructure audits at each of the 23 universities and allocated R130 million towards improving accessibility on campuses. The amount that was allocated to each university depended on whether disability was a priority for that university and whether they had the capacity to address disability. While this plan seems sufficient and effective, it is not clear what is meant by “capacity”. In other words, what would make a university not eligible for funding due to capacity? And would this criterion not serve to exclude some previously disadvantaged universities?

The second issue that was prominent from the experiences of disabled students was the lack of awareness regarding disability. Once again, the DHET did not overlook this problem. In their Green Paper (2012) they stipulated that, through the teaching of accessible teaching methodologies, disability awareness will be enhanced for lecturers and able-bodied students. In the subsequent

White Paper, disability awareness was not directly addressed, but rather full integration of disabled students was addressed through the aim to develop a strategic policy framework.

In their White Paper (2013) the DHET identified the need for a strategic policy framework. Such a policy, they argued, would provide clear guidelines for universities on how to improve the access and success of disabled students on their campuses. This framework would require that all institutions develop clear plans to address disability within their contexts. It furthermore would attempt to define and give guidelines on “reasonable accommodations” for disabled staff and students. Lastly, they aim to provide standards and norms for the inclusion of disabled staff and students in all spheres of campus life, including academic, sport and culture. It thus appears that this framework will serve as a benchmark against which universities would be able to measure their standards regarding the inclusion of disabled students. It would also ensure a less fragmented and a more integrated approach across universities.

It is thus clear, in the light of the current literature on the experiences of disabled students, that the DHET pinpointed gaps in provision quite correctly. However, since the FOTIM report of 2011 also found minimal involvement of disabled students in the functioning of disability units, the DHET could also take this into consideration in their strategic policy framework. For example, they could suggest a disabled student representative for each disability unit.

So, although South Africa clearly still has a long way to go in terms of the inclusion of disabled students in higher education, this fact is recognised by important governing bodies. Furthermore, steps are currently being taken to put policy into practice. There needs to be further and ongoing research into the experiences of disabled students in higher education so that barriers can be identified and addressed, thus creating the opportunity for more disabled students to experience a deserved and fulfilling higher education.

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Chapter 17

'Silence is Violence': Claiming voice for disability in higher education transformation

Rose Richards, Bongani Mapumulo and Leslie Swartz

[T]he shape of the material world we build and occupy together expresses and determines who inhabits human communities. Who we include and how we collectively constitute and support human communities are perhaps the most crucial contemporary ethical concerns. (Garland-Thomson, 2015a:13)

'[T]he look of recognition' ... constitutes us as equal citizens and equally legitimate reciprocal participants in the public sphere. To be shut away through segregation or to cover up devalued human differences thwarts opportunities for this recognition. To be recognized, one needs literally to be seen. (Garland-Thomson, 2009:194)

Disability intersects with all other areas of inclusion and exclusion that have been considered in the introductory chapter to this book and in other chapters. The previous chapter (McKinney, Lourens and Swartz) has outlined key issues in disability inclusion and exclusion globally and particularly in South Africa. In this chapter we explore embodied questions of how different types of access, and lack of it, are experienced by students. In line with traditions in disability studies which emphasise the importance of insider knowledge and accounts in understanding disability and access, we draw on the experiences of two of the authors (Rose Richards and Bongani Mapumulo) to develop our argument.

Wits in the late 80s and early 90s: Rose's experiences

The two vignettes I include here were originally used as part of a panel on visible and invisible disability on campus, with my co-authors. I also allude to them in an article I am writing about the experience of shame (Richards, article in process).

Disability is a more complex issue than people sometimes realise (Jung, 2003). Part of the reason for that is that disability is conceptualised and named as if it were one unnuanced, monolithic whole, a marker to identify a group of people different from the mainstream in the same way, but it is a misleading identifier. There are many types and degrees of disability, people have different resources with which to manage disability and the contexts in which we work and live offer different ways and extents of accommodating different disabilities.

My disability as an undergraduate 30 years ago was an invisible one that changed for the worse over the three years of my bachelor's degree. From infancy I had suffered from chronic kidney disease and began going into kidney failure in my mid-teens. By the time I reached university I was pretty impaired and my daily experiences on campus were a battle for survival. Not only did I have to struggle to survive organ failure long enough to receive a transplant, but I had to deal daily with an academic world that had no interest or stake in understanding my condition or the impact of the campus environment on me.

I am going to show what it was like living in the weird liminal space of having an invisible disability as a student at Wits in the late eighties and early nineties. I'll do this by telling two stories about my experience of institutional violence and then I'll briefly explain what they mean to me.

Chronic kidney disease is vital organ failure and, as it progresses, it becomes extremely disabling. My kidneys were scarred when I was a baby. By the time I reached university in 1987 I was already functioning well below par. I did not often discuss my condition with my friends or classmates for a number of complex reasons: I was not by nature a very confiding person, many people did not understand what kidney failure entailed (and some did not even know what kidneys did) and my precarious situation terrified me. It also made me feel like a freak. So I hid my disease as best I could. Kidney disease does not have many visible markers so people would not have been able to guess at what was happening to me, although by second year some of my lecturers and classmates thought I was anorexic, because I was so thin that I could only fit into clothes from the children's department. I bruised easily. My hands shook. My skin took on a strange pale yellow hue. Every day was a battle to keep up with other

people. To survive I had to learn how to make decisions that wouldn't ruin my day, such as whether a bath or a shower would exhaust me so much that I wouldn't be able to function.

The key issues my vignettes depict are the struggle for accommodations and the politics of legitimacy – who can claim support. These are major issues for people living with an invisible disability.

The Disabled Students' Programme and me (1987): When shame can be as disabling as the condition itself

I had experienced kidney function impairment all my life since I contracted haemolytic uremic syndrome at eight months. By the time I reached university in 1987, I was slowing down rapidly. I was struggling to climb stairs, walk distances and to get to my seminars. The main campus of the University of the Witwatersrand is quite hilly and the buildings all have stairs. I had seen the Disabled Students' Programme's (DSP) advertisements on the notice boards, asking students with disabilities to self-identify to receive the assistance they needed and not suffer alone. The DSP could even have lectures moved to more accessible locations. So I approached them for help.

But the people at the DSP told me that all students complained about the venues. They said being disabled meant you were blind, deaf or in a wheelchair. Disabled people, they explained, were much worse off than I was. I saw such people at the DSP getting help and I thought the staff were correct. Some of these students were quadriplegic and could not move at all, while I could.

I felt ashamed at my selfishness and weakness. Then I saw another notice on the DSP's notice board; this one was about needing volunteers who could read study materials onto audio cassettes for blind students. I felt bad about asking for help and my late grandmother had had glaucoma, so I offered to read for the project.

I read for them for seven years. During this time I stopped being able to climb stairs or walk far. If I had to get across campus I had to plan my route very carefully and sit down a lot. I was severely anaemic.

By 1989, I was sleeping 14 hours a day and was too exhausted to manage more than half an hour's work per week per subject outside of class time. My marks dropped during the year as I became more critically ill. I made a half-hearted attempt at explaining why to my Greek tutor in whose subject I had got 100% in the first semester, but didn't really try to convince him of my situation or ask

for help. I felt undeserving of help and I still felt bad about asking for it in 1987. I did, however, continue reading for the blind students.

I start my postgrad career and dialysis (1991)

By 1990, I was so ill I couldn't proceed with my Honours degree. I had been worked up for transplant in the wrong way. (I was being worked up for a related living donor transplant and the donor had backed out.) This meant that I needed to go onto dialysis after all and I should have been put onto it earlier than I was.

When I started Honours in 1991, I was adjusting well to peritoneal dialysis and my abdominal catheter and felt very much better. I could concentrate, I could climb stairs again and I could organise my daily dialysis routine around my classes and other commitments. I was no longer sleeping most of the day. I even secured a bursary. There was, however, one consideration. The transplant. So, at the beginning of the academic year, I went to the postgraduate coordinator in my department to discuss my options with her. I was worried that my transplant kidney may come up during the exam period – and we had only one set of exams. If I missed the exams I would risk not receiving my degree.

I outlined my concerns to her. From a position of immense privilege and power she said in these exact words, “Well, if you're not sure you can cope with the degree, perhaps you'd be better off doing something else.” I thought she must have misunderstood, so I explained that my health was vastly improved and much more stable since going onto dialysis. There was just a chance that I might need to postpone my end-of-year exam because I was on the waiting list for a transplant. She said, “We are certainly not going to set a special exam for one student.” I debated internally the odds of risking my degree to fit in with this decision. It seemed unwise. “What shall I do?” I asked her at last. “Change to part-time study”, she said, turning back to the article she was reading. So I did. I lost my bursary and another year, by doing my Honours degree year over two years.

When I had my transplant (during exam time as I had feared), a friend wrote back to the department about their treatment of me by placing a newspaper clipping about transplant awareness in which I had featured in the middle of the departmental notice board. She was asked to remove the clipping because it wasn't relevant to the department's academic field, but she refused and told the staff that if they removed it she would simply put up another. I don't know if the department was shamed, but it didn't stop them treating me like an unworthy person undeserving of support or recognition.

What this means to me

As an undergraduate in large class groups I had managed to convince myself that I had not received help, because I had not yet proven my academic worth and was invisible in a mass of students. Possibly I had not explained my situation clearly enough or assertively enough to the right people. However, coming to postgraduate studies was no better. If anything, it seemed worse, as the reaction of the postgraduate supervisor was so spiteful. Recently, I discussed these experiences with a friend who had her transplant a year after me and was also a student at the same institution then. She reminded me that her experiences had been no better, even in a different department. She had even provided medical certificates explaining her situation, but had been dismissed by the departmental chair with these exact words that still ring in her ears three decades later: "If I had to accommodate everyone with the sniffles, I would be inundated."

First of all, let me assert: I do not see myself as a victim. But I do see myself as having been disabled by a system that was not designed to accommodate me and by people in authority who didn't trouble themselves to understand my situation. A dissertation by Yee (2013) on women living with invisible disabilities explores five recurring themes in the women's narratives: Inclusion, Self-advocacy, Marginalisation, Exclusion, and Isolation. These themes are interrelated. I have borrowed the themes here to add structure to what I am discussing.

Inclusion

I did not feel part of life on campus. It all seemed to be designed for people who were not like me. I learned to pass, but that's not the same thing (Goffman, 1961). And passing made me feel like a hollow person and as if my relationships were fraudulent

Self-advocacy

I did my best, but people need to listen when one speaks or else one may as well have remained silent (Carson, 2002).

Marginalisation

It's difficult enough belonging to a marginalised, stigmatised group. But if that group or its leaders don't recognise and accept you, you have nowhere to go and no one to turn to.

Exclusion

The failure of the authority figures in my institution to whom I turned for help and advice left me cut off from resources to which I should rightfully have had access. This in turn cut me off from other resources. This rippled through my university career and in some ways changed its course.

Isolation

The exclusion and marginalisation I experienced were extremely isolating. The shame I felt was isolating too. So much so, that I could not talk about it. I felt shamed by asking for help and being told that I was not as badly off as some. I felt ashamed for (as I saw it) making a fuss. For not trying harder. For being lazy because I could not work all night or hold down a student job. For not getting better marks. (I was described as a good second-class student, but only first-class students seemed to be considered deserving. Marks were everything and what it took to get to university and stay there was never taken into account.) I felt ashamed for becoming more dependent on my mother, while my peers were growing independent of their parents. I was ashamed for not being more like my peers (either abled or disabled). For not being more deserving of help. For not being stronger.

I hid my shame and I hid my disability. I made sure I looked as well as possible and never complained. But I knew I could never measure up. I buried my outrage and my sense of injustice beneath my shame. I learned to live in liminal places or as Sen (Nussbaum, 2003) calls it, with adaptive preferences.

Thirty years later, I am a staff member on a campus of a different university. As an older person who works with students, I understand that there is such a concept as institutional violence. But I have an embodied understanding of what it means because of the harm that was done to me. I have been glad to learn in conversations with staff and students who have a range of disabilities that the institution these days takes a more nuanced view of disability and is more willing to offer individualised support. In coming to understand and work with that complexity, the present-day institution has opened up the space to consider another level of complexity around access, as Bongani will explain in the section that follows. And, as he will show, there remains work to be done around accessibility on campus and around transformation for people with disabilities.

Stellenbosch University today: Bongani's experiences

While support for students with disabilities has improved over the past decades, my experiences capture what might still be missing and what might be improved upon in the future in terms of campus becoming more seamlessly accessible and welcoming to all. I attended a special-needs primary and high school before coming to a mainstream university and I compare my experiences of school and university, as the different institutions address access and inclusion in different ways. For instance, I found my secondary schooling positive due to all-round inclusion, but the reality is that life has to carry on after school and being segregated from mainstream society becomes a challenge when that era ends. The contrasting point my section aims to highlight is that nowadays varsity campuses present a pleasant contrast of integration with mainstream society BUT there is a greater need to mainstream disability into as many parts of campus life as possible. This would go a certain distance into bringing about deeper transformation and making a campus such as Stellenbosch less alienating for people that form part of the various minority populations within broader campus.

Integration into mainstream society

My story begins when I sustained a spinal cord injury that caused paralysis at a very young age. I was so young that I hadn't started any form of schooling. However, after 10 months of hospitalisation, it became obvious that I was going to be permanently disabled from the waist down. Therefore, it was a necessity that I be enrolled into a special school.

There are some positive and negative aspects to this experience. Firstly, it is positive in a sense that I got exposed to a variety of disabilities completely different from mine. For instance, my first encounter with a disorder called cerebral palsy. Depending on the extent of the paralysis, someone with cerebral palsy might even struggle to express themselves clearly. This form of exposure, though not without its fair share of shock, helped me deal with my own new circumstance of no longer being able to use my legs. This taught me patience, tolerance and the importance of understanding 'difference' and the reality of dealing with varying struggles of being impaired. I have no doubt any child exposed to similar learning conditions would also benefit in the same manner.

However, in hindsight, a huge credit goes towards the structure of the school; it was never a disabling environment so to some degree one only had to deal with one's own impairment and not disability as such. Impairment is an illness,

injury or congenital condition that causes a loss or difference of physiological or psychological function. Disability, then, is the subsequent loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in society on an equal level with others due to social and environmental barriers (Shakespeare, 2013). This also goes as far as the teaching we received; we never felt like the teachers approached us differently in how they'd otherwise teach able-bodied children. They ensured that they inspired our beliefs of a better future and unleashed our full potential in spite of not being products of so-called mainstream schooling. They challenged and supported us to think and do more. This proved incredibly life- and identity-enhancing.

A special school is an educational boarding facility just like any other, except that all the children who attend there all have varying and wide-ranging disabilities. Practically, this means that the design and layout of a special school is in such a way that the space accommodates every form of disability. This became my entire schooling experience as a child, so I never felt out of place simply because everyone there had an impairment.

But one of the negative aspects of being in a special school was the matter of being away from mainstream society and not having much contact with the so-called outside world. Besides our parents, we had visitors such as church ministers and pastors to give sermons during our regular church services. We also had entertainers that would visit to do musicals and drama performances. However, we never had any form of contact with school children who were our age and able-bodied. As I grew up, this became the source of an intensely troubling internal conflict for me. On the one hand in our world we were taught we were 'normal' and able to do everyday things, but on the other it seemed as if kids with disabilities were purposely being kept away from society in its 'wholesome' form. Was disability being ignored or hidden away? Was this done intentionally so that disability is continually linked with being locked away, imprisoned or confined? Were our disabilities monstrous, evil and a form of punishment for something?

Time was always going to pass and we were never going to be in such environments forever but at some point we would finish and have to be integrated into the general communities we originally came from. There are no special tertiary institutions specifically for the disabled so we would have to integrate with other mainstream youth eventually. Thus, retrospectively thinking, this separation created an 'us versus them' outlook of the world. It developed a superiority and inferiority complex between us as pupils with disabilities and the other youth that attended mainstream school. This became

problematic when it came to dynamics of friendship and interaction in that we viewed the able-bodied children as superior to us due to being free and able to do what they desired, yet both groups most probably faced similar teen challenges be it within the classrooms, as a result of puberty or any other rites-of-passage-related issues.

Life on Stellenbosch campus as a student with a disability

Prior to my arrival at this formerly white Afrikaans university, I already had my own expectations of possibilities of what my life was likely to become. Although I was open-minded, I did recognise I was enrolling into one of the most highly recommended tertiary institutions in the country so I believed that my special learning needs would most likely be not only accommodated but embraced. The residence I was placed in, New Generation Residence (now known as Huis Russel Botman House), was one of the newest buildings amongst other far older residences. I was assigned to a room much bigger than the other rooms, which was hugely beneficial in accommodating wheelchair needs. The same applied to the lavatory facilities that were built to cater for needs of students with disabilities. While main entrance points at the residence still need re-configuration for more convenient use for all, all these other facilities do make my life a lot easier.

However, some later discoveries pertaining to other residences were to be rather alarming. For instance, if I had been placed in an older residence such as Dagbreek or Majuba, I simply would not have been able to enter these buildings at all as they are inaccessible for a person in a wheelchair. Throughout my undergraduate years in Stellenbosch, I have not been able to visit friends in their residences due to buildings I cannot enter. This is a form of social exclusion for minority members of mainstream society. In spite of disability, humans remain social animals and friendship forms an essential part of anyone's life. When sociologist Ray Pahl highlights the importance of friendship, he goes about it this way:

The accumulation of supporting experiences of various forms eventually leads individuals to feel securely that they are capable and competent people and that they can be confident in knowing that there are significant others who believe in them, who love them and who can be counted on in a crisis. Having this social support empowers people to live more effectively and, indeed, more healthily and for longer.

(Pahl, 2000:149)

Student social life is an important part of the university experience, allowing people to learn beyond their classrooms and to create networks and support

systems. While the type of situation experienced in the design of residences can cut one off from student life, other experiences have shown me that people are willing to include me. For instance, in one of my lectures at the beginning of a semester, there was a venue change that my lecturer wasn't aware of. However, I had introduced myself to him so he knew I existed and what some of my challenges might be. Upon arriving at the new venue, he realized access was going to be a problem for me. Not only did he stop to alert the whole class on how problematic this was bound to be for one of the students, but he also endeavoured to reach out to me in order to apologise and discuss alternative arrangements. The very next lecture was moved into a more accessible venue. That was a demonstration for me of the importance of inclusive thinking, especially from a leadership point of view.

Education and advocacy for inclusive education

I realise that when associated with institutions such as Stellenbosch University, performance and striving for excellence are taken for granted and expected from everyone who qualifies to be a student within the institution irrespective of internal or external battles they might be facing. This is not a negative expectation as it can inspire everyone involved to think and do better just like my special school inspired my early schooling life.

However, the glaring reality is that this is not a one-size-fits-all system of education, especially for those who require a lot more than just attending lectures in lecture halls. Into the future, if everyone is going to be afforded an opportunity to at least pleasantly co-exist, thrive and realise their full potential, the assumption that everyone is independent, equal and fully capable of automatically adjusting into the ways the university operates will have to be revisited and reviewed completely. In addition, if the university expects the best of its students, then as students we should also expect the best from university management and the approaches they adopt in order to make everyone's existence within campus as fulfilling, pleasant and rewarding as possible.

I once had an experience whereby my re-application for accommodation in residence was rejected by the university's system, which would have meant that the following year I would have had to seek alternative accommodation in a campus setting that is already compromised in terms of places that can fully accommodate a person with mobility problems. Upon my investigation of this matter, I was shocked to discover that the placement system actually does not indicate my disability status and therefore treats my application as any other.

The placement officer concerned had to make a human intervention to rectify the matter. I would assume that if there were some form of profiling that allows a complete view of student status, especially pertaining to disability, this would allow more informed decisions to be made.

A situation whereby a certain group of students carry more burdens than others does not assist in their development and the honing of their vocational skills and talents. In the case of students with disabilities, we have to fight to be heard and seen for who we are, to be seen as individuals and not just as 'the disabled' or merely 'the representative of the disability movement'.

Going into the future, it is going to be imperative that transformation becomes more of a participatory process and students with disabilities become subjects of research rather than just objects. The slogan of 'nothing about us without us' has to become more relevant as it has been proven in the past that without representation, the decision- and policy-makers risk losing sight of pressing matters and feedback of lived experiences that they are unlikely to ever have access to in their own capacities.

When assessing social exclusion and marginalisation on campus, the problem of exposure becomes central to the way interactions between students transpire. Due to attending ability-segregated primary and high schools, people find it difficult to understand something they might have not ever have been exposed prior to entering university. For instance, if every able-bodied student had a classmate or a friend with a disability at some stage of their upbringing, when confronted by other students with disabilities at tertiary level, that would not be a foreign phenomenon and yet another difficult confrontation with the 'other'. This would also not only be positive for unity and companionship but also a better attempt at facilitating diversity and social cohesion.

Conclusion

The two stories we have presented here show very different contexts. Rose has described her experiences as a white student with an invisible disability at a white university during apartheid and Bongani his experiences as a black student at a historically white Afrikaans university today. There are differences in the stories, and the naïveté and callousness with which invisible disability was treated at Wits by people who claimed to know about disability when Rose was a student would not, we hope, be repeated today.

But just as things change, so they stay the same. Issues of exclusion remain. In the context of #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, and other movements sweeping across higher education institutions in South Africa (Nyamnjoh, 2016), there has been much talk of “bodies” and specifically of bodies as raced and gendered. There has been some contestation and debate about LGBTIQ issues as part of the struggle for access and place in higher education (Cornell, Ratele & Kessi, 2016). But in general, there has been little thought given to those students whose bodies do not fit norms, and who commonly deal with embodied exclusion daily. This is a very serious omission and it leads to serious questions.

In a recent editorial in the *South African Journal of Psychology* arguing that South African psychologists should be doing more to support student movements for change, Pillay (2016) uses the telling phrase “silence is violence” (Pillay, 2016:155). The idea that not mentioning something is in itself an act of elision, and hence destruction and violence, has a long and important history in many struggles. The struggle by feminists for gender-neutral language was a key intervention in the academy in the 1970s, and the fact that few progressives these days would be happy to speak about ‘mankind’ or ‘chairmen’ is testimony to this.

Similarly, masculinist, heteronormative and racist assumptions that the default ‘normal’ or average person is a white man, are routinely, and appropriately, questioned. But what of the politics of what more than twenty years ago, the disability studies scholar Lennard Davis (1995) termed “enforcing normalcy”? Should those of us who are serious about inclusion and change in higher education in South Africa accept as ‘normal’ that in discussion after discussion on these issues (including Pillay’s [2016] paper dealing with silence as violence), disability as a transformation issue is not even mentioned? We believe not. Silence, overlooking, or viewing disability as a ‘boutique issue’ somehow separate from all other concerns about human flourishing (Swartz & Bantjes, 2016), is tantamount to taking a decision, ultimately, about who may make legitimate claims to be included in struggles for recognition of personhood for all. Indeed, keeping silent about and refusing to engage with disability is an act not only of misrecognition but ultimately a denial of personhood to people with non-normative bodies or minds (Garland-Thomson, 2015b; Kittay, 2005; Koch, 2004; McBryde Johnson, 2004). This is not a form of violence we wish to condone or be part of in current struggles for change in higher education in South Africa.

We have given just two examples in this chapter of experiences of disability in higher education in South Africa. Much has been achieved, as this and the

previous chapter both show. But until and unless disability issues are seen as part and parcel of other issues of struggle and change in higher education globally and in South Africa, there remains an enormous amount of work to do.

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6

SECTION

Transformative Pedagogies
and Curricula

Chapter 18

To Do Difference Differently:
Intervening at the intersection of institutional culture
and the curriculum

Christi van der Westhuizen

Introduction

Universities in South Africa acceded to the post-apartheid transformation agenda, and enacted their commitments in terms thereof. Still, discrepancies continue in participation of students, throughput, graduation, advancement to postgraduate level and retention of achievers as academic staff. Moreover, racist and hetero-patriarchal incidents punctuate the recent histories of universities, as illustrated, for example, in Chipso Munyuki, Louise Vincent and Emmanuel Mayeza's "A Home for All?" How gay, lesbian and bisexual students experience being "at home" in university residence life'; Tamara Shefer's "Doing Gender" on Campus: Students' experiences of normative practices of heterosex in South African higher educational contexts and some critical reflections on dominant responses'; Brittany Everitt-Penhole and Floretta Boonzaier's 'Constructing Heterosex: Examining male university students' depictions of (hetero)sexuality in their talk of rape'; and Megan Robertson and Rob Pattman's 'Feeling at Home or Not at Home: Negotiating gender, sexuality and race in residences in an historically white university in South Africa'. These are the conditions that produced student protests during 2015-2016. Among others, the protestors sought to expose the material and symbolic exclusion of black, queer and women students in higher education spaces. As argued in Chapter 1, the protests served as a jolting reminder that, while much work has been done to transform the tertiary sector, towering iniquities inherited from colonialism and apartheid

remain. A critical rethinking is in order to rejuvenate transformation in ways that will redouble efforts at redress (see also Van der Westhuizen, 2017b).

At higher education level, transformation is usually approached as consisting of the following elements: demographics, student and staff experience, curriculum, institutional culture, and governance and leadership. I approach these elements of transformation as existing in a dynamic co-constitutive interrelatedness, in that they stand in mutual reinforcement or derogation. Of these elements, institutional culture has been most notoriously nebulous, to the extent that some critics advise against settling on definitions. In this chapter, I argue that institutional culture can be grasped using the concepts of institutional racism, institutional heterosexism, and such like. Moreover, working with notions such as normalisation and recognition further allows for the pinning down of the otherwise slippery set of norms and social practices that constitute institutional culture. I further argue that institutional culture possesses a kindred phenomenon in the hidden curriculum, which provides a point of exposure where institutional culture can be confronted. This confrontation is best done through curricular interventions that seek to expose the normative assumptions of which the repetition continuously produces institutional culture, especially where these assumptions pertain to racial, gendered, sexualised and other forms of Othering. This chapter concludes with a discussion of such a curricular intervention at first-year level, called *Doing Difference Differently (UP3D)*, at the University of Pretoria (UP).¹ Firstly, I unpack the concepts of institutional culture and hidden curriculum.

The intersection between institutional culture and curriculum

Student protests at universities in 2015–2016 thrust the failures and shortcomings of the post-apartheid transformation project to the centre of the national stage. The demonstrations confirmed critical analyses of the higher education sector over especially the last decade, and made a nationwide reckoning with the realities of continuing injustices at universities unavoidable. Badat (2013:6) provides a nuanced definition of transformation that also grasps its limitations:

‘Transformation’ has the aim of the dissolution of existing social relations and institutions, policies and practices, and creating radically new social arrangements. Of course, the processes of dissolution and creation may be uneven and vary in

1 The *Doing Difference Differently (UP3D)* module is an initiative of Prof. Norman Duncan, Vice-Principal: Academic, at the University of Pretoria, and was developed by the author of this chapter.

place, and there may not be uniform rupture or total displacement of old structures, institutions and practices. In a nutshell, while ‘transformation’ signifies fundamental change, not all change is transformation.

This vantage point on transformation assists in understanding the vast discrepancies that continue in participation of students, throughput, graduation, advancement to postgraduate level and retention of achievers as academic staff – despite 20 years having passed after the *White Paper on Higher Education* and despite the overall improvement of student demographics at particularly historically white institutions. Institutions have “complied with the broad transformation requirements placed before them [...] especially employment equity” (Ministerial Committee, 2008:13), but access and success remain highly determined by race, gender, class and location. The incongruities clustering around axes of difference mean that the higher education system continues to haemorrhage particularly black,² poor students, who are lost due to prematurely dropping out, or not advancing through the system. Few are retained as academics. Particularly black women are impeded from progressing to the higher echelons of higher education. Hence the emphasis of the 2013 *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* on the following:

High-level postgraduate output must increase, by encouraging those already in the system as well as by developing future researchers, and with a strong continued focus on improving equity in relation to gender, race and disability. (p. 34)

The 2013 White Paper speaks to the Ministerial Committee’s finding that:

discrimination, in particular with regard to racism and sexism, is pervasive in our institutions. [A] disjunction is apparent between institutional policies and the real-life experiences of staff and students ... [despite] consensus amongst both staff and students across institutions that the necessary policies were in place. (pp. 13-14)

The pertinent question is how, after more than two decades, such a stark chasm could still exist between lived experience and policy. The Ministerial Committee fingered the disconnection between transformation policies and particularly the institutional cultures of universities (p. 14). Increasingly, institutional culture has come to be identified as the primary hindrance in the way of higher education transformation (Higgins, 2007). Institutional culture is generally understood as one of the terrains for transformation to be addressed by higher education institutions, alongside demographics, student and staff

2 Racial categories are necessarily a fraught terrain due to South Africa’s history of racism. Race is here assumed to be understood as a social construction with the political aim of inequality, both symbolically and materially. Depending on context, ‘black’ may also refer collectively to the three apartheid categories of black, coloured and Indian.

experience, curriculum, institutional culture, and governance and leadership. These elements are here approached as operating in a dynamic co-constitutive interrelatedness: they mutually construct each other and together, interactively, constitute the whole of institutional life, formal and informal, individual and collective, micro and macro, at universities. Therefore, transformation in one or more of these areas will affect other areas, either in advancing transformation or in invoking resistance to transformation.

Arguably, institutional culture is the most encompassing of all the elements, and also works most insidiously of all, as it speaks to the vague condition of how institutions ‘feel’ towards those within them (Vincent, 2015:25). It is not quantifiable, as demographics would be. It is also to some extent impervious to policy-making, unlike governance, and to epistemological interventions, unlike curriculum. Being the most encompassing, interventions that speak to and potentially re-constitute institutional culture therefore must range from changing the contents of curricula and policies, to diversifying those who teach curricula, provide support, head up governance structures and implement policies, to democratising governance, in order to eradicate institutional practices of domination, exclusion, stigmatisation and marginalisation.

The focus of this chapter is the interconnection between curriculum and institutional culture. I agree with Badat’s analysis (2013:7) that ‘the heart of transformation’ must be an explicit linking of ontological and epistemological issues, as manifested in research and curriculum, with

institutional cultures that genuinely respect and appreciate difference and diversity – whether class, gender, national, linguistic, religious, sexual orientation, epistemological or methodological in nature – and exploring and creating spaces for the flowering of epistemologies, ontologies, theories, methodologies, objects and questions other than those that have long been hegemonic in intellectual and scholarly thought and writing.

My argument is that initiatives in curricula can be productive in gaining a grip on otherwise amorphous institutional cultures. The concept of the ‘hidden curriculum’ can be of particular use, as it speaks to assumptions reflective of and drawn from an institution’s culture that are transmitted into the lecture hall and that infuse pedagogical practice. Indeed, the hidden curriculum is one of the points of exposure where the hazy formations of institutional culture can be brought into view for transformation. The next two sub-sections unpack the interrelated notions of institutional culture and hidden curriculum in greater detail.

Institutional culture

Institutional culture is a notoriously woolly concept. Higgins (2007:98) argues that educationists should avoid defining it and rather work with its evasive character as reflective of the contested reality it seeks to describe. Higgins' proposal is useful as an alert to institutional cultures currently being sites of intense social and political dispute. This speaks to Keet's (2015) definition of institutional culture which foregrounds *recognition* and *misrecognition*, concepts that assist in pinning down institutional culture, *contra* Higgins. The notion of recognition of personhood on the basis of norms, which draws on Butler (2006:43-45; 2010:4-6), refers to a reciprocal humanisation of the Other in relation to Self, with mutual recognition serving as the basis for ethical social relations (Van der Westhuizen, 2017a; Van der Westhuizen, 2017b). Based on these pivotal concepts, Keet (2015:4) defines institutional culture as:

the totality of regimes of praxes within universities that normalise the productions and distributions of patterns of recognitions and misrecognitions according to norms that construct subjectivities without these norms themselves being subjected to scrutiny. These subjectivities carry cultural identities that are determined by various categories: race, class, religion, sexuality, gender, ability, ethnicity...

To unpack Keet's definition, patterns of recognition and misrecognition are determined by norms that hold the power of constituting subject positions for individuals. This constitution works through the creation of cultures and related identities, drawing on social markers of difference. Norms work mostly invisibly, as captured by the phrase 'normalisation', referring to processes of iteration and reinforcement of standards of being, and of inclusion and exclusion. It is of particular relevance in understanding institutional culture. For those whose cultural base is aligned with an institution's culture, 'the way we have always done it' is assumed to be 'normal' (Steyn & Van Zyl, 2001:20). When a prevailing cultural position carries privilege, the 'taken-for-granted given' becomes something for all others to assimilate into. Those who are different (racialised, gendered, sexualised and other Others) are rendered inferior and in need of correction (p. 20), or may be denied recognition altogether.

These normalised assumptions are therefore continuities of injustice from the apartheid past to the postapartheid present. To discern their sources, Robus and Mcleod (2006:467-468) utilises Essed's (2002) notion of "everyday racism" to make sense of a university's institutional culture. Everyday racism links the macro and the micro in the production of the social world. It is "not about extreme incidents [...] it concerns mundane practices" and "normalised micro-injustices" that are repetitive and cumulative and blend

into familiar practices (pp. 207-208). Everyday racism works through class and gender relations; institutionalised racism, sexism and cultural chauvinism are “structured into the systems and the mindsets” of universities (Steyn & Van Zyl, 2001:20).

Delving deeper into institutional racism, heterosexism and related modes of domination and subjugation, Vincent (2015:23) asks how we can ‘get at’ institutional culture given its everyday inconspicuousness. She directs us to interrogate institutional culture as discursive: discourses construct meaning and also serve as “truth statements [...] about what is to be regarded as normal and right”. Linking this with Keet’s approach to institutional culture, normalised truths operate as discourses that constitute subjects and determine whether they will be recognised or misrecognised. These narratives produce micro cultures at the level of the everyday and the ordinary (Vincent, 2015:26). She suggests understanding the culture of an institution as:

the stories we tell about it and ourselves in relation to it – and indeed the stories that the institution itself, *qua* institution, tells, authorises, negates, suppresses, circulates and propagates. (Vincent, 2015:24)

Stories are sense-making tools not only used in identity-formation by individuals but also by institutions. An interaction exists between individuals’ stories and institutional stories in that individuals narrate institutions’ stories as much as being narrated by the most prevalent institutional stories (Vincent, 2015:25). We will return to narratives in our discussion below of the module on differences. At this point I wish to argue that institutional racism and heterosexism work as interpretive frameworks, providing stories with which both individual identities and institutional identities are manufactured, ‘making up’ an institutional culture in repetitive, interactive processes.

Homing in on whiteness as an institutional form, this concept is used by a number of scholars in a bid to capture the workings of everyday racism in the institutional cultures of universities (Van der Merwe & Van Reenen, 2016; Higgins, 2007; Steyn & Van Zyl, 2001). Whiteness is a structural position intertwined with heteropatriarchal and middle-class privilege which maintains itself invisibly and is normalised as the standard of achievement. This positioning is indistinguishable from its material effects, in that heteropatriarchal, middle-class whiteness works to position certain individuals as automatically deserving of whatever material benefits may be on offer. With the final collapse of state-sponsored racism and heteropatriarchy in 1994, these forms adopted defensive postures aimed at safeguarding unequal power

relations as they exist in intertwined symbolical and material form, also in institutions such as universities.

Following Vincent, an approach to surfacing whiteness is through narratives. For example, one of the key stories of whiteness that infuses institutional cultures across higher education institutions in South Africa is a fabricated contradiction between blackness and excellence. This trope draws on relational equivalences that whiteness has relied on since colonial times. These sets of equivalences are black = incapacity, and therefore white = excellence. Ultimately black = inferiority and white = superiority.

A study done at Rhodes University finds a discourse in which a polarity is manufactured that sets up blackness as ‘naturally’ equivalent to failure, which renders whiteness as opposite and therefore ‘naturally’ equivalent to excellence (Robus & Macleod, 2006). Whiteness is normalised as the standard of achievement, while blackness is forever lacking and in pursuit of achievement as manifested in whiteness. For black staff members at a university, this translates into: ‘If you are black you are never good enough’ (Moraka, 2014:13). For black students, it translates into the expectation that they will not succeed: ‘I did not belong and my educational endeavour was not something that was seen to come as naturally to me as it did to those who looked the part’ (Njovane, 2015:121). Similar dynamics of recognition and misrecognition occur in relation to gender and class. The next section addresses the hidden curriculum.

Hidden curriculum

As argued, understandings of ‘institutional culture’ and of ‘hidden curriculum’ reveal resemblances between these phenomena which can be exploited for the purposes of transformation. In Wren’s (1999:593) approach, institutional culture is the hidden curriculum: He regards the hidden curriculum as the ‘ethos’ or ‘school spirit’, the symbolic aspects of an educational institution, in an echo of Steyn and Van Zyl’s notion of institutional culture as the ‘prevailing ethos’ (2001:9). Within that, Wren includes traditions, rituals and rites that are used to inculcate social norms in students. These norms are transmitted intergenerationally to enable students to function within specific institutions but also as ‘productive citizens’ in broader society (p. 594). Other definitions of the concept ‘hidden curriculum’ range from micro to macro contexts. Sambell and McDowell (1998:391-392) define it as ‘the shadowy, ill-defined and amorphous nature of that which is implicit and embedded in educational experiences in contrast with the formal statements about curricula and the surface features of educational interaction’. While this definition puts its finger

on the indistinctness that the hidden curriculum shares with institutional culture, the interconnectedness with the broader context beyond the lecture hall is absent.

Universities as institutional settings cannot be approached as separate from the larger social sphere. Power shifts and contestations at national level have echoing permutations throughout institutions, including those in the higher education sector. In South Africa, the official divisions among higher education institutions were based, first, on colonial and apartheid racialisation and ethnicisation. Therefore institutional challenges should be analysed as permutations of national challenges, as there is a mutually productive relationship between institutions and the social sphere which makes it imperative to continuously link transformation activities with the larger social context. At the same time, and this is the good news, given the more contained and localised environment of the university, interventions can be much more focused.

While South African universities display similarities due to their shared histories of apartheid and colonialism (Duncan, 2005; De la Rey, 2001), there are historical, contextual and ideological specificities that put unique challenges in the way of transformation at each institution. It is imperative to be mindful of the local context specific to each university. Here the historical conditions of the founding of a specific institution are of importance. These include the ideological purposes underlying its creation and how these functioned in harnessing apartheid.

A wider lens, drawing on understandings of schooling as a coercive societal mechanism, brings the social context explicitly into relation with the content of the classroom, or lecture hall, as per Giroux and Penna's (1979:21) analysis:

By viewing schools within the context of the larger society, social studies developers can begin to focus on the tacit teaching that goes on in schools and help to uncover the ideological messages embedded in both the content of the formal curriculum and the social relations of the classroom encounter.

The 'ideological messages', 'tacit teaching', and 'ethos' are akin to the normalised truths described above that determine recognition and misrecognition of subjects. But Apple (1975:210-211) in Giroux and Penna (1979:22) extends this idea to include what is presented as 'objective, factual knowledge' and 'unquestioned truths' in the lecture hall, which are in fact particular, limited and partial knowledges and ideologies (norms) that represent dominant social interests. He urges the problematisation of "day-to-day

regularities” and curricula that reflect dominant ideologies. Apple’s approach corresponds with the analysis above of institutional culture as normalised everyday discursive truths that draw on race, gender and other categories to determine the recognition of subjects. Misrecognised Others are subjected to cultural and material exclusion, marginalisation or invisibilisation in an institution.

From this discussion we glean that the hidden curriculum consists of everyday, normative, cultural assumptions that form part of and are productive of the institutional culture; that it encompasses both the informal and formal statements in educational spaces; that it should be broadly contextualised to ascertain the social norms that inform it; that it represents a contact point for acculturation into dominant norms that draw on race, gender and other categories to determine recognition of subjects within an institution. The hidden curriculum is a situated, determinable instance of the institutional culture at micro level. Contextualising the hidden curriculum as the micro set of social relations of the classroom encounter – first within the institution and then within larger society – brings one closer to grasping institutional culture. The converse is also valid and useful: in seeking transformation of institutional culture; a point of exposure of this otherwise evasive phenomenon is to be found in the hidden curriculum, as it emerges in the social relations of the classroom.

As I have argued, interventions in institutional culture and the hidden curriculum benefit from framing within the larger and also more immediate social context. The next section turns to an endeavour that seeks to do exactly that.

A curricular intervention in UP’s institutional culture: Doing Difference Differently (UP3D)

As argued, institutional culture is produced through everyday discourses of racism and heteropatriarchy. Institutional culture and curriculum are interconnected and mutually generative. The instance where this is most specifically evident is in the classroom encounter with the ‘hidden curriculum’. In addressing this intersection between institutional culture and curriculum, I now move to a discussion of a new module called Doing Difference Differently (UP3D), which was launched in pilot form in 2015 at the University of Pretoria, with the second instalment in 2016. UP3D is an initiative that moves from the theoretical basis that the curriculum and the culture of an institution are interlinked. Given South Africa’s history of state-driven injustice – what could be called institutionalised misrecognition – UP3D is an endeavour, through

contextualisation and historicisation, to advance transformation of both the curriculum and institutional culture by cultivating critical thinking and self-reflection about difference among students.

- ▶ Badat (2013:5) captures a number of challenges before universities, of which the following two are particularly salient:
- ▶ The “role of universities is to contribute to forging a critical and democratic citizenship. Vibrant and dynamic societies require graduates who are not just capable professionals, but also thoughtful intellectuals and critical citizens that respect and promote human rights”.
- ▶ Another “role of universities is to proactively engage with our societies at the intellectual and, more generally, cultural level. This requires universities to not just transmit knowledge to people in the wider society, but to have a two-way engagement with the wider society; a reflexive communication if you like”.

Applying these insights to institutional culture and the curriculum, as I have argued, is to analyse the curriculum in relation to the social and historical context, which surfaces the dominant but obfuscated norms that constitute an institutional culture and the related hidden curriculum. In the South African but also other contexts, these norms underpin social recognition of personhood, which consists of ongoing and also haphazard processes of racialisation, gendering, sexualisation, classing, and so forth. Advancing transformation hence requires curricula that capacitate students to discern and critique the dominant norms that determine recognition, particularly when it comes to Othering on the basis of race, gender and other differences. UP3D aims to equip students with critical insights that up-end the normalisation of the abuse of differences that entrenches relations of subjugation and domination.

Given the module’s aim, and drawing on the insights about the formation and content of institutional cultures and the hidden curriculum, contextualisation and historicisation are two important approaches. UP3D moves from the positive acknowledgement of differences in the country’s constitution, with a view to encouraging students to ground their critical embrace of difference in the assertion of the human dignity of all. The constitution’s foregrounding of the right to human dignity as foundational value, alongside equality and freedom, is a refusal and undoing of colonial and apartheid misrecognition or denial of recognition, which formed the basis of centuries-long dehumanisation of racialised, gendered and other Others. The ability to integrate understandings of difference with the constitutional verification of human dignity should

empower students to act as ‘thoughtful intellectuals’ who share in ‘critical and democratic citizenship’, to use Badat’s words.

The module is framed by UP’s Strategic Plan 2025, which privileges ‘diversity’ as one of four navigational markers. The approach to diversity is explicated in the ‘UP Values’ statement as referencing “differing perspectives” and “diverse backgrounds and histories” that together “deepen scholarly enquiry and enrich academic debate”. The values include “cherish[ing] social justice” and “foster[ing] academic citizenship, whereby we commit ourselves to harnessing our intellectual abilities in the interest of our nation and humanity”. The formulation of UP3D avoids an approach to difference merely for the sake of acknowledging heterogeneity. De la Rey (1997:9) cautions against a collapse into liberal pluralism, which denies the inequitable outcomes of the symbolic and material values attached to differences and renders all differences equal:

We need to name racism appropriately so that we can engage its specific historical forms and practices of domination and the ways in which this specificity intersects with other forms of oppression.

Another pertinent challenge is to avoid the instrumentalisation of ‘diversity’ in a way that domesticates it as a feel-good project which papers over continuing inequities. The aim with UP3D is to contribute to the redress of the “inequities, imbalances and distortions” (Department of Education, 1997:5) that the higher education system was historically deliberately infused with, and which mirror the injustices in wider society. For this reason the module pertinently names the injustices it seeks to confront: racism, sexism and patriarchy, classism, homophobia and xenophobia.

UP3D is oriented towards first-year level to address the dual concern of preparing new entrants for the diverse university community – in relation to race, class, gender identity and nationality – and for critical citizenship in a diverse country and world. A strong recommendation that emerged at brainstorming sessions with academics from across all nine faculties³ is for the course to be compulsory and therefore credit-bearing. The primary difficulty with a compulsory course is that between 8 000 and 9 000 students across eight

3 The author and course developer consulted UP colleagues individually and in brainstorming sessions and with a reference group drawn from faculties other than Humanities where she is based, consisting of: Prof. Nasima Carrim (Economic and Management Sciences), Dr Martina Jordaan (Engineering), Dr Ramadimetja S. Mogale (Health Sciences), and Mr Anthony Wilson-Prangley (Gordon Institute of Business Science).

faculties⁴ were expected to register at first-year level at UP in 2016. So-called ‘chalk and talk’ teaching and learning would be logistically complex and require significant resources. Therefore it was decided to recruit students on a voluntary basis to pilot the content and its mode of delivery. With the potential of numbers swelling to the thousands, the module was designed for online delivery. This generated another difficulty: given that the course is about Self in relation to Other, which cannot be addressed at an individual level alone, it was essential to craft a real-life, face-to-face dimension. I will elaborate on this below. The next section homes in on self-reflection as primary pedagogical approach in UP3D and describes the method employed to enable this.

Critical self-reflection as primary pedagogical approach

Gaining a grip on the slipperiness that is institutional culture, I have so far argued that institutional culture emerges in concentrated form in the related phenomenon of the hidden curriculum. With a view to transformation, the hidden curriculum is the point of exposure of otherwise obscured institutional culture. I concur with Apple that the hidden curriculum includes both underlying normative assumptions *and* the formal selection of knowledges presented as universal ‘facts’ but which are in fact partial and particular cultural versions of ‘knowledge’. In the postcolonial condition that prevails in South Africa, both these forms of curriculum reproduce patterns of recognition and misrecognition contingent on race, gender, sexuality, nationality and other categories of social variation. The challenge is therefore to lift the veil of normalisation from the inequitable operationalisation of these variations and their resultant exclusions. The approach followed in UP3D is to bring these operations into students’ consciousness through the critical pedagogical practice of self-reflection (Fernández-Balbao, 1998). Self-reflection as praxis resonates strongly with the idea of recognition as reciprocal humanisation of Other in relation to Self, as discussed above. Reflecting on one’s Self necessarily involves reflecting on the connection with the Other, as there is no Self without the Other. Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) phrase ‘constitutive outside’ captures this unavoidable co-construction without which the Self does not exist.

Self-reflection is also particularly apt as a learning process in relation to institutional culture and the hidden curriculum. As Moon (2001) suggests,

4 Economic and Management Sciences, Education, Engineering and Built Environment, Health Sciences, Humanities, Law, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Theology, and Veterinary Sciences. The 10th faculty, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), does not teach at first-year level.

self-reflection references learning and thus the generation of new knowledge, but goes significantly further than that: It references both unconscious and conscious processes of grappling with ‘things for which there is no obvious or immediate solution’, as well as things containing an emotional charge. Self-reflection might be imbued with emotions, and these emotions might be pleasurable or uncomfortable. The affective dimension speaks to meaning-making through the mobilisation of identity markers, which is indeed shot through with emotion, to the extent that affect is generative of identity’s inclusions and exclusions (Ahmed, 2012). Therefore working with these markers and their effects in one’s own relation to others must involve emotional work. Moreover, the subversion of normalisation is necessarily both challenging and discomfiting – due to the ‘taken for granted’ status of normalised inequalities and the subjectively destabilising effects when they are disturbed.

Fernández-Balbao (1998:47) provides a useful formulation: “Critical reflection reaches true effectiveness when it lies between excessive rumination⁵ and superfluous thought, when it looks not only backward and forward (connecting us to the world) but also inward (i.e. self-questioning) in a constant cycle of coming back to our starting point and purpose.” The ‘connection with the world’ speaks to the relationality between Self and Other and the possibility of social bonds. To achieve the balance between historicising and contextualising ‘outwardness’ and self-questioning ‘inwardness’, the following elements are combined in the UP3D course:

- ▶ Introductory theoretical content on oppression, discrimination, stereotyping and privilege, and some of the social grounds for these forms, i.e. race, nationality, gender, sexuality and class. Global, continental and national contexts were addressed, and illustrations were drawn from South Africa’s apartheid past, the African continent’s postcolonial present and contemporary social and economic inequalities in the Global North.
- ▶ Introduction to the critical theoretical notion that differences and the social value attributed to them (recognition and misrecognition) are not ‘natural’ but instead socially constructed and historically contingent.
- ▶ Regular opportunities interspersed throughout the course content for active individual reflection on the practices of stereotyping and privilege that generate the student’s own prejudices, using multimedia and written

5 The point about excessive rumination and superfluous thought is especially relevant in a module where, as much as the generation of debate and thinking is essential and one hopes that engagement will continue, it is important to address the issues at hand in a directed form, with the aid of the theoretical insights and interactive tools that are provided.

exercises that problematise normalised discriminatory assumptions about nationality, race, gender, sexuality and class.

- ▶ Opportunities for students to reflect on their own positioning due to the social constructs of class and gender, and their material effects.
- ▶ The culmination of the above exercises in a face-to-face encounter with a randomly assigned fellow student, using both autobiographical storytelling and biographical writing in a reflexive mode, to reflect on own and (an)Other 'coming into' difference, and associated practices of oppression but also resistance.

Together these elements address issues of recognition and misrecognition, and Self and Other, from different vantage points. The course content speaks directly to the constitutive aspects of institutional culture to explicitly expose what is usually hidden and normalised.

The selected modes for the culminating encounter between Self and Other are story-telling and biographical writing, with a view to drawing out the stories through which individuals make sense of themselves in their worlds – including the university – as a basis for the continuous forming and reforming of their identities. Students are provided with the opportunity to explore how one's own identity is continuously under construction through the inculcation of norms assigning values to social markers. As explained above, this approach corresponds with Vincent's analysis that institutional cultures are made through stories, including the stories that individuals tell about themselves.

As institutional culture is here understood as forms of institutionalised racism and heteropatriarchy, which usually surface in the hidden curriculum, students are asked to specifically reflect on otherwise normalised assumptions about race, gender and class, as well as on the UP3D curriculum's treatment of these assumptions. This they do in relation to Self and to Other.

A specific set of questions is presented to students to guide them in their interviews and the subsequent write-ups of each other's stories. These questions reference all the terms that they are introduced to in the course, ranging from social categories of difference to the modes through which those differences are inequitably operationalised. The moment of the interview creates an opportunity of confrontation with otherness. This is done in two ways. First, by telling the one's story to (an)Other who is not only different but also a stranger, and receiving their responses. Second, by noting down their story as they choose to relate it to you as a stranger. A further opportunity for engaging more deeply with the Other is created in the subsequent step

of crafting the Other's biographical story, where the student decides on the narrative of their version of another's life, to be presented to that person and to the lecturer. Using the 'wiki' functionality, the two interview partners can read each other's versions of their biographical stories. A third moment of reflection in relation to the Other is created through the 'comment' function, where students can give feedback on the treatment of their story by the other student. Lastly, the final moment of reflection with regard to Self and Other and how differences are used in the service of domination and subjugation is when the student gets an opportunity to give feedback to specifically the lecturer – which the other student cannot see – about the treatment of their story by their interview partner.

UP3D in 2016 and 2017: Disturbing habits of misrecognition

The difficulty with interventions such as UP3D is that change, whether subjective or interpersonal, is almost impossible to measure. This is doubly the case with the opaque phenomenon of institutional culture. In this section, I use three lenses to explore signs of transformation in institutional culture. Firstly, a limited determination of transformation can be garnered from measurable factors such as participation rates. Secondly, still limited but more helpful than participation rates, are pointed questions to ascertain the participants' positions on the course content with its explicit purpose of confronting misrecognition, exclusion and hierarchisation on the basis of social differences. Thirdly, I analyse some of the written feedback from students, using key terms from my above discussion of institutional culture and the hidden curriculum.

Turning to participation rates, while involvement in the module remained on the basis of voluntary enrolment in 2016 and 2017, the course graduates almost tripled in number between 2015 and 2016 (increasing from 24 to 64), dropping back slightly in 2017 to 55. The increase in 2016 could partly be due to new initiatives to alert students to the course, which were possible with more time available in the run-up to the course, as compared to 2015.⁶ The 2016 increase in numbers may also have to do with the closure of the University of Pretoria in reaction to student protests. University lectures were moved to online platforms, and students could not physically access the campuses. This may

6 For 2016, I designed a short intervention for the Orientation Week, titled 'How to be an Academic Citizen in a Diverse World', which was both presented and included in a compulsory online orientation module for all first-year students. I also did a presentation as part of Orientation Week to Law faculty first-years, titled 'Being a Student at UP: No to Discrimination! Yes to Diversity!' Apart from the online announcement informing students of the course on the UP intranet page with their other courses, colourful posters were also featured in physical spaces

have allowed for more time to engage with UP3D. With 2017 being a year without disruptions, 55 completions are a notable improvement over the 24 of 2015, as a comparable year without disruptions. The numbers suggest that students indeed found the course relevant against the background of demonstrations about issues that include the very exclusions that UP3D seeks to address.

Where participation rates specifically improved was with retention, increasing from one in 10 in 2015 and 2016, to almost one in five students in 2017. Homing in on the faculties, growth in enrolment between 2016 and 2017 was significant for specifically Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT) and Health Sciences students. The improved retention seems partly due to the completion rate for EBIT students, which at 25% was even better than their enrolment rate (22%). Due to the racial and gender composition of EBIT students, the module in 2017 showed an impressive improvement in the retention of white male students, with a quarter of all students who completed the course falling within this demographic group. This was excellent news, as experiences in critical diversity work indicate that this group, which holds particular structural power, is difficult to attract and retain.

Another indication of the potential for transformation could be the request to use the interview data for research purposes.⁷ Over the three years of the pilot study undertaken, only one out of the total of 143 students declined permission. The student, an English-speaking white male student studying Engineering, in 2015 queried the section on sexism with the counter-argument that men are 'also oppressed' by women. The invitation for him to present his argument in the discussion forum went unanswered. Apart from this instance, generally supportive statements were received from students about the course, despite the variation in positionalities regarding oppression and exclusion, which I will

across all UP campuses in 2016 and 2017. SMSs were sent to all first-year students for the first time in 2017 to alert them to the course. Innovations to the course in 2016-2017 include weekly discussion forums on topical issues related to the course content, and weekly polls on issues arising from the discussions. UP has five campuses in Tshwane: Education, Health Sciences and Veterinary Sciences are spread across three campuses while other faculties are hosted at the main campus in Hatfield and the Mamelodi campus.

- 7 The pilot module straddles teaching and research. The self-reflection in relation to social categories and the biographical stories, as well as students' feedback to one another and to the lecturer, are collected as data. The data are used to gain insights and make changes that will strengthen the module, and also for investigations of differences in the constructions of identity among students. Learning from the experience with the 2015 pilot led to the following changes in 2016. More questions were inserted into the biographical interview. Extra questions were created in the feedback survey to test the impact of the content with negative propositions. Space was provided for written feedback on the pilot.

discuss shortly. While more data are needed, this suggests that both students who cling to hierarchisation and exclusion as modes of identification and intersubjective organisation, with resultant misrecognition, and those students who are opposed to these modes and opt for recognition, are interested in engaging with such a course. Such a finding undermines the idea that subjects who hold on to misrecognition as identity mode also want nothing to do with critical discussion on the topic, an impression borne out by the increase in white male completion rates. This preliminary finding bodes well for the future use of UP3D and similar initiatives.

Another indication that UP3D is not only reaching the so-called converted is the results of the survey on the course content. UP3D features a survey with multiple-choice questions that afford students the opportunity to critically reflect on the curricular content and provide feedback anonymously. This aspect speaks directly to the issue of the hidden curriculum, in that students are encouraged to interrogate the curriculum on offer. In 2016, nuances were added to survey questions in an attempt to gain greater qualitative understanding of the reported improvement in the comprehension of the key concepts. Between 80% to 99% of students in 2015 and 2017 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the course improved their critical understanding of the keywords under discussion.⁸ Some 54% in 2016 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with the statement that 'it is clear to me that how somebody looks says a lot about the person that s/he is'.⁹ About two-thirds disagreed in 2016 and 2017 with the statement that 'some people have privilege because they are naturally better than others' (as opposed to about a quarter in agreement or strong agreement). About a quarter 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that, 'even after doing this module, I remain convinced that people should stop complaining about racism and sexism and just work harder', increasing to 31% in 2017. In 2016, about 16% marked 'don't know', similar to the 14% in 2017. About 20% 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' in 2016 that 'racism and sexism are not just the experiences of some individuals but are

8 For example, in 2015, 68% strongly agreed and 32% agreed that their understanding of oppression and discrimination had improved; between 53% strongly agreed and 37% agreed that their understanding of the production of gender and race had improved; between 63% strongly agreed and 37% agreed that 'going forward, this module will help me to place myself in other people's shoes and show them respect even when I feel I am different from them and don't agree with them'. In 2017, 98% agreed or strongly agreed that their understanding improved of how differences are used to create privilege for some and disadvantage for others; 98% agreed or strongly agreed that they understood how stereotyping worked after doing the module; and a full 99% agreed or strongly agreed that they understood the construction of gender and race better after doing the module.

9 This statistic unfortunately contained errors in 2017, so a comparison cannot be made.

ideologies used to systemically privilege white people and men', as opposed to 28% in 2017. Almost 17% marked 'don't know' in 2016, increasing to 9% in 2017.

These findings therefore show that, depending on the question, between one-fifth and a third of all participants misrecognise Others based on value-laden social markers, a process enabled by their decontextualisation of such differences, among other manoeuvres. But these results can also be read as suggesting disturbances in such identity habits, as those who misrecognise their Others are always in the minority position. It becomes even more significant when the race composition of participants in the UP3D surveys is taken into account: white people are disproportionately represented among participants, at between 28% and 47% from 2015 to 2017. This reflects the reality that about half of UP's student population are white. However, as pointed out, critical diversity practitioners find that white people are particularly loathe to engage in such processes. My own experience also bears this out. Therefore, with high levels of white involvement, the results still show that up to two-thirds of participants adopt positions of recognition towards their perceived Others – in violation of inferiorising norms. The implications in relation to gender still need to be explored, as 55% of the respondents over the three-year period were female.

The impression of disturbances in inferiorising identity habits is further strengthened by written feedback.¹⁰ Given the limitations of multiple-choice questions, particularly with regard to qualitative results, students were also asked for written feedback from 2016 onwards. The direct feedback sheds further light on the transformative potential of UP3D, when analysed using the key terms in the earlier discussion on institutional culture and the hidden curriculum.

A number of students reported – either in the survey or in the self-reflection exercise – not being exposed to such content before. For them, the reflection was both challenging and rewarding, precisely because of the encounter between Self and Other. This speaks to recognition as central element of an inclusive institutional culture, as for the following student:

I'm glad I did this module. Not only because I've learned to see differences in a whole new perspective but also because I got the chance to hear the story of someone so completely different than me and then realising that I have the deepest respect for her views and for the person she is today. I can honestly say that this module helped me

10 Presented unedited.

grow as a person and just opened up my eyes to the fact that differences really exist and that we should address it [and] not just look the other way.

This excerpt suggests a ‘seeing’ and a ‘hearing’ through story-telling, which elicited a humanisation of the Other as someone deserving of dignity (respect). These processes were possible because of a learning that brought about a ‘new perspective’ about differences that helped the respondent comprehend the problem of invisibilisation and to decide (‘realise’) to recognise and humanise the Other. A number of clues are provided that suggest that the respondent speaks from a normative position which had not previously provided recognition of those who are different. Therefore a taken-for-granted position of privilege has at the very least become available for change, and with that the possibility of not only shifting the prevailing cultural position away from denial but towards dignity for those formerly erased. This speaks directly to institutional culture, and how hearing and listening to non-normative stories can help subjects to break with privilege-related obliviousness in favour of dignity for all. Creating more opportunities through curriculum for hearing and seeing would therefore be imperative in addressing institutional culture.

The following excerpts from two different respondents have a similar ring:

I enjoyed doing the module. I like that I gained a new colleague. I enjoyed doing the interview because it gave me insight of another person’s background which is very different from mine and I now understand stereotypes much better.

It did have a bit of an unexpected outcome, as I realised the extent of my own stereotyping. I realised how we have the ever-present tendency to assume certain things about other people before we get to know them better. I also found that I enjoyed working with my interview partner, as he was very cooperative, and whereas I usually dislike group assignments, I quite enjoyed this one.

The realisations in the last quotation speak to those norms that are not subjected to scrutiny, to refer again to Keet’s definition of what constitutes institutional culture. In this instance, the respondent reports surprise at their own tendency to stereotype and make assumptions about others. Again, it is the interaction and the self-reflection in the story-telling exercise that provide a gap for this realisation to emerge. The respondent even reports experiencing enjoyment/joy in the process of recognising the Other. This confirms the centrality of affect in meaning-making and identity formation. The next excerpt surfaces feelings of ‘love’ and ‘amazement’:

UP3D is amazing, I love the fact that it exposes us (students) to topics that give us more knowledge of what happened in the past and some things that are still happening, this module help me to be more sensitive, understandable and respectful to other people.

Again dignity, or respect, features. This time it is placed alongside amazement, love and sensitivity, and connected with understanding and knowledge. This serves as an alert that so-called rationality is entwined with affect, combining to provide recognition of the dignity of the Other (see also Van der Westhuizen, 2016). How affect can be mobilised in the work of transforming misrecognition into recognition should be explored further. The excerpt above also brings historicisation to the fore, and how it assists in reflecting on the Self in relation to Others, producing feelings that are conducive to recognition of those who are different.

The next excerpt shows the forging of new bonds of sociality through challenging differences and finding similarities in experiences, resonating with Mbembe's (2017) observation about the interplay between difference and similarity. The Other is not only different but also similar, which can form the basis for forging social relations that were thought impossible previously:

Wow. There are no words to describe it. I thought i was going to be a pilot [reference to it being a pilot module], then it was really a pilot as i am a better driver of my own thoughts now. i had plenty of time to complete the units and i have learned a lot from them. i have met a best friend through the interview because we knew each other and never thought we shared the same experiances [sic]. The topics are great and i have no additions to them.

In the following excerpt, the psychological dimension is linked with rationality (understanding, realisation) and sociality. Story-telling serves as communication in which thoughts are shared, working as a form of 'therapy' that creates social bonds and even friendships with 'other people', particularly with reference to 'race'. Interestingly, this 'therapy' is not individualised; rather, sharing thoughts is about bonding. For the respondent, all of this becomes possible through institutional processes of interaction, which speak to institutional culture:

The exercise yes brought a fresh understanding about my relationship with other people. I realised that two people despite racial differences can be friends and can bond quickly and also work and other social projects can be used to bring people together as they are expected to communicate putting in they thoughts or whatever that is in their mind which can be a form of therapy.

Other respondents also connected UP3D with changing institutional culture, particularly the necessity of redress in relation to race, which confirms that curricular transformation can challenge the hidden curriculum and advance the transformation of institutional culture:

I think the module is necessary to be continued in the future because it gives you a chance to see things from other people's perspectives and this is needed in UP. There are too many people that have these narrow-minded views of certain groups of people and this has to change. This module is the start of a more integrated and less racially tense environment on campus.

[The course] also takes into consideration that being part of a diverse space, [where] people have differences [and] more often than not tend to push people into a mindset that others are inferior and articulate this in a manner which is hurtful to others. But since we find ourselves in such a situation it presents a great opportunity to learn about other and disregard our built in ster[e]otypes. So I think [it's] spot on.

Both these respondents surface an institutional culture of exclusivity, inferiorisation, stereotyping and wilful ignorance, maintained through the normalisation of dominant positions impervious to difference. Again, the psychological ('mindset', 'narrow-minded') features alongside affect ('hurtful'). The following excerpts addressing personal conundrums about the Self–Other relationship confirm that transformation efforts must address all dimensions of human subjectivity and interaction:

Nevertheless, the exercise helped me to understand that I don't have to conform to the way people perceive me and that there are people all over the world who go through the same problems that I do and it is okay to feel different.

The exercise was too helpful because I used to be intimidated by white people but now I'm free and willing to start a conversation with them.

Some responses confirm disturbances in whiteness and heteromasculinity as two particular permutations of institutional culture. In the next excerpt, the interaction with (an)Other created an opportunity for complex identification, in which the respondent's own male privilege had to be confronted along with shared white privilege:

The story and doing the interview was enriching to me, it felt as if I got a greater understanding of how stereotypes affect our lives. I have a very similar background to [white Afrikaans female interview partner], therefore I could associate with some of the feelings of privilege as well as stereotypes forced upon us. [...] [She said] by only looking at an individual, one has to resist the temptation of immediately categorising the person in a social group, without knowing the person's circumstances and story. [She] believes that cultural and gender stereotypes still exist in the Afrikaner culture. The traditional role for a white, Afrikaans woman is to marry, raise children and do housework. As a child, I myself believed in that all women become housewives once they are married. As I grew up and developed this stereotype of mine faded [sic].

In the following excerpt, a white person is acknowledged for extending recognition and humanisation of a black person even as she grapples with her

own identity in relation to the ‘taint’ of the history of her white, Afrikaans-speaking forebears:

- Q Describe in one word how it made you feel writing the story?
- A Understood, because at times it is difficult to imagine that you would have something in common with an individual from a different race. She made me feel normal and human. [...] She is learning to deal with other race[s'] opinions of her race and where it comes from because even if she personally did not do anything she is tainted because of her race. She also has to learn about the history of her forefathers which may be difficult to deal with as a person. I cannot disagree with her as she also is discovering herself and she has not voiced any presumptuous comments on anyone, she only spoke of herself.

However, defensive whiteness also featured, seeking to reclaim its former position as unquestioned and unproblematised centre of power through facetious equivalences:

I would also have liked to have learned about the discrimination and privilege against all groups (black and white included) currently because the situation and therefore stories of all groups changed after Apartheid.

It was never purported that UP3D would be a magical wand correcting habits of domination and exclusion through a single exposure to critical thinking about such behaviours. But, in pursuing the transformative potential of critical reflection in upsetting the normalisations inherent to institutional culture and the hidden curriculum, we find that the course at the very least troubles identity and difference, and their abuse. These findings suggest that UP3D is a success in this regard, as reflected in the excerpts:

When I signed up for this module, I thought it would just be another “speech” to tell us not to be racist, sexist or to treat everyone as you would like to be treated. I was completely wrong. This module placed me in the shoes of the people I could not normally relate to.

The data show UP3D to be an effective platform for self-reflection through story-telling, breaking through the strictures of institutional learning to enable personal experiences of mutual recognition and humanisation.

Conclusion

The newly piloted UP3D module at UP is an example of curriculum transformation that challenges both the culturally particular, concrete knowledges that may

be presented as objective 'truths' in the lecture hall, and the hidden, oppressive norms of race, gender and other differences that frequently underpin those 'truths'. As such, it seeks to confront the point of exposure where the hidden curriculum reveals the otherwise shadowy culture of an institution. Using self-reflection as primary pedagogical mode, UP3D provides a platform to confront practices of recognition and misrecognition that constitute institutional culture. These practices involve the mobilisation of race, gender and other markers as terms for domination, exclusion and marginalisation. Through telling their stories of racial, gender and classified as an Other, and critically reflecting on UP3D's curricular content in relation to Self and Other, students are afforded an opportunity to interrogate taken-for-granted 'givens' in relation to that Other and to the curriculum, which speaks to the institutional environment. The preliminary findings show, at the very least, a troubling heteropatriarchal, middle-class whiteness as an interpretive paradigm that otherwise invisibly produces cultures of institutionalised racism and heteropatriarchy at universities.

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Chapter 19

'Gender Equality is a Human Problem': Teaching men and masculinities in a South African undergraduate classroom

Lindsay Clowes

Introduction

While there has been substantial legislative change around gender equality since the establishment of South African democracy in 1994, there is also a great deal of evidence to suggest that gendered relationships between and amongst South African men and women have been resistant to change (Gouws & Hassim, 2014). The levels of sexual violence perpetrated by South African men against their wives, lovers and children – as well as other men – remain extremely high, for example (Gqola, 2015; Watson, 2014). With one or two exceptions women's voices remain marginalised in an economy in which decision-making positions remain dominated by men and in which women continue to dominate the ranks of the un- and under-employed. At the same time, and despite this limited access to economic resources, significant numbers of women continue to have little choice but to take sole responsibility for caring for children, the aged and the sick and for the maintenance of their households. Similarly, and despite legislation guaranteeing them reproductive and sexual rights, women continue to have limited access to the health care that might make those rights meaningful (see Stevens, 2008). One recent report suggested that less than 7% of public health facilities in South Africa offer women the opportunity to terminate their pregnancies, for instance (Amnesty International, cited in *Daily Maverick*, 2017). So, while change (at least in terms of the law) has been extensive, the reality is very different.

In the face of the enduring legacies of these gendered inequalities, research and activism have become increasingly focused on developing an understanding of the processes, structures and institutions that underpin resistance to change. One aspect of this has been the development of activism involving working directly with boys and men through a range of organisations and interventions. These include Sonke Gender Justice, One Man Can and Men Engage (Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012; Greig & Edstrom, 2012; Stern, Peacock & Alexander, 2009). This focus on involving men and boys has been reinforced by researchers pointing to the significance of men's involvement (or lack of involvement) in working for change (see Shefer, Stevens & Clowes, 2010, for an overview). Amanda Gouws and Shireen Hassim (2014) have suggested, for example, that the absence of a strong political commitment challenging male violence is an important factor in explaining the absence of change (see also Ratele, 2006; Ratele, 2004; Hassim, 2014, 2009, 2005; Gouws, 2008, 2014). Indeed it could be argued that political leadership, even in the highest office of the land – that of the state president – has been instrumental in perpetuating violence against women (see Motsei, 2007). Another important factor is thought to be ways in which 'custom' and 'tradition' have been (and continue to be) deployed to validate practices that privilege heteropatriarchal versions of masculinity, as discussed by Kopano Ratele (see Ratele, 2008, 2013a, 2014).

Emerging out of this work is an understanding that developing a critical focus on and understanding of South African masculinities is central to work aiming to promote the social justice envisaged by the constitution and associated legislative change. Teaching, I suggest in this chapter, should not be exempt from this. This chapter thus reflects on teaching and learning focusing on South African men and masculinities undertaken in an introduction to gender studies course offered to second-year students at the University of the Western Cape since 2011. The chapter focuses on teaching and learning between 2014 and 2017 to suggest that such a focus has the potential to make a significant contribution to processes of transformation involving gender as well as other forms of equity.

Background and context

First offered in 2000, the undergraduate programme in Women's and Gender Studies employs a feminist pedagogy to focus on intersecting power inequalities and ways in which these shape knowledge production inside and outside the classroom (see Choules, 2007; Crick, 2009; Maher & Thompson-Tetreault, 2001). An overarching aim of our teaching is to promote social change and social justice through contributing to the production of graduates who are socially aware and critically engaged citizens.

Students who have completed their first year of study may register for either (or both) of the ten credit modules offered in the first and second semester respectively. The modules offered by the Department are available as part of a major or as electives and, in the absence of first-year modules, many, if not most of the students are engaging for the first time with feminist theorising and the key concepts emerging out of that theorising. The course that is the focus of this chapter is offered at second-year level in the first semester and is entitled 'Introduction to sex, gender and sexuality' and attracts between 50 and 100 students. In 2014, 108 students did the course and in 2017 there were 85 students who signed up.

A central aspect to the course involves identifying and recognising the material realities of the lives of students in the class, and placing these at the centre of the curriculum. While it was half a century ago that Ausubel declared that "[t]he most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows; ascertain this and teach him/her accordingly" (cited in Hay, Kinchin & Lygo-Baker, 2008:302). His view has been affirmed by more recent theorists who suggest that prior knowledge is the "baseline from which learning can be calculated and its quality assessed (Hay et al., 2008:300). Drawing on the 'baseline' knowledges and understandings – what students already know – to frame and inform the debates, discussion and theorising that are central to the course helps facilitate more meaningful learning, offers opportunities to identify and address misunderstandings and misconceptions, and presents possibilities for teachers, as well as students, to learn. It is a reflection on and consideration of some of the knowledges and understandings that students bring to the course between 2014 and 2017, and their implications for teaching and learning, that are the focus of this chapter.

The knowledges and understandings that students bring to the course are elicited in a variety of ways – through brief pre-class anonymous surveys conducted via Google forms (that do not count for assessment purposes) as well as through weekly online written submissions through regular participation in an online discussion forum, and through small-group tutorials. Because the course aims to facilitate student ownership of the learning process, students are encouraged to choose how to demonstrate their learning. They may submit some (or all) of the weekly online worksheets, for example, participate regularly in an online discussion forum or join small-group tutorials, or any mix of these three activities, to build up their desired mark for the continuous assessment component of the evaluation. Finally, in recognition of contemporary debates around 'slow' scholarship and 'lazy' learning, and ways in which such scholarship offer opportunities to challenge colonial pedagogies

(see Mbembe, 2016; Shajahan, 2015; Nyamnjoh, 2012; Tejada, Espinoza & Gutierrez, 2003) and neoliberalist metrics and efficiencies (see Mountz, Bonds, Mansfield, Loyd, Hyndman, Walton-Roberts, Basu, Whitson, Hawkins, Hamilton & Curran, 2015; also Shajahan, 2015), the traditional sit-down exam at the end of the course has been replaced, since 2016, by an essay, written over the course of the semester, in which students reflect on their learnings. In 2017, the focus of this essay was on what had been ‘unlearned’.

While this focus on prior knowledges and ways in which students make sense of their own lives as gendered persons is the fulcrum around which teaching takes place, it is also central to this research. This presents a set of complex ethical challenges that must be negotiated carefully. Ethical clearance is obtained from the institution before the course begins, with students informed about the research project at the beginning of the course each year and invited to consider participating. They are informed that their participation in the research project is voluntary, that if they decide to participate they will need to sign a document giving their consent, that their participation will be anonymous and confidential, and that they have the right to withdraw later on should they change their minds. It is also explained that their choice about participation will have no impact on any assessment of their work and their choice will not be communicated to the lecturer until the course has ended.

Students who decide to participate are asked to give consent to the use (for research purposes) of their comments on the online discussion forum, as well as their reflective essays. Where extracts from conversations that took place on the online discussion forum are discussed, or where extracts from reflective essays are shared, names have been changed to guarantee anonymity. The class is also advised that because responses to the online surveys held before each class are anonymous it is not possible to connect specific responses to specific students in order to exclude responses and that they should bear this in mind when deciding whether to participate in the online surveys. Generally, about one third of the class responds to each online pre-class survey.

These brief pre-class surveys pose simple questions, with no right or wrong answers, and are aimed at eliciting input from students that speaks to the focus of the class that week. The first survey, conducted in the week before classes start, for instance, asks students (amongst other things) to submit the first three words that come into their head when they hear the term ‘gender’ as well as why they are doing the course. This information is then shared in class in the form of quotes, pie charts, word clouds and tables. As the course continues students are asked: “Whose lives do you think have changed the most over the

last couple of hundred years? And in what ways?" Another pre-class quiz asks students to reflect on their experiences of primary school and ways in which they, as girls or boys, were treated differently or the same. Sharing these responses, highlighting continuities and discontinuities, facilitates debate in class that helps pointing to insights and contradictions between and amongst students' views as well as continuities and omissions in relation to the theory covered that week. Starting with perspectives and experiences emerging from the material lived realities helps work towards making students' lives, as gendered persons, the centre of the curriculum. The discussion presented in this chapter compares some of the information and ideas collected during pre-class surveys conducted at the beginning of the semester in 2014 and 2017 and considers what has been learnt as represented in the reflective essays in 2017 that constitute the final assessment task.

Discussion

Despite increased research and activism locally and internationally exploring the social construction of masculinities in different contexts, most people still tend to understand gender as referring to girls and women (see Dover, 2014). Whereas this understanding characterised my classes in earlier years, there are signs of change, as evidence in the 'word clouds' illustrated in Figures 19.1 and 19.2 below. Word clouds are generated to give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text – in this case the pre-class quiz asking students to offer three words that come to mind when they hear the term 'gender'. In 2014, the words that dominated the word cloud were, as illustrated in Figure 19.1 below, 'female' and 'equality', followed by 'gender activist', 'feminine', 'strong', 'power' and 'rights' (see Clowes, 2015a, 2015b), with the word 'men' appearing a few times.

By 2016, this had begun to change, and this change was reinforced in the 2017 survey, as illustrated by the word 'cloud' shared in class and reproduced in Figure 19.2. While students continued to consistently associate the words 'female' and 'feminine' and 'equality' with gender, they were also much more likely to offer 'male', 'masculine', 'masculinity', 'sex' and 'sexuality'.

As noted before, the word cloud generated in 2017 suggests that some young people in the class were beginning to imagine that the concept of gender might signify more than a fairly simple, one-dimensional expression of women's subordination/empowerment. Perhaps linked to the student protests since 2015, or to innovations in their first-year courses, this suggests a slightly more nuanced understanding of gender as relational, as an axis of social power intersecting with other expressions of power.

The idea that gender is largely synonymous with women however has, and continues to play, a role in shaping the demographics of the course. Around 80 to 85% of the students who sign up each year identify as women, reflecting similar demographics in gender studies courses globally (Berila, Keller, Krone, Laker & Myers, 2005). As demonstrated in the reflective essays submitted at the end of the course, students continue to expect the course to focus on women:

I also assumed that this course conflates indirectly to nursing in some manner, where some sort of practical work would be done. I know, nursing!?

(Thandi, 2017)

At the beginning ... I knew that the course would be focusing on women as it is called Women and Gender studies.

(Zainab, 2017)

The reflective essays also reveal that students are surprised to find any men at all in the class:

I expected a ladies-only class. To my shock ... and to my surprise there were males as well.

(Nikiwe, 2017)

Stereotypes of feminism as anti-men also play a role in discouraging male students from signing up for the course:

When I tell people that I am doing WGS ... I ... get snide or disapproving remarks that goes along the lines of "what type of things do you talk about in those classes? How to burn bras, start abortion rallies, and hate men?"

(Achmat, 2017)

Male students who sign up for the course often report that they find their sexuality questioned. One student explained that she'd anticipated that the course would be: 'all about women and only women will attend the class but I was shocked to find men in the lecture room and they were not just men they were also straight men.'

(Ntombi, student 2017)

This stereotyping of the course as for women or gay men is further complicated in postcolonial societies by understandings of feminist theory and the gender equity it promotes as a Western import, as 'unAfrican'. In contemporary South Africa, long histories foregrounding 'race' as the dominant explanatory narrative are interwoven with these stereotypes of 'Western' feminism to produce powerful discourses around what counts as 'authentically' African. Tending to validate and legitimise behaviours which are more (rather than less) patriarchal (see Christiansen, 2009) such beliefs underpin stereotypes of feminism as not simply anti-men, but also as unAfrican, as anti-black anti-heterosexual men.

If there are signs of change, as hinted at by the 2017 word cloud, the understanding that gender is for and about women continues to emerge very strongly in the pre-class surveys conducted early on in the course each year.

In 2014, as the pie chart in Figure 19.3 reveals, 61% (11) of the 18 students who responded to the quiz asking whose lives had changed the most and in what ways, believed that women's lives had changed the most. Just five (5) said men's lives had changed the most with two (2) students offering 'other' as an answer. One of these said that both men's and women's lives had changed, the other that children's lives had changed the most.

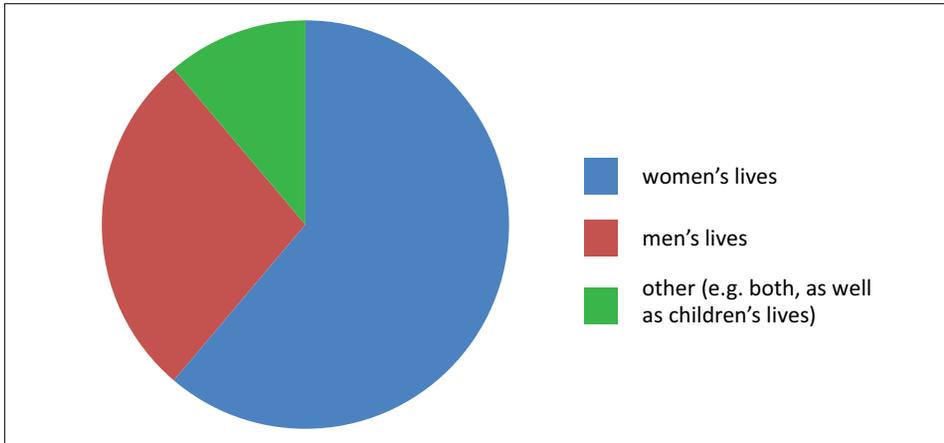


Figure 19.3 Whose lives have changed the most? And in which ways? (18 responses in 2014)

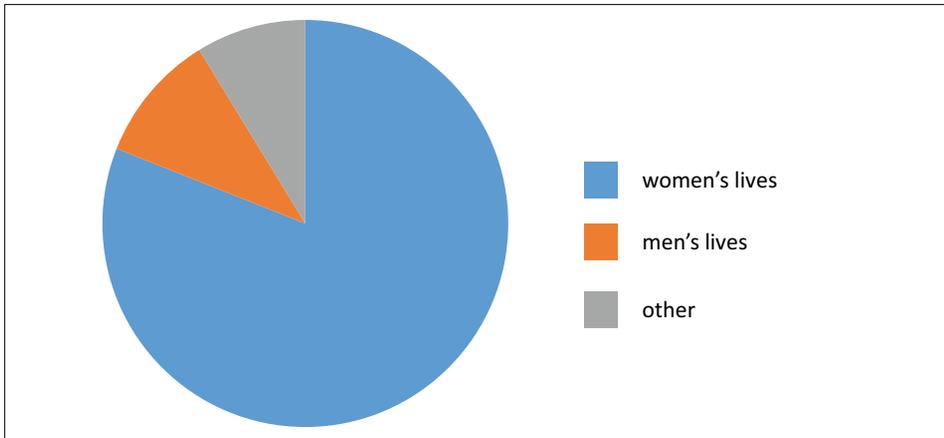


Figure 19.4 Whose lives have changed the most? And in which ways? (33 responses in 2017)

As illustrated in Figure 19.4, 2017 saw almost double the number of students respond to this quiz, with a much larger proportion (27 of the 33 students) indicating that, in their view, women's lives had changed the most. Another four (4) thought that men's lives had changed the most, and another two (2) chose 'other'.

Another quiz also asked students to elaborate and explain their answers, to briefly outline what they thought had been the most significant changes. Responses, as shared in the relevant class each year, are reproduced in Tables 19.1 and 19.2. Of the 54 students who described what they thought had changed in 2014, over 80% believed that women's lives had changed the most and that this was a positive change. Table 19.1, shared in class in 2014, presents a selection (that aimed to be as representative as possible) of answers offered by students. In 2014, the vast majority of students imagined contemporary women to be more empowered, more independent, having better access to decision-making jobs, with futures where they could be, in reference to Figure 19.1, more 'equal'. While four (4) students suggested that both men *and* women's lives had changed, another five (5) suggested that men's lives had changed the most, with all of these implying that for men, these changes were less positive and more negative.

Table 19.1 Examples of responses in 2014

Women's lives have changed the most	Men's lives have changed the most	Both men's and women's lives have changed
45 students	5 students	4 students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women are more empowered nowadays and are taking on the roles of men in terms of the economy. ▪ Women are more independent have more power, are leaders, managers and heads of the household. ▪ Women are not merely seen as housewives anymore but as equals able to work. ▪ Women have become more liberal and less oppressed. ▪ Women are now allowed to dress in any fashion they desire ... can occupy the same jobs as men. ▪ Women have made phenomenal progress with regards to freedom from oppression. ▪ Women have earned more respect, more independence, can study to be someone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Men still hold top positions but women are moving into these jobs. This striving for equality affects men who are expected to be powerful main sources of income. ▪ Men, with women gaining more rights and being able to have more dominant roles in society, men's lives changed because they only then realised who is really in control. ▪ Men because it seems they had much more power, they were more advantaged. ▪ Men, in terms of power relations and the amount of opportunities they get in relation to women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Both, if either women's or men's lives have changed then the other is naturally affected. ▪ Both, men have become less dominant and women have become less submissive.

In Table 19.2, the same question posed to students in 2017 elicited very similar responses, with the vast majority explaining that women's lives had changed the most and that these changes had involved the opening up of job and career opportunities that had previously been reserved for men, higher incomes for women, women taking on breadwinner roles and heading households and having more autonomy. Two (2) students suggested that both men's and women's lives had changed, that women were doing what had been men's work and men were now doing what had been traditionally women's work, with another four (4) students indicating that men's lives had changed the most. Just as in 2014, men's lives were seen to have worsened, with men struggling to fulfil the masculine role of breadwinner, having lost status, authority and respect.

The dominant understanding of the students who responded to these surveys in 2014 and 2017 was, in other words, that change in women's lives has been overwhelmingly positive, that women's opportunities and prospects have opened up significantly in comparison to men. At the same time, while change in men's lives is understood as relatively limited, in comparison to women's lives, it is also understood as overwhelmingly negative. In addition, where women appear to be understood primarily through the social, men seem to be understood in much more essentialising ways, as 'simply bodies' impacted upon by the social rather than themselves products or agents of social change (see Dover, 2014; Clowes, 2015a, 2015b). While one needs to be careful about ascribing these views to the wider communities from which these students come, such understandings likely contribute to resistance towards a more gender-just society; if change is believed to be entirely negative, then dominant groups are much more likely to work against it (see Spoor & Schmitt, 2011).

It is with the aim of challenging such understandings that this introduction to a gender studies course has foregrounded men and masculinities. This raises a number of concerns. The Department within which the course is located was established over two decades ago, in 1995, at the University of the Western Cape, in direct response to feminist struggles around women staff and students' marginalisation on campus as well as more broadly in the new democratic dispensation. What might be lost or gained by using a space carved out for women to focus on men's performances of gender? And in what ways might such a focus depoliticise or dilute the feminist political vision around which the Women's and Gender Studies Department is structured? At the same time, while these concerns should not be dismissed (see Shefer & Aulette, 2005; Berila et al., 2005), the development of critical thinking requires that dominant understandings be challenged. Given the widespread belief, in class at least, that men have little or nothing to gain, and in fact a great deal

to lose from movement towards gender justice (see Boler, 2013; Lemons, 2013; Guckenheimer & Schmidt, 2013; Farr, 2013; Boler & Zembylas, 2003) then a *critical* focus on heteropatriarchal masculinities that explores ways in which men – and South African men in particular – might benefit from gender justice is, I suggest, both legitimate and desirable.

Table 19.2 Examples of responses in 2017

Women's lives have changed the most	Men's lives have changed the most	Both men's and women's lives have changed
27 students	4 students (2017 answers)	2 students (2017 answers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the olden day's women were made to work only in the house and not get jobs. Now women are allowed to work and even get more salary than men. ▪ Women clergy and bishops. ▪ Many women are also becoming the bread winners in their families. ▪ Women are going into lines of work which were previously seen as "a man's job" e.g: engineering , truck drivers, electricians etc. ▪ Women are generally more employable these days and are often the bread winners and sole providers in families. ▪ Woman have become more resistant towards men's undeserved privilege, they have become less submissive to them (men). ▪ Women are becoming more powerful. ▪ The role of the women has changed dramatically to not being dependent on the bread winner, the man, but to become independent and not only being a care giver but also a bread winner in a family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Men as they now struggle to fulfil their masculine roles as patriarchy dictates in a changing world. ▪ Men back in the days used to get away with a lot of things just because they were men, looking specifically at culture, men used to choose who to marry and actually go about marrying that person without that female person's consent. Women back in the days were greatly objectified and men were greatly respected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The position of men and women in the household and workplace. Men are still dominant in the workplace but many women are starting to take over and sometimes have higher positions than men. ▪ In households, women and men's roles have changed. Women do not do housework alone but are assisted by men. Men now also take over the position of staying home and doing chores.

And so, as outlined earlier, the course is structured to make students' own lives the starting point for discussion. Google forms is used to elicit experiences and perspectives before class and these diverse experiences and understandings are then shared in class as starting points from which to engage concepts and ideas

emerging out of the feminist theorising covered each week. After considering local understandings of sex and gender in relation to theory as discussed above, we move on to think about the gendering of bodies, about students' own experiences of processes of gender socialisation in their preschools, primary schools and high schools and how their experiences are reflected (or not) in the theory (see Langa, 2010b; Msibi, 2012; Mayeza, 2015; Martin, 1998; Thorne, 2007). Eliciting information from students reveals that while South African teachers' expectations of learners are clearly gendered, as suggested by the literature, these are not always consistent across schools. Cleaning the board might be a performance of masculinity – boys' work – in one school, and girls' work in another – and these inconsistencies offer important challenges to essentialised understandings of gender emerging directly out of students' lives. From school we move on to campus, to consider how these earlier processes of socialisation are currently playing out in their lives (see Sanger, 2009; Salo, 2007; Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Langa, 2010a; Ratele, 2004, 2006). Pre-class surveys explore the kinds of behaviours students associate with appropriate masculinities and femininities in the student centre, in the student pub and on a first date, as well as ways in which students have themselves challenged gender normativity, *and* the informal and formal processes of social control that such challenges have elicited. While specific issues discussed are flexible, responsive to matters raised by students, contemporary events in local or regional contexts, or in response to new research, there is a consistent attempt to foreground ways in which dominant understandings of what it means to be a man in contemporary South Africa have been invisibilised (see Kannen, 2014) how these invisibilised processes limit men's opportunities for psychic, emotional and personal growth (see Hooks, 2004) as well as to acknowledge systemic processes of marginalisation that, emerging out of these patriarchal masculinities, work against women.

The impact of this pedagogical approach emerges in the reflective essays constituting the final assessment task since 2016. The focus of the reflective essay in 2017 was on 'unlearning', with students advised at the beginning of the course that the final assessment task required them to reflect on what they had 'unlearned' in the course. They were encouraged to keep learning diaries and five minutes were allocated in classes at the beginning of the course for students to 'free write' about what they expected from the course. In the weeks that followed, students were offered additional opportunities for free writing in class and encouraged to record moments in which they were surprised or challenged. They were then encouraged to make use of this free writing, as well as their online submissions, conversations in class and in tutorials, etc to work

on their reflective essays. While there were any number of issues students could have raised in these essays, a substantial number spoke about how their ideas about men and masculinity had changed, articulating their surprise that men might be feminists, or have much to gain from gender equity. Female students reported that:

I moved from thinking that feminists were female who were anti-males to realising that feminism is actually a movement which fights for the equality of genders and also learning that even males could be feminist! (Babalwa, 2017)

One of the greatest things I have learnt in this course was about male feminism. What an amazing thing! I remember the talk we had with Mr Godana [in class] was really interesting. I never knew that men were working to end gender inequality. (Fazlin, 2017)

I'm getting heated because Dean Peacock is trying to tell me that men are oppressed, that "in the liberation of women, lies the liberation of men" (Peacock 2005:190). How can men be oppressed? To me, it seems like another classic case of an oppressive group victimizing themselves. As I read further and contemplate more and it occurs to me that, while in a much more abstract sense than the historical oppression of women, the patriarchal order of society has socialized men to have sexist and violent tendencies and to have a toxic understanding of masculinity. So when Peacock says that men are oppressed he means that the oppressive tendencies toward women have had self-destructive effects for men. Therefore, as women gain more rights, men do not lose anything. Rather, they are released from the toxicity that stems from the patriarchy. For the first time I see that gender equality is not a women's problem, it is a human problem. I see the need for collaboration between men, women and everyone in-between in the struggle. (Rachel, 2017)

While there were relatively few male students in the class, a number revealed changed understandings about what it meant to be a man, as well as the realisation that men might have something to gain from gender equity, or that men such as themselves could become gender activists:

The Peacock (2005) reading really changed the way I viewed masculinity and feminism. Before, I had perceived masculinity as a performance that brought privilege. Male privilege. I had not thought of the repercussions men might face if they did not adhere to the confines of masculinity even though that had happened to me, all my life I was ridiculed for not being masculine enough or not living up to a standard of hypermasculinity ... This reading also brought to my attention that feminism does not only advocate for the freedom of women from the confines of their gender roles but for the freedom of men as well, men like me who are not masculine by nature. (Geran, 2017)

I now believe that there should be a focus on men in gender studies as per Ratele (2008) ... Among the things I have unlearned is that only men perpetuate patriarchy. In accordance with hooks (2004), I am now of the opinion that women are [also] culpable. ... In conclusion, I would argue that gender studies has challenged and shifted my mindset from a passive one to an active feminist one ... Now I find myself actively challenging heteronormative patriarchal binaries in my daily life. Instead of feeling offended by people who perpetuate hurtful gender related stereotypes, I see it as an opportunity to engage with them and perhaps even change their perspective on the matter. (Rayaan, 2017)

In foregrounding, as significant, new understandings of feminism, patriarchy, men and masculinity in which men (as well as women) have something to gain from gender equity in their essays, these students suggest that teaching and learning that disrupts dominant understandings has transformative potential. Rather than a fixed and inflexible expression of biology, young women are able to imagine masculinity as a fluid, situational performance, and as a performance that can be harmful to young men, thus presenting the possibility that men can become allies (rather than enemies) in the struggle for gender equality. At the same time, a critical focus on masculine privilege (see Hooks, 2004) offers a lens with which young men are able to confront their largely invisibilised (see Boler, 2013; Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Kannen, 2014) positions of gender privilege to see how that privilege might be personally harmful, and how masculine privileges are intersected by race, class and sexuality to further marginalise particular groups of men. Foregrounding the harmful effects of patriarchy on men (as well as women) offers the conceptual and theoretical tools with which young men are able to start conceptualising themselves differently, to understand themselves as gendered beings to whom patriarchal privileges accrue, while simultaneously exploring ways in which these privileges are deeply harmful and in need of change – change in which they have a vested interest.

Conclusion

Making students' gendered lives the fulcrum around which an introduction to gender studies curriculum is structured, and the final assessment an essay in which students reflect on what has been learned over the course of the semester, serves a number of overlapping and related purposes. A key aim, as articulated at the beginning of this chapter has been to challenge powerful and essentialising discourses around masculinity and to present the possibility that men might have something to gain from gender equity. Challenging dominant

understandings of gender equity as a zero-sum game in which benefits can only accrue to women has also involved disrupting dominant understandings of feminism as Western and thus as anti-African in general and anti-African men in particular. Another aim has involved replacing the traditional sit-down exam where stakes are high, where there is little or no time to think, and where the academic/scholarly writing skills we aim to develop tend to fly out of the closest window, with a more democratic assessment process. The reflective essay that currently constitutes the final assessment offers students the opportunity to demonstrate what they have actually learned, while simultaneously encouraging and validating the authorial voices of undergraduate students through writing that is the product of sustained critical self-reflection in thoughtful and consistent dialogue with others over time. Positioning the teacher as facilitator rather than sage, and students as experts on the gendered dynamics of their own lives, also, it is hoped, works towards a rejection of the discourses of deficiency that are widespread in contemporary higher education in South Africa (see Smit, 2012). Another aspect of the embodied pedagogical approach employed involves resisting and challenging neoliberal institutional cultures that increasingly position students as customers or consumers. Taking a feminist intersectional approach that acknowledges and respects diverse material realities also represents attempts to undermine the Eurocentricism of more traditional curricula through a rejection of Cartesian divides as well those structured around gender, race, class, sexuality and other positionalities. Taking seriously the embodied lives of those students actually in the class is also an attempt to employ a decolonising pedagogy, to present young men and young women with alternative understandings of the past and present emerging out of their own lived experiences of marginality and privilege as gendered, raced and classed beings in contemporary South Africa. It is, in the end, a pedagogical approach that aims to open up possibilities for working *together* to deconstruct the inherited canons and orthodoxies that constrain us all.

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Chapter 20

Gender, Violence and the First-Year Curriculum

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Introduction

We explore here ways of contesting gender violence within the first-year curriculum. The Soudien report (Ministerial Committee, 2008:89) affirmed the centrality of curriculum reform within university transformation:

It could be argued, given that the primary function of higher education is the production and transmission of knowledge, that epistemological transformation is at the heart of the transformation agenda. And at the centre of epistemological transformation is curriculum reform...

The Cornerstone module at Durban University of Technology (DUT) is an example of curriculum reform that aims to achieve epistemological transformation. It attempts to position students as both producers and transmitters of knowledge, thus challenging the notion that has afflicted academic support in South African higher education, of the 'deficit' of students (Coleman, 2013). This chapter describes an intervention that drew the work of young students on gender and violence into the teaching of the module. The specific research questions asked in this chapter are: What is the nature of the learning being created through this intervention in the Cornerstone module? Secondly, what are the implications, in particular for epistemological

transformation, of using such methods within curricula? We argue that such interventions create the possibility for challenging long-established boundaries between research, teaching and community engagement. We see this as a form of anti-oppressive education, a form that (Kumashiro, 2000:40) describes as 'Education that Changes Students and Society.' Such interventions are inherently open-ended, raising new questions about students' needs and responsibilities, and the role of staff. A central element in such work has to be the ethical dimensions and the responsibility of universities in a context of societal violence.

The chapter first addresses gender-based violence and what we know about its incidence at South African universities, and then the theoretical framework. A section on methodology, including a description of the context, precedes the presentation and discussion of findings and finally implications for practice.

Gender-based violence in South African universities

University transformation must, in our view, address the reality of social conditions facing students and staff. These conditions include the reality of gender-based violence (GBV). In South Africa, GBV remains a gross human rights violation and a public health and social development concern (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013). The country continues to experience higher levels of violence against women when compared to other countries (Amnesty International, 2008).

South African GBV – a range of behaviours that include rape, physical violence, intimate partner violence (IPV), female homicide and emotional violence – is under-reported, prevalent and has reached crisis proportions (Mathews et al., 2004; Dosekun, 2007). There is ample evidence that a significant number of young women have experienced, among other things, physical violence and coercive sex (Moletsane, 2014).

The threat of gender violence against young women in their daily lives occurs in all societies (Dosekun, 2007) and cuts across all social classes (Dartnall & Jewkes, 2013). National prevalence estimates suggest that up to 59 per cent of women have experienced either sexual abuse or physical violence in their lifetime (ibid.). Furthermore, studies have identified intimate partner violence as the most prevalent form of GBV; reporting on a national female homicide survey, Mathews et al. (2004) found that over 50% of women who are killed in South Africa are killed by their intimate partners.

Research has found that the epidemic of GBV is driven largely by social norms about power, gender and violence (Ricardo, Eads & Barker, 2011). In essence, GBV is a form of exerting dominance and control over another person (KZN Department of Community Safety and Liaison, 2010). It is also embedded in existing social, cultural and economic inequalities between men and women (Posel, 2005). Within this context, the inequalities between males and females that are reinforced by gender roles leave young women particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse, physical violence, being bullied, harassment, assault, discrimination and female homicide (Mathews et al., 2004; Mullick et al., 2010). GBV thus reflects the unequal power dynamics between men and women (Mullick et al., 2010). In relationships, young women tend to have very little or no power to speak out or defend themselves. Dartnall and Jewkes (2013) report that GBV takes place in a number of different circumstances and settings, including in institutions of education; Clowes et al. (2009) further identify the form such GBV takes. Qualitative evidence has demonstrated how the prevalence of violence against female students in the South African higher education system remains a pressing concern that calls for immediate interventions and policies (Bennett, 2009; Gordon & Collins, 2013). Universities are a microcosm of broader society and thus tend to be a fertile environment for gendered violence against young women (Hames, 2009).

A study by Gordon and Collins (2013) reveals that the fear of becoming a victim of GBV serves to constrict the daily activities of female students. The murder of female students by their intimate partners on campus, particularly in campus residences, has brought the stark reality of GBV to the fore (Hames, 2009; Clowes et al., 2009). It has also highlighted the limits “of more than a decade of legislative change, concerted activism, education, consciousness-raising and knowledge production aimed at challenging GBV” (Clowes et al., 2009:22).

In one South African university, researchers found that female students who challenged sexual norms tended to be punished by their male peers and intimate partners (Clowes et al., 2009). Heterosexual practices on campuses are often characterised by inequality and coercion (Gordon & Collins, 2013). Female students are afraid to report their victimisation as they either anticipate that no legal repercussions will be carried by the perpetrator or that GBV, and intimate partner violence in particular, is normal and a “sign” of love (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2015).

Moreover, Ngidi and Moletsane’s (2015) study revealed how female students felt men had a right to beat up their girlfriends for not behaving in an “acceptable” manner. Within this background, even rape is not treated as a form of violence;

instead it is normalised and silenced (ibid.). Furthermore, female students are blamed and criticised when they experience GBV (Gordon & Collins, 2013; Ngidi & Moletsane, 2015). Gordons and Collins (2013:103) conclude that:

Victims of GBV are blamed as they are assumed to have broken one of the many unspoken rules inherent in the precautionary strategies. Women are criticised for violating these 'rules' and even more importantly, they are not only perceived to be responsible, but they accept that responsibility willingly.

What is more, research has revealed a lack of commitment by institutions of higher learning to protect women students and provide safe and secure environments to live, study and learn (Hames, 2009). Bennett (2009) argues that GBV on campus rarely receives the attention it demands, and instances of gender violence continue to be treated largely as anomalies rather than as the indices of the ubiquitous, critical and complex gendered and sexual misalliances that they are.

Education has been identified as the key strategy for countering the prevalence and impact of GBV (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2015). Johnson and Das (2009), cited in Ricardo, Eads and Barker (2011), found that men with a higher level of education were 40 per cent less likely to perpetrate IPV. Education has been shown to improve health and other important outcomes for young women (ibid.). It is further positively correlated with a lower risk of GBV, including sexual violence, and greater opportunities for upward social mobility (Moletsane, 2014). The use of transformative methods in social science research, and social justice education specifically, is increasing (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2015). McGregor (2008:52) describes this approach as follows:

The transformative orientation to teaching places the student or learner at the center of the equation ... The teacher and learner both take on a more critical, multidimensional view of society, far beyond the formal classroom. The basic tenet of this approach is that people can begin to change when they can begin to express their feelings, perceptions, and personal reactions as they discover how society has helped make them who they are as a citizen.

Advocates of these pedagogical styles of teaching and learning acknowledge that learning is also influenced by students' individual beliefs, ideas and experiences. In using transformative pedagogy as a framework to address GBV among students, Ngidi and Moletsane (2015) found that this approach facilitated the participants' deep reflection on the self by addressing both structure and agency. To encourage transformative learning, in their study, the authors considered students' own understanding of sexual violence valuable, and therefore gave it preference (ibid.). In this chapter, we reflect on our work

with university students in addressing GBV through processes of reflection and learning within formal education.

Theoretical framework

We draw on Kumashiro's (2000) concept of 'anti-oppressive education' to frame this study. Given the conceptualisation of Cornerstone as an instrument of university transformation, this is appropriate. Kumashiro distinguishes between four approaches: Education for the Other, Education about the Other, Education that is Critical of Privileging and Othering, and Education that Changes Students and Society. Here the 'Other' refers to any group that is marginalised. He argues that it is helpful to distinguish between such approaches and to be aware of the ways in which each brings certain issues into focus and excludes others. There is an inescapable selectivity; for example, a focus on the situation of the 'Other' may be essential but neglects to address the nature of how the 'non-Other' is socialised into privilege.

We use this framework in the analysis of the presentations and responses in the class discussion. For example, is the intention of the presentations to educate men about the issues of women? Is it to raise the consciousness of women? Does it aim to contextualise the issues of gender-based violence in the context of capitalism? Is it to change social norms and practices and thus challenge structures of inequality? Are what students articulate responses to theory or do they constitute their attempts to reframe their own thinking and practices?

Setting the context

At DUT an initiative of general education was launched by the then Vice-Chancellor, who argued for general education on five grounds (Bawa, 2013): to address the effects of poor schooling, to embed skills development within a broader educational paradigm, to enable greater articulation within the higher education system, to strengthen intellectual culture and foster lifelong learning.

A criticism of universities of technology is that they are too narrowly linked in to professional requirements. Staff at DUT developed a listing of 'Graduate Attributes' that sets out the general capabilities that all graduates should demonstrate, rather than the capabilities specific to a profession. Thus Cornerstone in very broad terms relates to themes of effective communication, being 'culturally, environmentally and socially aware within a local and global context' and being 'active and reflective learners'.

Cornerstone was the first institutional-wide module developed within the programme of general education and started in 2015. It is a compulsory element in all new programmes – as diverse as Child and Youth Care, Business Law, Human Resource Management and Mechanical Engineering. There are now large classes taught on different campuses in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, and about 60 tutorial groups; registration numbers in the first semester of 2018 are around 4 000. Each lecture or tutorial class is 100 minutes in length. The whole module follows the same outline, though the complexities of holidays and disruptions due to student protests have meant that not all classes are at the same point in any one week.

The specific learning outcomes for Cornerstone are that students will be able to:

1. Identify and critically interrogate particular constructions about themselves and others in the context of a diverse society
2. Apply communication practices appropriate to higher education
3. Demonstrate values of respect, accountability and responsibility in relation to a just society and a sustainable environment.

Cornerstone addresses three specific topics: the journeys taken by oneself or others, gender and HIV/AIDS, in particular related to stigma. The focus is on critical engagement with one's sense of identity or identities, drawing in part on the development of narratives, and on teaching of what Steyn (2013) describes as diversity literacy, theorising about social structure and agency. The outcome relating to communicative practices entails an emphasis on reading, writing, speaking and listening within the university context. The issue of values is central to the module; in each introductory lecture a 'Common Set of Values' is negotiated with students at some length. It typically includes terms like 'respect', 'listening attentively', 'not blaming others', 'punctuality', and so on. Throughout the module, staff refer to these guidelines; they serve as a reference point that enables discussion to be kept within limits.

Research methodology

The study reported here takes the form of a qualitative case study. A case study is a "systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest" (Bromley, 1990:302). The key features of a case study are its scientific credentials and its evidence base for professional applications (Zucker, 2001:1).

This study relies on a constructivist paradigm, which argues that truth is relative and is influenced and dependent on one's positioning in the society. This paradigm embraces people's construction of social reality. Case study allows the researcher to explore what is happening with individuals or groups of people in complex relationships or contexts, such as workplaces, education or contexts of violence. The value of this method is that it supports the deconstruction and the subsequent reconstruction of the particular phenomena (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case study research facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Baxter & Jack, 2008:544). Data was collected from four lecture sessions – taught to 750 students – that followed the same outline.

Cornerstone students had in a previous class been asked to consent to the use of data from the module – classroom discussion, and assignments in particular – for research purposes, under limited conditions. Apart from the typical commitment to confidentiality and anonymity, and assurances over the right to withdraw, students were asked to indicate if visual images could be used. As a few individuals withheld consent for the use of visual images, they will not be used in any research presentation. No student refused consent for the use of other material for research purposes.

The research process and methodology was explained to the students and they were informed that their class would be used as a case study towards understanding the transformation of the curriculum in relation to transformation of higher education in South Africa broadly. Students were reminded that their participation was voluntary and all other social science research ethics were observed closely.

In each class that was the focus of this study, the class began with the presentations. After discussion, the university's policy on sexual harassment was briefly presented and relevant information was given to the students on the HIV/AIDS Centre, Campus Health Clinic and the Student Counselling Centre.

Each class reported here began with presentations by two groups of DUT students (discussed at length below), *Girls against Sexual Violence (GASVA)* and *Amajita*. These presentations were done and recorded in the first lecture. A video recording of this first presentation was thereafter shown in the three subsequent lectures. The aim of these lecture sessions, drawing on the resources

developed within those two groups, was to develop insight into ways in which we can work from experience and through dialogue to develop our sense of agency in the face of the oppressive relationships around GBV. Students were expected to relate this to an earlier session that reflected on gender socialisation.

The content of the presentations mainly focused on gender differences and inequalities as well as GBV. The presentation by the GASVA group relied largely on silent communication to express their ideas and their message to the audience. On the other hand, the presentation by *Amajita* was a drama through which the men themselves role-played different genders.

The presentations (both the live and the recorded material) were followed by a facilitated class discussion, where students were given the opportunity to comment and ask questions accordingly.

Some of the probing questions we asked students after each presentation were: What did you like in those presentations and why? What did you not like and why? What voices were silenced in the presentation? What emotions were evoked in the presentation? What were the lessons learnt? To what extent do these presentations speak to the reality of DUT students?

Voice recordings and notes taken during each class were used as data for this chapter. The analysis took the form of a collaborative review of transcriptions of the discussion to identify and distinguish recurrent themes in the discussion, further drawing on the theoretical framework (Kumashiro, 2000) to explore the implications of the themes.

Girls against sexual violence

Girls against Sexual Violence (GASVA) is an offspring of a broader multi-institute initiative entitled 'Networks for Change and Well-being'. The network is an international and interdisciplinary partnership of institutions in Canada and South Africa working to advance girl-led interventions in the area of sexual violence through action research, use of innovative multimedia technologies, leadership development and mentoring. One of the co-authors was tasked to identify and mentor a group of young women at the DUT. Eight of the group members came from the 2015 offering of the Cornerstone module.

'The involvement of girls and young women in action research, participatory approaches could be regarded as an interventionist approach in and of itself' (Mitchell et al., 2015:5). The meetings with GASVA started in August 2015.

GASVA has comprised 12 undergraduate students in their first and second year of study, who meet most weeks to discuss and work on ways to address sexual violence in and around campus. It has created a space where these female students feel safe enough to share their understanding of, as well as their observations, attitudes and experiences with sexual violence. What have dominated most discussions (including the presentation described above) have been feelings of unsafety, the fear of being attacked and the policing of women's bodies and clothing.

This initiative is an example of what Kumashiro (2000) terms 'Education for the other', which focuses on addressing the needs of a group facing oppression. Through a typically Freirean approach, the young women's sense of consciousness and their ability to understand their position is heightened (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2015), with the intention that they therefore become active citizens, challenging injustices both within and among themselves and transformers of the world around them (Poppo, 2000).

The GASVA presentation was a dramatised depiction of the female students dressed in all-white or all-black attire. Most of the group members had adhesive tape covering their mouths. Each student held a placard with a slogan. One member spoke as commentator/narrator while others hummed, one-by-one moving to the front of the group to show the content of their placards. The central themes were the use of women's clothing as an excuse for rape, the insistence that a woman's 'no' means just that, a protest against the increased vulnerability to sexual assault of black women (SAPS [South African Police Service], 2014 – Crime Statistics; Human Rights Watch, 2010), a rejection of the role of transactional relationships, and an appeal for harmony and genuine relationships between men and women.

*Amajita*¹

When one of the authors lecturing on the 2015 Cornerstone class invited women to join a group focused on sexual violence, some men commented that there should also be a men's group and then approached him with a request that he facilitate meetings of a group they named *Amajita*. Meetings started in late 2015 with a negotiation of the way the group would function. From the outset, members made it clear that they wanted to speak of their experiences related to violence, in a context of mutual emotional support.

1 *Amajita* is isiZulu slang for 'brothers'.

If there was one pattern that was consistent in the majority of stories, it was the sense that boys and young men had been subject to physical violence, often extreme, and sometimes at the hands of fathers, and subject also to observation of GBV. Initially the facilitator's reaction had been to question what he took to be an emphasis on men as victims of violence; he soon though realised the significance for GBV of the violence experienced by boys and men.

Jewkes, Flood and Lang (2015:1582) state that “men who have been victims are more likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence or rape, although most male victims do not subsequently perpetrate”. Their argument is that work with both genders should focus on the change of social norms. Consistent with this, *Amajita* has worked to build a positive sense of men as caring and mutually supportive; the emphasis has not been on behavioural change, not isolating men's behaviour from their sense of self and their struggles with trauma.

The drama developed and presented by the men starts with a man being retrenched without warning, who is trying to deal with his despair over this with his friends, who drink with him but provide no emotional support, and then going home and reacting abusively to a minor perceived failing by his partner. His young son is troubled and seeks consolation from a friend who tells him, ‘a man doesn't cry’. Five years later the son reacts abusively to his girlfriend and is then challenged by a male friend who explains that his behaviour is not right.

The class discussions

To understand what learning was being developed through the presentation and responses, we explore here the themes that emerged in the discussion. Not all the presentations worked in the same ways: the first had the actual physical presentations and interaction with the members of the two groups, while the other three relied on a video of the presentations and a short explanation by the only member who could be present, one of the *Amajita*. In all the sessions there was a full and varied discussion, while similar themes emerged in each. Generally, these sessions were more effective in enabling active participation than typical lecture sessions. However, not everything worked as planned. The drama by *Amajita* went on longer, as the men began to extemporise. Secondly, the sound quality of the video was very uneven and it became evident that in future such videos would need subtitles.

Themes from the four classes

In the discussion, students developed specific arguments, some as observations only in response to the presentations, others as a counter-argument to another position. Participation was good; there was generally easy discussion, with hands going up and the lecturer identifying speakers, sometimes posing questions.

Resistance, stereotyping and contestation around clothing

In all four classes where data was collected, students rapidly moved discussions to a focus on clothing and sexual harassment. Some male students felt that women were responsible for their own sexual harassment and that men, in contrast, were helpless in controlling their reactions (what was not engaged with at the time was the vulnerability of men that this implies). The argument was that women chose their clothing items to impress and attract the attention of men on campus.

There is evidence from secondary schools as to how girls' clothing becomes the focus of GBV (De Lange, 2012). For example, De Lange (2012:197) argues that "...[clothing] can therefore position the girl as not only 'ready to learn' but also as not allowed to learn; as inviting seduction – either for pleasure or for money; and as enticing gender-based violence". In our study, male students held similar sentiments and perceived their female peers' clothing as an invitation for GBV (including rape). The arguments of some men were that they could not take responsibility for GBV, alternatively that it was unacceptable for men not to respond 'naturally':

- Man 1 And when, when you wear something in the morning and you look at yourself in the mirror, do you actually say, I like what I am wearing? Or ... I want, I want him to see me, that I am wearing this today? [clapping and calls of 'no']
- Man 2 In my view you know, you get attracted to short skirts, and after that, not that we do it on purpose, but it is the way we feel. We want to act on it [noises of reaction from girls].
- Man 3 This [discussion] makes us uncomfortable with our sexuality. You will keep checking yourself. 'No, I shouldn't be noticing that.'

In one more extreme comment, spoken in isiZulu and translated, a man said:

Man 4 It is a disgrace to talk about it. In the whole biological makeup of men, they look at something and it doesn't go away, whereas women base their reactions on what they hear. If they are wearing these clothes, they are attracting the danger.

These comments illustrate two patterns: one holds women responsible for the violence against themselves. In this instance, by wearing certain items, deemed 'sexually-inviting' for men, women are violated and made to feel inferior, which, according to De Lange (2012) is a further violation of their right to learn. The second treats men as inescapably driven by the provocative sight of women, highlighting the hidden curriculum that promotes gender inequality and stereotyping in spaces of education (ibid.).

Such discussion could and did evoke strong emotions. The men's assertions though were strongly contested; women and some men articulated arguments against the stereotyped views. Women, in particular, voiced anger at the restrictions on their freedom, and asserted an alternative discourse around agency and choice. They further drew from cases of sexual violence against children and infants to highlight that female clothing was an overly simplified excuse for violence against women. Women further protested against the belief that women made themselves "look good" for the pleasure of their male peers. They also lamented how such beliefs infringed on their freedom and the right of expression through clothing:

Woman 1 There are babies – how can you rape a nine month old baby? Was she also in that position, did she look at herself in the mirror and go, 'Do I like myself, am I dressing up for him?'

Woman 2 We cannot dress freely [supporting calls] because someone will be judging us, and saying that, oh, you are selling your body ... Where is that freedom that we have of being able to do everything, when someone will judge me when I am wearing something?

Woman 3 We want to look good for ourselves, not just for someone else.

Woman 4 I want to talk about this ... I wanted to use the f-word, but ... [co-author use it!] I am comfortable in my own body, it does not mean that I am asking, hey. The men are getting comfortable with what they are doing, but it needs to stop right now ... This is the generation where we need to be comfortable.

- Woman 5 I like covering up, it is my personal choice. I prefer covering up more than showing my body. And if someone feels that she is more artistic, if she is wearing a short skirt, then that is her choice.
- Man 5 ... when our women were wearing breasts openly, there was no problem.

These extracts highlight how students are developing ways of speaking about gender that include a sense of agency in the affirmative of selfhood, through the language of choice and of dressing for oneself rather than to satisfy the demands of others. This discussion also typifies the changing of citational practices that Kumashiro (2000:42) refers to:

In contrast to prohibiting harmful words and actions, or to developing a critical awareness of harmful structures and ideologies, some have argued that change requires becoming involved in altering citational practices.

One GASVA member put the same point in different words, arguing for a different ‘picture’ that sets out an alternative vision of gender relations:

...saying that someone is dressed in a certain way is asking for certain things, it is a perspective that has been created, and there needs to be someone who is painting a picture, listen that people are expressing in different ways.

It is clear that dress in higher education evokes important, albeit controversial, social issues such as gender and violence. This, as noted by other scholars, offers an important entry point for reflection and interrogation (Ntombela, 2012).

Silencing and breaking the silence

Some of the students picked up the silencing depicted in the GASVA presentation. For them, silencing of GBV was a stark and lived reality. While sexual violence, for example, was part of their lives, women acknowledged that they had a fear of talking about their victimisation. This is in line with recent studies that find that female students fear reporting their victimisation (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2015). An early study by Woods et al. (1998:233) highlighted how “conditions and timing of sex [are] defined by male partners through the use of violence and through the circulation of certain constructions of love, intercourse and entitlement to which the [...] girls were expected to submit”. There, as noted in the extract below, legitimacy of these GBV experiences is reinforced by female students who indicated that silence and submission is the appropriate response (Woods, 1998:233).

Woman 6 We as women, whenever we face ... as women we are afraid to talk about things that are happening in our everyday lives, we are abused at home by our boyfriend or whatever, we don't talk about those things, we keep them to ourselves.

Man 6 The problem is because people don't report these cases, they are afraid. There is this whole thing of people not speaking, the shame of speaking (isiZulu phrase).

Other students, however, chose to use this as an opportunity to break the silence and make explicit what they have experienced. Some students articulated their experience of gender-based violence, confronting others with this reality. Embedded in the fear of reporting violence is the threat to well-being that perpetrators of violence make towards their victims. As highlighted by the comment from a female victim below, the threat became physical the moment she reported her victimisation. What this further illustrates is the silencing of not just victims, but also of witnesses to GBV. The male friend described in the extract below became a secondary victim, once his female peer reported her sexual violation. Moreover, there is a sustained belief that GBV is normal and a learned social reaction to threatened masculinity.

Woman 7 On the point of silence – in my own experience, when I got sexually violated ... I was not alone at that time, it was a male friend. The guy that sexually violated me threatened my male friend not to tell anyone. 'If you tell anyone about this, me and my friends are going to beat you up.' ... As soon as I reported it, they started to beat up my male friend all the time, he couldn't go out.

Man 7 I grew up in a community where beating up or using violence was a normal thing, if your girlfriend was cheating, you would just beat her ... It is to do with how we are brought up.

One student spoke about extreme physical abuse in a neighbour's family, and then approached the lecturer to say that this was actually about her own family and she needed help in dealing with it. Two of us sat with her in an office and listened to her while she sobbed and spoke of the history; eventually we referred her to the student counselling centre. She later reported to us that this had enabled her to deal with these events for the first time.

Students were choosing to make their experience available to others as a resource; there are risks to them in this, first that potentially this could be used in some way against them, secondly in that they are experiencing again some

of the original pain. Such discussion would not have been possible without the degree of security provided through the Common Set of Values. From the outset, the issue of speaking about experience was discussed in terms of what was needed to protect people.

Poverty and relationships

Students spoke with some sympathy for women who entered transactional relationships to deal with financial problems.

I want as ladies, we need to stand strong and firm. If you need something, rather than sleeping with a person, trying to get luxury ... if my friends are wearing Brazilian or Afro-American hair, I have my own and I am comfortable with it. I like the hashtag #sugardaddiesmustvoetsek. If there is a campaign here at school, that can help with that, I will support it.

This is one area where the issue of intersectionality was made clear; at another point the different expectations around race and gender relationships was touched on.

Taking responsibility for gender issues

Noticeable was that the situation became the opportunity for both women and men to set out their vision of how things should be.

- Man 8 And I think as guys we need to learn that though sometimes we have this thing of not being equal of women, but women should be respected because they are the people that carry these children that we bring forth. So we need to respect women as much as we want respect. [Much clapping].
- Man 9 Right now we live in a society where it is easy to shift blame. We are looking at this guy and saying that it is all the fault of his friends. Every man is able to differentiate what is right and what is wrong ... Every man should take responsibility for knowing what is and what is not. It is a choice at the end of the day.
- Woman 8 What comes into my mind is, I was here and I was listening; this brings into mind is, where am I going to do about that when I walk out that door? Am I going to be the same person? Am I going to be behaving the same way that I was behaving before, to her? What am I going to do or what am I going to become when I walk out that door?

Man 10 We can instil values for future generations that could erase all this abuse.

Addressing the role of men

Kumashiro (2000:29) makes the point that a focus on gender may fail to acknowledge the ways in which there are marginalised identities amongst men. We could add the need to bring into focus the experiences of men that are areas of vulnerability rather than of privilege. This connects with the men's drama, in which both father and son are shown as simultaneously vulnerable and seeking dominance.

An achievement of the discussion was the willingness of men to speak directly about their situation. One in particular gave a long statement related to his experience of not having had a father present, and how he thought men should handle such issues:

Man 11 And also with us not being, with us not being mentored properly we do not get the knowledge of respecting each other. Common values as that no matter if a person is a woman I must respect them first ... As a man now, if you can make a child, you should be able to say that as I am a father, I can make sure that life does not cave in on you, because I have created this thing, because a child does not ask to be born.

In another interaction, the lecturer had responded to a man who said that men just react to the sight of women's bodies with a question to men as to whether it is true that they cannot control themselves:

Man 12 What the girls are saying here is right, they should resist all these things. They are supposed to be girls who are successful, it is good to hear some strong girls who can speak up for themselves and my view on what that guy said about men can't resist being attracted by females. We are not gay, we are attracted towards girls, but respectfully, even if you are attracted you have to show respect in some way.

Absent though from the discussion was the situation of men whose identities are also marginalised, such as gay men – even through the assumptions made in the comment that 'we are not gay' – except where a lecturer brought that directly into the discussion. The discussion did not get to the full acknowledgement of the multiple ways in which GBV is exercised.

However, when one co-author asked men to indicate if they were shifting their understanding as a result of the dialogue, several indicated that they were.

Discussion

We set out to address these research questions: What is the nature of the learning being created through this intervention in the Cornerstone module? Secondly, what are the implications of using such methods within curricula? We argue that the discussion opened up the possibility of alternative ways and visions of thinking about men and women. Even the statements of resistance to change brought about a dynamic interaction, enabling a fuller understanding of how gender structures operate through violence as well as the possibilities that people can bring change. One indication of the latter is how we ourselves gained in our understanding of these issues from the discussion. Following Kumashiro (2000), we would characterise this as 'Education that Changes Students and Society'. He draws attention in particular to the need to change citational practices, to develop new ways of speaking about gender; these were articulated at various points in the discussion.

What did we learn about the implications of this approach? The difficulties were made evident in a campus forum, where two members of *Amajita* themselves resorted to the stereotyped view that women must take responsibility for ending violence through their clothing (Hemson, 2018), while also stating their rejection of GBV. This has led us to note how uneven and partial progress can be; it also raises the question about how men who can acknowledge their vulnerability with each other come to feel so defensive in spaces where women speak freely.

There are also major difficulties in scaling up from a direct presentation. With perhaps 25 large classes in the coming years, we would need a more technically polished video presentation. Finally, while the presentations touched on a range of aspects of GBV, some resonate immediately – such as the issue of clothing – and we did not fully engage with such issues as non-sexual violence or the ways we socialise children.

We cannot determine if it made a significant difference to use student presentations. Class discussion though was generally more open and impassioned than in other classes; it suggests that positioning students as the communicators of ideas does encourage other students to reflect and theorise more deeply.

The ethical issues are complex. Students brought life experience, some of it disturbing, into the classroom. Potentially handling such issues on a larger scale increases the risks of students and staff being traumatised if the contexts are not systematically thought about and planned for (Plüg & Collins, 2018). On the other hand, an ethical commitment to addressing these issues means not avoiding what may be the one moment in a student's history that GBV is directly on their agenda.

While the Common Set of Values has provided a degree of protection, we have come to recognise how a classroom discussion can itself be the occasion for the enactment of GBV through language, and how this can impact on both students and staff (Hemson & Plüg, 2017). Learning will not take place without some degree of disruption, and this requires bringing resistance into the open; learning also requires developing a higher degree of safety than we typically experience within class settings. One way of keeping this balance is to open discussion on *how* we speak on these issues before starting the conversations.

How staff and teaching assistants handle issues of emotion and pain in a society that has experienced considerable violence critically depends on their own learning – we see creative and thoughtful work with teachers and tutors as essential to doing this well. Finally, we see the need to include a stronger element of theory in such work, to recognise that change can be advanced also through what Kumashiro (2000) refers as 'Education that is Critical of Privileging and Othering'. One way to do so would be to follow such sessions with a lecture based on an analysis of the classroom discussion that shows the relationship to the literature on gender-based violence. This would be a further affirmation of the role of this work in epistemological transformation.

Implications for development

We argue that drawing student experiences and perceptions into first-year teaching offers unparalleled opportunities for challenging GBV in a violent society. It has also served as an example of how epistemological transformation can be undertaken, even in large classes. What we have learnt from this work is that this approach requires four critical elements:

1. Developing and keeping before the class a set of guidelines for how students and staff relate to each other;
2. Understanding how our students came to collude with or to resist the forces that drive GBV;

3. Developing facilitators' capacity to see their own experiences as a resource, and to keep under critical review how they were themselves socialised; and
4. Developing facilitators' skills in framing discussion to pre-empt hurtful interactions, for using their own experience selectively as evidence to trouble taken-for-granted assumptions, and for enabling a context within which those most subject to marginalisation can participate with confidence.

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Chapter 21

Performing Transformation:
Exploring the contribution of the InZync poetry
sessions to sociocultural transformation in Stellenbosch

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Introduction

Calls for transformation have permeated South African society since at least the advent of democracy in 1994. Understandings of transformation, however, are multifarious and sometimes even contradictory. This chapter will summarise a context-based systems understanding of transformation in South Africa, whereafter complexity theory and systems thinking will be introduced as a tool to approach the InZync poetry sessions as a case study to explore the contributions the sessions have made to sociocultural transformation in Stellenbosch. Findings from in-depth semi-structured interviews will be combined with participant observations to provide a thick description of the InZync poetry sessions through the voices of the participants and the ways in which the sessions have transformed them.

Background

The InZync poetry sessions are regular multilingual poetry sessions which have been hosted largely in Kayamandi between 2011 and 2017 – initially by SLiP

¹ This chapter is based on research completed towards an MPhil in Sustainable Development at Stellenbosch University under the supervision of Dr R. Preiser and Ms S. Swanepoel.

(the Stellenbosch Literary Project)² – and now officially run by the NPO InZync Poetry.³ The sessions have connected intercultural communities in Kayamandi and Stellenbosch University through the medium of poetry and have most often been held at Amazink, a theatre venue in Kayamandi, Stellenbosch. Other Stellenbosch venues include GUS gallery, Klein Libertas Theatre and Café Art. The sessions have been hosted more than 50 times and usually attract 150–200 young audience members per session.

The basic tenet of the poetry sessions is the establishment of a performance space that is open to various kinds of poetic genres (including hip-hop, *imbongis* [traditional Xhosa praise poets], spoken word poets and page poets) and as many South African languages as possible (the main languages that poets perform in are Xhosa, English, Afrikaans, Afrikaaps and Sotho). The poetry sessions have been free since their inception in an attempt to create a space that doesn't exclude people on the basis of class. Furthermore, transport is provided to students from Stellenbosch University to and from Amazink – and for Kayamandi poetry lovers to and from the venue if it is hosted elsewhere in Stellenbosch – in an attempt to stimulate the crossing of borders between areas that remain largely segregated on the basis of race.

The sessions have been driven by students from Stellenbosch University in a conscious attempt to engage in transformative artistic expression in a town which has notorious links to apartheid and the perpetuation of white supremacy. In the context of concerns about transformation at Stellenbosch University – the predominantly white demographic of the students, exclusionary residence cultures and linguistic barriers to education are some that come to mind – investigating alternative sites where student-led transformative practices have been taking place (such as the InZync poetry sessions) becomes paramount in understanding what transformation might look and feel like at the university. I therefore contend that an investigation into the transformative potential of the InZync poetry sessions (with the explicit intent to reconfigure the spatial relations between Stellenbosch University and

2 SLiP is a project founded by Professor Leon de Kock and is based in the English Department at Stellenbosch University (slipnet.co.za). The InZync poetry sessions and biweekly poetry writing and performance workshop is for students from under-resourced schools in the greater Stellenbosch area (the INKredibles).

3 InZync Poetry is an NPO that was conceptualised and founded by myself and Adrian van Wyk. Its main objectives are to cultivate and promote plurilingual poetry in all its (South) African regional forms – including but not limited to spoken word, rap, izibongo and more traditional “page poetry”; to provide inclusive platforms for live literary expression in Stellenbosch and Cape Town; to identify and mentor young poets from the Stellenbosch surrounds through the INKredibles poetry workshops

the town that surrounds it) can also provide insights into the ways in which Stellenbosch University itself can approach transformation.

This study, however, has consciously chosen to take Stellenbosch-town as a whole as the investigation horizon rather than solely focusing on Stellenbosch University, not only because the histories (and therefore also the transformations) of the university and the town are deeply and inextricably linked, but also because the poetry sessions and my own research have consciously tried to subvert the divide between university and town. Nevertheless, some key learnings will be offered at the end of the chapter as suggestions that the university can incorporate into its own transformation project.

What follows is also a personal investigation, as the rationale for the research stems from my own experiences in organising and attending the poetry sessions. The recasting of my own personal and social identity as a consequence of the sessions prompted me to further investigate their possible transformative effects.

Towards a context-specific systems understanding of transformation

This overview does not attempt to give an exhaustive account of the various meanings of transformation, but draws on various literatures to provide a workable definition of transformation in a South African context which will frame our discussion of transformation at the InZync poetry sessions. Firstly, the Oxford English Dictionary defines “transformation” as “[t]he action of changing in form, shape, or appearance; metamorphosis” (Oxford English Dictionary [Online], n.d.). Here we see how change forms a core component of an understanding of transformation. The definition, however, fails to acknowledge the systemic nature of transformation and the multiple actions which occur at various scales when systems are transformed. In this respect, Moore et al. (2014) more accurately describe an understanding of transformation that is system-based: “Transformation [...] describes a form of change that is more significant than adaptation, one that recombines existing elements of a system in fundamentally novel ways” (Moore et al., 2014:55).

Relatedly, the processual nature of transformation is emphasised when it is understood as “a set of [...] changes at various internal states of transition along a continuum” (*Universities South Africa*, 2015:22). We should therefore not understand transformation as a static end state that will be reached once certain requirements have been met. Transformation is an open-ended process.

Furthermore, some of the key elements of systems that change during a transformation are “norms, values and beliefs; rules and practices, such as laws, procedures and customs; and the distribution and flow of power, authority, and resources” (Westley & Antadze, 2010, in Moore et al., 2014). Omoyefa (2014) identifies four dimensions of transformation in the context of conflict transformation which I contend are generally applicable to the transformation of political, economic and social systems: personal, structural, relational and cultural transformation (2014). Furthermore, creativity is seen as a central mechanism for transformation by Kleiman (2008). The creative act is both transformative in itself and as a tool for social transformation (Kleiman, 2008).

In South Africa, transformation has a particular resonance in relation to apartheid, where apartheid is understood as a supra-systemic attempt at practising exclusion of the black population in the South African political, economic and social systems during most of the 20th century (Porteus, 2003; Henrard, 2003). Within this historical context, transformation is seen as “change that addresses the imbalances of the [...] apartheid era” (Govinder et al., 2013:1), as the process needed to change the “inequalities embedded in the apartheid system” (Oldfield, 2002, n.p.), and as a “social, economic and political change in the nature of society that clearly mark[s] a break with the [a]partheid past” (Lange, 2014:6). More than merely moving away from the apartheid past, the assertion of agency and concomitant empowerment forms a core part of the process of transformation in South Africa (Shwerin, 1995; Nkomo, 2013). It should also be noted that transformation is one of the most prolific signifiers in South Africa (Keet 2015), meaning that a plethora of understandings of transformation exist whereby transformation has become the battleground for competing agendas (Lange, 2014).

Furthermore, the spatial dimensions of transformation are emphasised in urban planning literature (Adebayo & Musvoto, 2010; Schensul & Heller, 2011). In this regard, transformation can be understood as “a move from one condition of existence – exclusion – to another condition of existence – inclusion” (Oloyede, 2009:430). These conditions of existence should not be seen as static states of being, but as active processes which are interconnected (Porteus, 2003). This dynamic view shifts the emphasis from the boundary between the excluded and the included to the agency of those contained in the system and their ability to remould and transform their surroundings (Porteus, 2003:18).

In the context of the South African tertiary education system, there exist comprehensive and multidimensional understandings of transformation

which move beyond understanding transformation as merely a quantitative demographic numbers game (Govinder et al., 2013). In this vein, universities in South Africa have recently come up with the following collective definition of transformation:

[Transformation is a] comprehensive, deep-rooted and ongoing social process seeking to achieve a fundamental reconstitution and development of universities to reflect and promote the vision of a democratic society. [It] refers to the active removal of any institutional, social, material and intellectual barriers [that stand] in the way of creating a more equal, inclusive and socially just higher education system.

(Universities South Africa, 2015:2)

The above acknowledgement of transformation as a systemic intervention into an ongoing social process signals a more complex understanding of what transformation entails. The recent student protests at higher education institutions around the country have shown the urgency of fast-tracking deep-seated transformation and the large distances we still have to cover in order to arrive at an inclusive education system. As Keet (2015) aptly observes, the demands from students suggest that “transformation must be performed to create an Afrocentric space; advance the decolonization of knowledge; agitate for better facilities and more productive practices; promote just pedagogies; broaden opportunities and increase success rates for black students” (2015:1). The education system still has a long way to go in order to systematically transform, and quantitative demographic transformation only constitutes one aspect of the multidimensional process of deep transformation.

Complex systems – an orientating framework

This section will outline the basic tenets of complexity theory and systems thinking which will be used to conceptualise the InZync poetry sessions as a temporary sociocultural system. There is no agreed definition as to what exactly constitutes a complex system (Chu et al., 2003) and definition inevitable reduces complexity (Cilliers, 1998), so rather than attempt a definition, the various characteristics which typify complex systems will be outlined by looking at the work of Paul Cilliers (1998; 2000a; 2000b; 2008; 2010), which marries complexity and post-structural thinking.

According to Cilliers (1998), complex systems consist of a large number of elements that dynamically interact over time in a non-linear fashion – these interactions determine the behaviour of the system and lead to the

phenomenon of emergence⁴ – i.e. the creation of systemic properties and behaviour that cannot be traced back linearly to the components themselves; since the behaviour of the system is determined by the interactions between the components and not the components themselves, the structure of the system can be maintained even though the components might change; feedback loops form an integral part of the structure of complex systems; complex systems are open, meaning that there is an exchange of energy and/or information with the system's environment, and adaptive, meaning that they can responsively change to conform with changes in their environment; lastly, Cilliers also notes that there is no singularly valid way to describe a complex system, since various descriptive options exist (Cilliers, 2000a:23-24; 2008:45).

In order to better understand the phenomenon of emergence, Cilliers (1998; 2010) uses post-structuralist insights into the creation of linguistic meaning through a play of differences between signifiers. Here, the central idea is that meaning is not pre-given or fixed, but something which emerges contextually through the relations between signifiers and between the signifiers and their context. The argument here is that there is a structural similarity between the emergence of meaning in language and the emergence of properties in complex systems. In the same way that the difference between words leads to the emergence of meaning à la Derrida (Cilliers, 2010), the interaction between components of a system lead to emergent systemic properties. The logic of difference is therefore central to Cilliers' account of complex systems (2010). Furthermore, Roberto Poli also draws our attention to the fact that complex systems are inherently creative (Poli, 2013). Here, creativity is understood as "the capacity to change, learn, and over time become different from what one was before" (2013:145). The creativity of complex systems therefore implies that they are dynamic and subject to transformations, whilst also having the possibility to transform other systems of which they form part.

We can also identify characteristics which specifically apply to complex social systems. Firstly, they consist of individuals (who are themselves complex systems) who interact over time to produce behaviour that is emergent. A complex social system can therefore be understood as "a voluntary association of purposeful members who have a choice" (Gharajedaghi, 2011:2). Secondly, social interactions form the core of the dynamics of social systems, where social interactions are understood as "the regulated coupling between

4 It is this property of complex systems which, in my opinion, can ultimately enable transformative behaviour.

at least two autonomous agents where the regulation [concerns] aspects of the coupling itself [and] constitutes an emergent autonomous organization in the domain of relational dynamics, without destroying in the process the autonomy of the agents involved” (De Jaegher & Di Paolo, 2007:493). These interactions lead to the creation of a “temporary self-producing system” which self-organises through the coordination of the utterances, gazes, gestures and movements of the individuals involved (McGann & De Jaegher, 2009).

Thirdly, social systems are also indelibly symbolic, because “while people experience [...] social systems directly, they identify and understand social systems [...] through symbolic, in particular semiotic, systems such as shared social representations” (Pickel, 2007:4). These symbolic aspects of any social system include “cultures, knowledge systems, ideologies [and] values” (Pickel, 2007:5). It would therefore be more prudent to refer to a complex social system as a sociocultural system in my opinion, since the cultural and symbolic aspects of any social system form part of the interactions which circumscribe the systemic behaviour. Furthermore, whereas mechanical systems are energy-bonded, sociocultural systems are information-bonded (Gharajedaghi, 2011), meaning that the elements of a sociocultural system are linked by the “interconnection of information” (Gharajedaghi, 2011:6).

Within this framework of sociocultural systems, it can be argued that a fruitful way to investigate sociocultural transformation in South Africa is to look at different instances of systemic interventions in the South African system which mainly operate on the social and cultural levels. Let us define sociocultural transformation then as a process of systemic change that happens concomitantly with socioeconomic transformation and transformation in general, and which specifically addresses sociocultural issues like language use, belonging, inclusivity and identity through sociocultural praxis.⁵ It should be noted, however, that it is not possible to strictly separate different kinds of transformation from each other because they intersect with and influence each other. However, the term “sociocultural transformation” helps to limit our focus to the sociocultural realm and the ways in which sociocultural systems are transformed through concerted effort.

5 My contention here is that transformative sociocultural practices such as intercultural poetry sessions are key vehicles to bring about sociocultural transformation in places of historic segregation such as Stellenbosch.

InZync as a complex sociocultural system

This section will argue that the InZync poetry sessions can be understood as a temporary complex sociocultural system by applying the above characteristics of complex systems to the InZync poetry sessions. This systems-understanding of InZync will serve as a prelude to the discussion of the 20 interviews that were undertaken with participants of the InZync poetry sessions and what they reveal about the distinctiveness and transformational capabilities of these sessions. Establishing the InZync sessions as a temporary complex sociocultural system will help us to see more clearly how the sessions have contributed to sociocultural transformation which can be understood as a process that emerges from the activity of the system.

Firstly, an InZync session consists of various elements/participants which interact in a specifically structured way over time. The participants are poets, audience members or organisers (the host, DJs and producers). The InZync system persists over time even though the elements of the system might change from one poetry session to the next, because the relations and interactions between the elements stay relatively constant. Furthermore, we need to acknowledge that there are as many experiences of InZync as there are people on the night, and that any description of the system inevitably entails a reduction of this diversity and complexity. This acknowledgement also helps us to see why the participants themselves are ideally suited to describe the transformative effects of the InZync system.

Secondly, there are also various feedback loops which characterise the InZync system. Firstly, the audience's response to performed poems constitutes a feedback loop which can change the way in which the particular poet performs their poem. There is an undeniably dialogical interaction between the audience and the poets which consists of information which is both verbal and non-verbal (Allison, Adrian⁶). An example of verbal feedback are responses like "Thetha!" and "Bua!" – Xhosa and Sotho words which mean "Speak!". These words, along with many others such as "Yes!" and mmm's and ahhh's, are often used to show support for a particular train of thought in a poem or to anticipate what might come next. They notify the poet that the audience is present and following their poem as it is performed. An obvious example of non-verbal feedback is the audience's applause (or lack thereof) which responds collectively and directly to the poem as a whole. This applause not only includes hand-claps, but also cheers, ululations and other expressions of support.

6 Interviewees are identified throughout this chapter by their first names.

Another relevant feedback loop is the interaction between the host and the audience. In order to start the session, the host uses verbal and non-verbal communicative cues to act as a positive feedback loop which establishes the communicative parameters of the system: the host welcomes everyone, gets them “psyched-up” by employing a call-and-response technique. By requiring the audience to respond directly to his/her words, the host prepares the audience for their role as listeners and active respondents to the poetry that is to follow. The dialectic between poets and audience and the concomitant two-way flow of information (poems from the poets, responses from the audience) is hereby established. Furthermore, the host also establishes the rules of the system, which includes mutual respect between poets and audience. The host can also act as negative feedback loop during performances by ensuring that the audience returns to a suitably focused and quiet state before the next poet comes on stage. Here, the host’s sensitivity to the state of the audience is crucial in ensuring the continued appreciated exchange of poetry which characterises the InZync system. In this regard, Adrian affirms that the hosts “have to help create the space so someone can feel comfortable enough to speak on stage”. In order for that comfortable space to be created, the hosts often make themselves vulnerable by sharing one of their own poems.

Thirdly, the InZync system can also be said to be an open system, since there is an exchange of information between the system and its environment. The environment here is taken to mean the outside world and the larger sociocultural and social-ecological systems of which the participants form a part. In this way, the participants bring with them their connectedness and embeddedness in larger complex systems and act as representatives of these systems. Furthermore, the InZync system (as informational exchange between poets and audience) also acts as a temporary environment for these larger complex systems, an “outside” from where these larger complex systems can be described, critiqued and challenged.

Lastly, following Cilliers’ thoughts on meaning-making through the use of signifiers via Derrida (2000a), we can also conjecture that the meaning that emerges from the InZync system is contextually bound and receives its substance from the interplay between different poems, different signifiers and different languages. In this regard, it is important to point to another characteristic of the InZync system which emerges from the fact that the sessions are consciously structured to be multilingual events – the differential and changing understanding of the audience as different languages are employed by different poets. A concrete example will make this point clearer:

imagine that a poet comes on stage and performs a poem in isiXhosa. This will only be understood by all Xhosa-speakers in the audience, even though the non-Xhosa-speakers can still follow and appreciate the poem, not only by listening to the musical qualities of the poem, but also by taking their lead from the response of Xhosa-speakers in the audience. Their mmm's and ahhhh's help to contextualise the poem and provide the non-Xhosa speakers with audio clues as to the emotional substance of the poem. Now imagine that this poet is followed by an Afrikaans poet. Once again, only a certain (but different) section of the audience will understand Afrikaans, but the rest (via the same process as described above) can still follow and meaningfully interact with the poem despite their inability to understand the language.

What we see here are the ways in which different participants become semantic outsiders or insiders during the performance of poems in different languages and the ways in which their embeddedness in the system allows them to continue to participate in meaning-making even though they might not speak the language in which a poem is being performed. There is an interlingual (and therefore also intercultural) awareness which emerges here in the interplay between different languages to which we will later return.

A thick description of transformation at InZync through the mouths of participants

This section summarises the findings of my thesis by highlighting the most important insights gained from the interviews with participants of the InZync system. Over the years, InZync has evolved into a “sociocultural event” which “draws in a wide variety of people from very diverse parts of the town into [...] one space” (Mbao, 2014). Wamuwi discusses how this is particularly significant given the fact that these kinds of intercultural meeting spaces are quite rare in Stellenbosch. Relatedly, for David, InZync shrinks the “small literal separation” and “figurative cultural separation” between people from Kayamandi and students from Stellenbosch University.

The place in relation to other Stellenbosch spaces

The distinctiveness of the sessions definitely involves their geographic location at Amazink in Kayamandi. The sessions are held in Stellenbosch's satellite township, which is often seen as a “forbidden space for privileged students” (Stephanie). By inviting students to enter the township, the sessions therefore help to break the presuppositions that students have about Kayamandi in

general by creating a safe and inclusive space in the township. As Béata asserts: “For a town so stuck in its ways, stuck in a box, [InZync] forces us students to get out of that box.”

Furthermore, InZync is experienced as a space that is distinct from the rest of Stellenbosch. In this regard, Stephanie argues that she has experienced the university as an oppressive space which does not allow for the unencumbered expression of her identity. A similar sentiment is shared by Allison, who has experienced Stellenbosch as a space of exclusion:

In a space [...] like Stellenbosch, there’s no breathing space for people. At your lectures, at private space, at work, there’s little opportunity to express yourself, to be creative, to say whatever you want to say. But InZync is that space. And Stellenbosch needs that space. Because there’s a whole history of silencing people here.

Attempts at facilitating traffic between historically segregated Stellenbosch-spaces through InZync have not been met without difficulties. Whereas the sessions have been particularly successful in bringing university students from the centre of Stellenbosch to Kayamandi, “they have been less successful in attracting people from neighbouring Cloetesville [a coloured neighbourhood]” (Valley, 2014).

In contrast to the above descriptions of Stellenbosch, InZync is significant because it “allows for the presence of other cultures in [the same] space” (Ashanti). As Mbao points out, InZync shows how poetry can “[forge] connections that cut across the spatial and class differences of our country” (Mbao, 2014). InZync’s explicit foregrounding of multilingualism and intercultural encounters therefore distinguishes it from many other spaces in Stellenbosch.

The participants and their interactions

Apart from the location of the InZync sessions, Maria G identifies several other factors which contribute to the distinctiveness of the sessions: the kinds of people that come, the languages that they speak, their economic backgrounds and their cultural identities. Because of these various differences between participants at an InZync session, Maria G holds that there is no single marker of difference which characterises the participants. Rather, one could say that it is the multiple ways in which people are different – their differentness – which defines the participants. Lwamba echoes this when she states that “[one] cannot make any assumption about anyone that’s [at InZync]”.

Furthermore, the sessions are “intimate”, because of the short distance between audience and poets (Maria G). Lisa calls this an “ease of intimacy”, and the performance of poetry at InZync carries with it a distinctive immediacy which is the result of the co-presence of poets and audience (Lisa). The immersive character of the InZync system is highlighted by Maria G when she says that “everything that happens fills all the nooks and crannies of the space – it’s almost like you are sitting in the poetry during the performance”.

Relatedly, Wamuwi points out the dialogue which emerges between performance and audience. Elsewhere, Mbaio describes the relationship between performers and audience as “telepathic” (2014). Whereas poetry events are often characterised by a passive, quiet audience, the InZync audience “directly participates, not only through their applause but also in how they react to the things that are said” (Wamuwi). This dialogue is also described as a conversation, a back and forth and a call and response (Wamuwi), a dynamic that has already been identified as central to the discussion of InZync’s functioning as a complex system.

Agonism at InZync

An important characteristic of the system which kept on emerging throughout the interviews was the fact that differences of opinion are tolerated, that agonism is allowed, in the space. Here, a particular understanding of the term “agonism” is employed, as set out by Chantal Mouffe (2008). Mouffe (2008) suggests a reconceptualisation of the political public sphere where antagonism will always be present. Her conceptualisation of the political public sphere stands in opposition to both liberalist conceptions of the public sphere (which envisage that a rational consensus will ultimately emerge between differing parties) and pluralist conceptions of the public sphere (which envisage many perspectives that ultimately converge into a harmonious whole) (Mouffe, 2005). According to Mouffe, both these conceptions ignore the basic fact that antagonistic difference will always be present in the public sphere, because the essence of the political, to her, is the construction of a “we versus them” dichotomy (2005:2). If we accept Mouffe’s basic definition of the public sphere as a site of perpetual strife, we can also adopt her notion of the “agonistic” relationship between differing parties. The use of the term “agonistic” points to the fact that there might not exist any lasting rational solution to differences of opinion in the public sphere. In such a case, recognising the legitimacy of opposing views becomes crucial to the “agonistic” stance that Mouffe (2005) advocates.

The following examples from interviews help to clarify why the InZync system can rightfully be said to cultivate agonism. Referring to one of the performers she experienced, Maria F says the following: “I didn’t agree with what he was saying, but also you can feel free to say what you want to say, as long as you don’t hurt anybody”. At InZync, you are welcome to audibly disagree with something that is being said (Du Toit); sometimes the different viewpoints from different poets can be “quite clashing” (Stephanie); and there’s “no censor” at InZync (Ashanti).

The point made here is that everyone doesn’t always agree with each other and that this disagreement should be seen as a strength in a diverse community such as InZync. As David puts it:

To be offended or [...] challenged by a poem in the InZync context is not something where you need to assert your point of view, you have to think about it, contemplate it.

Relatedly, Lisa points to the politicisation of content at InZync over the years and how she has experienced this politicisation as a positive antidote to a town where “it’s not always safe to be angry” (Lisa). Here we see again how allowing agonism in the space enables a robust and inclusive system to emerge. Allowing “dissidence and dissonance” (Lisa) at InZync is therefore crucial to understanding InZync as an intercultural space. Lwamba makes a similar point when she says that “no one group owns the space. But at the same time it’s not like anyone is compromising – we can just call things as we see them”. This tolerance of dissidence means that people “accommodate each other” at InZync (Chrystal).

Poetic communication and the social importance of poetry

The following section summarises the interviewees’ understandings of the various functions that poetry can play in a societal context, with particular reference to the InZync sessions. Their responses reveal certain shared understandings of what poetry can do in the public sphere, understandings which have been sculpted by the interviewees’ participation in the InZync system. The following themes emerged in this regard: Poetry as shared message, poetry as form of expression, poetry as social commentary, poetry as self-reflection, poetry as parrhesia and poetry as cultivator of togetherness.

Firstly, poetry is seen as a “powerful medium for communication” (Ashanti). Aphelele underscores this understanding of poems as messages being passed from the poets to the audience: “We [the poets] come here to send a message and all the people [come] here to listen to the message.” The importance of

this sharing is explained by Maria G: “Sharing this energy and these ideas and stories about one [another] helps us to tell stories of people that don’t know [each other], that don’t meet often.” Here we see how InZync contributes to the knowledge that people have about each other, especially if they belong to social groups which, due to historical or contemporary reasons, do not often engage in each other’s personal narratives.

Secondly, poetry is understood as a unique form of expressing the self (Vusi; Vuyisa; Ulrike); poetry gives everyone a voice to tell their story (Chrystal; Aphelele). The singularity of perspective that a poet with a particular subjectivity brings to the sessions is also highlighted by the interviewees (Vuyisa; Nthateng) and is closely tied to the poet’s voice. By giving people a voice, poetry helps in the formation of agency and identity. Aphelele complicates our understanding of “voice” by insisting that poets do not simply express their own voices, but can also act as conduits in order to be “a voice of all the dead and living victims”. Poetry is therefore not only seen as a way to speak for the self, but also a way of speaking on behalf of others, especially those who are otherwise silenced or absent. Furthermore, poetry can be used to say things that people don’t often talk about (Sam). In this regard the ability of poetry to express that which is not being expressed elsewhere is emphasised by Vuyisa. For her, the purpose of poetry is “to tell what is not being told [...] for people to be aware of your stories – [...] it’s all about awareness”. Here Vuyisa explicitly links the performance of poetry to an increase in intersubjective awareness.

Thirdly, poetry also functions as social commentary. Vusi asserts that poetry is not only about poets and their expressions, but also about the society in which the poets find themselves: “Some people think that if you are a poet you do it because you love it, [but] it’s because you have to. We don’t do it for ourselves, but for society”. In fact, according to Allison, poets are seen as “social commentators of the world”:

We observe and because we observe intensely and honestly and deeply, we speak truth. And we need to be reminded as people all the time – it’s not just about race, it’s about all of us trying to understand all of it, [understanding] how to be human.

Poets are social commentators because they are able to use poetry to provide a different perspective on social issues “through the perspective of someone’s struggles” (Chrystal). According to Chrystal, poets are able to talk about these social issues in a way that draws the audience in and forces them to pay attention to the issues at hand in a way that is unique to poetry.

Fourthly, poetry also functions as a tool “that can allow people to self-reflect, especially if it’s activist poetry around sensitive issues” (Ashanti). In this regard, Lwamba describes InZync as a place of “thoughtful reflexivity”. Ashanti refers to a poem she performed about the differences between rough sex and rape as part of the ongoing “End Rape culture” protests that were happening around the country to explain poetry’s potential to act as self-reflective tool. For her, bringing these issues to light helps some people in the audience “to take a different viewpoint” and to see an issue such as rape in a new context (Ashanti). Poetry not only allows for self-reflection, but poetry events can also be read as reflections of society as a whole (Wamuwi). The poetry that is shared on a platform therefore reflects what is happening in the society within which the poetry event is held (Wamuwi).

Fifthly, poetry functions as parrhesia. Rivera, in following Foucault, identifies parrhesia as a particular form of “courageous truth telling” (2013:115) which characterises poetry events and which is intimately tied up with the identity formation of the performers and audience. From the interviews it transpired that parrhesia is also the mode through which poetry is shared at InZync. In this regard, Ulrike argues that the performance of poetry at InZync has a “rawness [...] authenticity [...] and honesty”. In a passage which reveals the possibility of parrhesia operating across and between different languages, Maria G remarks that “[t]he authenticity, the honesty and vulnerability is the language which the audience and performer understand”. Here, parrhesia is shown to be central to the mutual understanding that poetry at InZync enables.

Lastly, poetry is also understood by the interviewees as a cultivator of togetherness. For Adrian, performing poetry is about “letting people in”. This letting-in implies an “immense vulnerability” and is often accompanied by fear “because you are going to say the things you have written down to a room full of strangers, and then you’ll see what happens” (Adrian). Relatedly, Béata holds that listening to other people’s poetry provides “a glimpse into their life”. Throughout the interviews it repeatedly emerged that poetry has the potential of bringing people together (Maria G; Wamuwi), even if (and perhaps especially because) “there are so many problems and ideas about other cultures in South Africa with its painful history” (Maria F).

Maria G argues that it is not necessarily the political and critical nature of a lot of the poetry at InZync which has the biggest social impact – rather, it is the brute fact that InZync brings people together because they want to listen to poetry. Du Toit takes this train of thought further by insisting that people come because they want to listen to each other. Vuyisa echoes this statement:

“One thing that gathers people here is poetry. Everyone will be talking about poetry and nothing else.” It is in this respect that Maria G refers to the sessions as a “social lubricant” which “entices”, “invites” and “allows” people to come together for a singular, shared purpose. This leads Maria G to sum up what she sees as the real power of InZync:

You don’t need to come from a specific class because the sessions are free, it happens across multilingual platforms, it speaks to all kinds of sexual orientations and gender experiences. That’s the real power behind the sessions: Because of its multifarious nature it actually brings all these people together. And that’s the real impact that the sessions have, the intermingling of audience members [who are all] there for poetry.

InZync as a facilitator of learning

This section touches on some of the learnings that the InZync system has enabled for its participants. Firstly, learning about the importance of believing in one’s own writing was a recurring motif in my interviews with the INKredibles⁷ (Vuyisa; Vusi). For these young poets, this insight is closely linked to understanding the importance of self-belief when undertaking self-expressive activities like poetry (Vusi). Furthermore, the focus on multilingualism at the sessions have also taught various participants about the different traditions of poetry which exist in our country. In this regard, Adrian learnt about these different traditions and how they contribute to the different regional cultures by being exposed to a variety of poetic genres and forms.

For Maria F, InZync has taught her to accept difference and to understand difference better. Similarly, Ashanti has learnt the importance of accepting difference and acknowledging our common humanity. In a striking metaphor, Ulrike argues that the sessions help to make the walls that separate people from each other “more transparent”. Although these walls do not necessarily disappear, it is impossible not to acknowledge someone else’s humanity once you have seen it shared through poetry (Ulrike). The use of the wall metaphor is reminiscent of Alexander’s quote about the “prejudices, fears and anxieties” of South Africans which are like “walls of misunderstanding” which still exist between us and which need to be broken down (2003:108).

The recognition of sameness despite difference also stands out as something that Sam has learnt from the InZync sessions: “In poetry we are all the same [...] we understand the same language, the language of poetry.” Relatedly, Aphelele

7 Poets that form part of the fortnightly INKredible poetry workshops, facilitated by InZync.

holds that InZync has explicitly taught her about ubuntu, especially through the relations she has built with fellow young poets, “the Shonas (like Sam), the Xhosas (like me), the Sothos (like Nthateng)”. For Nthateng, InZync reminds us of our shared humanity despite the racial dichotomies with which we still live on a daily basis. Her insistence on the unifying possibilities of certain forms of intercultural expression reminds us that a space of togetherness beyond race might still be viable. In this regard, Allison similarly asserts:

InZync represents ubuntu in its fullest form, I feel. Because I am learning so much about myself through other people. We are reflections of each other. All our stories somehow, we can relate. And that is the beauty of it – I can’t grow on my own, I can’t be isolated, I need people, I need togetherness. [...] And poetry reminds us of that humanness, that energy that connects us.

Nthateng emphasises the knowledge-creation side of the poetry sessions when she affirms that InZync has helped her “to understand the social life of others, others’ livelihoods”. This understanding is cultivated through a focus on listening to others’ narratives. David picks up on this when he states that he has learnt “to listen in different ways” at InZync: “To literally shut up and listen to people, that [...] is a tool, that isn’t a South African lesson, or gendered or racial: it’s a human lesson” (David).

Lastly, there is also the skill of perspective-shifting, of imagining the other as self, which many participants identified as a crucial component of what they had learnt at InZync. For Sam, creating and sharing poetry taught him how “to be a person who has two perspectives: not only [his] own, but also what other people think”. Poetry thus has the ability to cultivate an understanding of the other in relation to one’s self. In this regard, Wamuwi holds that the InZync audience becomes immersed “into a whole set of viewpoints that are completely different to your own”. Adrian uses a similar metaphor when he says that at InZync the participants are continuously “getting angles of other’s people’s lives”. According to Wamuwi, InZync is a space “where no one’s particular cultural viewpoint dominates [and] where people are exposed to the experience of other viewpoints having as much legitimacy as their own”. It is this characteristic of InZync that is directly responsible for making it a transformative space, in Wamuwi’s opinion. These varied viewpoints help participants to provide perspectives on their own identities and the ways in which they make sense of the social fabric in which they are embedded (Adrian).

Identity formation at InZync

Throughout the interviews, the personal transformative potential of the sessions, specifically when it comes to identity development through performance, repeatedly emerged. In this vein, Aphelele affirms that attending the InZync sessions gave her the courage to take to the stage, to speak out about her sexuality and to be proud of her identity as a lesbian. Here we see how InZync has functioned as a platform for the performance of identity. The power that comes from performing identity and the concomitant responsibility that this entails for performers is summed up as follows by Aphelele:

InZync is giving me the power to be me, it's giving me the power to speak out, it's giving me the power to be the voice of the voiceless – the voice of all the victims. Because rape, I've been there, being lesbian, I've been there, tortured by my sisters and family issues, I've been there, depression, I've been there.

In this quote, we see how the voicing of the self entails the voicing of others, thereby affirming the mutually constitutive nature of identity formation that takes place in the InZync system between poets and audience. This understanding of identity echoes an ubuntu-centred worldview where you are who you are through others. InZync can therefore be read as an enactment of this interconnected constitution of identity. The performances act as showcases of various identities that, by virtue of being allowed to be performed, allow other participants to gain a better understanding of their own identities. This understanding takes place not only through identifying the similarities with those identities that you can personally associate with, but also by noting the differences between yourself and others.

Transformations at InZync as described by participants

For Mbao, the InZync sessions are “transformation made visible” (2014). This section attempts to understand how the InZync sessions help to visualise and perform sociocultural transformation. According to Maria G, everyone has an equal sense of belonging at InZync: because the sessions are free, there are no financial restrictions placed on who can attend the sessions. Furthermore, throughout the interviews it repeatedly emerged that people experience InZync as an inclusive space (Vuyisa; Stephanie). The transformative nature of the sessions is, at least partly, enabled by their location. As Maria G aptly observes: “The space [Amazink] is on the periphery of town and if you want to think of [Stellenbosch] as [a] centre of white privilege, [the sessions] take place on the margin, [meaning that] people are immediately forced to discomfort themselves”. The fact that InZync takes place on the margins means that the

dominant cultural narrative does not carry the same weight at Amazink as on the university campus in the centre of town. One might even speculate that the peripheral location enables transformative practices precisely because the hegemonic hold that Stellenbosch University has on cultural production is loosened in this space.

For Ashanti, InZync has contributed to the process of transformation through decolonisation simply because many of the “revolutionary minds on campus” often come to InZync, the critical thinkers and thought leaders who are, together with students all over the country, coordinating the call for decolonised and free education. In this regard InZync has served as a rallying point for these critical thinkers and a “welcoming space” where the social issues of the day are deliberated (Wamuwi). The importance of the kinds of conversations which take place between participants at InZync “about what they have witnessed and what they have experienced” during the break and after the session and the contribution of these conversations to transformation is also acknowledged by Wamuwi.

According to Wamuwi, there are crucial transformative moments at InZync where people are “made to experience what it is like to be on the outside of a cultural paradigm for a moment, or [...] made to experience someone else’s cultural paradigm as being not simply a marginal thing but something that has as much claim to the space that we live in as their own”. It is during these moments that InZync can most clearly be seen as having transformative effects.

Furthermore, people from different cultures feel acknowledged at the sessions since there is a conscious effort to invite poets that perform in different languages (Sam). The importance of this multilingualism should not be underestimated, especially within a Stellenbosch University context where debates about the language policy at the university have dominated university politics for years. According to Adrian, acknowledging people’s mother tongues and allowing them a space for expression has the following effect: “acknowledging someone’s language [is] an acknowledgement of existence”. Many of the participants pointed to the ways in which InZync plays with different languages and genres and how this contributes to transformation (Maria G, Wamuwi). As David asserts, InZync is seen as a vanguard intercultural event which shows us what Stellenbosch could be “in terms of accommodating [and] mixing language” (David). We will now turn to the question of language use at InZync because the mixing of languages, in my opinion, is one of the most important characteristics of the InZync system which enables transformation.

Encountering linguistic and cultural differences at InZync

David talks about the simultaneous understanding and non-understanding which is a defining characteristic of the InZync audience and a function of the multilingual nature of the sessions: “that [certain] people can understand what’s going on very clearly, and that [other] people can’t, at the same time – it’s weird. It’s kind of unsettling at first, but then you realise there are other ways to understand it”. Lwamba specifically enjoys poems in languages she cannot understand “because then [she has] to deal with the fact that there is a barrier, and [acknowledging] that is natural and okay and honest”. By not understanding, you are confronted “with your lack of knowledge about language and about the ways that language connects people” (Stephanie). Encountering performances in a language that you cannot understand therefore highlights the central role that language plays in creating exclusive and inclusive spaces.

This code-switching between different languages forces the audience to realise that “they are not the centre of attention, [that] they are not the centre of the place where they live” (David). This de-centring effect therefore helps audience members to broaden their perspectives on the kinds of people that live in Stellenbosch and the validity of the stories that they carry with them. It is this effect which leads David to state that InZync “doesn’t really have a centre”. Although the sessions are representative of Kayamandi, Stellenbosch and South Africa, they are centreless because there is no single cultural or linguistic viewpoint which dominates or excludes others (David). David also insists that non-understanding is an essential component of the transformative impact that the sessions have had on him: “it’s good to realise your own inabilities, to hear them, to feel that feeling you get when you are not privy to the conversation taking place. It is a powerful feeling”. This feeling is also described by Lisa as realising that “you are not the center of the universe – your experience is not the only one in the space”.

When a poet performs in a language she doesn’t understand, Maria G asserts that she is forced to switch to a different kind of register where she “listen[s] to sound effects, rhythm, or even just [looks at] body language”. These then become the ways in which she “reads” the performed poem. In this regard, she emphasises her continued ability (despite her linguistic handicap) to respond to the poem because she still “feels” it, because “there’s a bodily response to it”. Furthermore, Maria G also highlights the role of the audience’s reaction in guiding her own response to poems when they are performed in a language that she doesn’t understand.

Maria G describes how these differentiated responses from the audience also occur when people talk about social contexts that she might not be familiar with: “[S]omeone will do something which you don’t get because you don’t live what they are talking about, [b]ut other audience members around you do and then you’re like: ‘there are different people here and they relate and I don’t’ and [then you ask yourself] why.” Here we see how the audience’s response is crucial in connecting the responses of the audience members who feel they understand the social context that the poet is talking about with the audience members who might feel alienated by the described context. In this way, the latter’s understanding of the poem is enhanced through the observation of other audience members’ responses.

The audience’s understanding of the poems and lived realities to which the poets refer is something that, according to Maria G, continually “comes back and falls away” during the course of a session, depending on the extent to which one understands a poet’s language and social context. This means that an audience member “is distanced from certain audience members who collectively respond to what the [poet] says and vice versa” (Maria G). Here, Maria G touches on a central emergent characteristic of the InZync system which she describes as the “strange and constant links” among audience members and between audience members and poets. These shifting dynamics also reflect the tensions between racial, linguistic and cultural differences, between an “us” and a “them” that are alternately accentuated and erased from one moment to the next. Maria G succinctly describes this dynamic as one that pendulums between the understanding that “we are all human” and the understanding that “we are all different”: “there is a constant fluctuation between these [two]: [the differences] need to be addressed, and they need to be forgotten, and they need to be addressed, and they need to be forgotten”. This continual reminder and erasure of difference is therefore an emergent property of the InZync system and one which, in my opinion, centrally contributes to the sociocultural transformation that the InZync system enables.

Key learnings applicable to transformation at Stellenbosch University

This section will summarise some of the key learnings that emerged from the research and which may provide fruitful avenues for further investigation in terms of their potential to contribute to transformation in general and to transformation at Stellenbosch University in particular. Firstly, we have seen how using a system’s lens to explore social interactions helps us to

think through temporary sociocultural systems and how they function as potential vehicles of transformation. Applying the same lens to Stellenbosch University could open up new strategies to combat discrimination and affect transformation. Then, we need to understand that agonism is a defining feature of society and the university should cultivate the ability to hold differences rather than try to assimilate them, whether they be differences of opinion, culture, language or identity. Thirdly, pedagogically speaking, the university should consider how it can nourish students' voices and provide platforms for their expression as voice is central in creating a sense of social and personal identity. The value of parrhesia is important in this respect since courageous truth-telling, as we have seen in the discussion above, can break down the walls of misunderstanding which exist between people, provided it is accompanied by deep listening and thoughtful reflexivity. Creating more such frank listening spaces at the university can only benefit its project of transformation.

Fourthly, InZync represents one manifestation of the possibilities of interlingual/-cultural difference in producing transformative encounters through heightened interlingual/-cultural awareness. By experimenting with difference, going towards it rather than shying away from it, the university can affect transformation in ways that is not otherwise possible. Specifically, the importance of experiencing non-understanding in order to cultivate a sense of your own limitations seems to be a crucial component of such transformative encounters. Lastly, the dynamic interplay at the sessions between between unity and difference, understanding and non-understanding, is an interplay which the university would do well to emulate when approaching sociocultural transformation. In the words of Maria G: “[the differences] need to be addressed, and they need to be forgotten, and they need to be addressed, and they need to be forgotten”.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the contribution of the InZync poetry sessions to sociocultural transformation in Stellenbosch by discussing a context-specific understanding of transformation and complex systems, applying a complex systems-lens to the InZync poetry sessions, and elaborating on the findings from 20 semi-structured interviews to gain a multidimensional understanding of how participants have been transformed by the InZync system. Specifically, the significance of the location and its relation to other Stellenbosch spaces, the distinctiveness of the participants and their interactions, the agonism which the InZync system enables, participants' shared understandings of the social

importance of poetry, learning and identity formation and the encountering of linguistic and cultural differences were identified as the main characteristics of the sessions which have allowed them to act as a vehicle of sociocultural transformation. Lastly, we also looked at some key learnings from the research that are applicable to transformation within the project at Stellenbosch University. But we should not fool ourselves into thinking that the kind of sociocultural transformation that the InZync poetry sessions have enabled can single-handedly effect the multilevel transformations which South Africa's economic, political and social systems need to undergo before we can truly speak of a transformed South Africa. Rather, this chapter has tried to show how we can understand the singular contribution of intercultural poetry events such as InZync to the larger and ongoing process of deep transformation.

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Chapter 22

Transforming the Intellectual: Open Stellenbosch and the use of social media

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Student movements such as #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall and Open Stellenbosch (OS), as well as many other student collectives across the country, have in the past three years laboured to highlight the incongruence between the promises of transformation and the material realities at institutions. Drawing on students' experiences of higher education, student activists have raised concerns about how post-apartheid universities are implicated in promoting inequalities, notably in relation to race, gender, and class. The student protests, as well as the concerns of student activists which motivated these, have received considerable media coverage and arguably, policy makers, academics, journalists and lay-persons from various ideological standpoints have, at different moments, engaged the content of the concerns and issues raised by students over the past few years.¹

In this chapter, I engage with student activism in 2015 and 2016, what forms it took and its impact and influence on setting a new agenda and contributing to debates in and outside the university. In doing so, I define and characterise student activists as *intellectuals* identifying, reflecting, articulating and labouring to correct social injustices in their immediate student situation.

1 Aside from the widespread media coverage of student protests at various universities across the country since 2015, the FeesMustFall Commission, Council of Higher Education paper on these issues, the ANC and EFF stances, as well as the formation of solidarity movements outside of South Africa, are illustrative of this.

Thinking about the student activist as an intellectual necessarily requires a re-consideration of what constitutes an intellectual. This, I argue, entails conceptualising the student activist as a thinker, observer and meaning maker and a producer of knowledge who derives legitimacy, in part, as a voice for the voiceless. This stands in contrast to the intellectual who derives status from their seniority in the academic hierarchy as a paid ivory-tower scholar.

In addition to making a case for the student activist as an intellectual, I use this chapter as a provocation towards thinking about students more broadly, which contests assumptions of students as relatively passive, disinterested and incapable of critical thought. In practice, this may have implications for re-thinking the student-teacher relationship in ways that may transform teaching and learning in higher education.

In addressing the student activist as an intellectual I focus in particular on the student movement, Open Stellenbosch, which emerged at Stellenbosch University in early 2015, and the forms of knowledge production, dissemination, pedagogic and research strategies, advocated and exemplified by student activists attached to Open Stellenbosch. I explore how these participatory models of knowledge production, linked with student activism, were facilitated by the use of particular forms of social media.

Defining the Intellectual

The question of who is an intellectual and what being an intellectual entails, has been prevalent amongst scholars in the twentieth century. Feuer (1976), as well Huszar (1976), trace the origins of the debate and the changes in the definition and priorities of the intellectual in contemporary society. Although there are numerous and contested definitions, Gramsci's (1971:51) concept provides a useful starting point for characterising the intellectual in that for him "[all] men are intellectuals" by way of being able to think and reason. Gramsci proposes that although all human beings are intellectuals, he argues that it is "not all men [that] have in society the function of intellectuals" (ibid.). For Gramsci, 'intellectual' denotes a particular social function as opposed to an assessment of cognitive ability – a point he emphasises by noting that "non-intellectuals" do not exist (ibid.).

Furthermore, Gramsci argues that there are two types of intellectuals in this sense, namely traditional intellectuals and organic intellectuals. Traditional intellectuals are distinguished by their engagement in paid labour to produce

and distribute knowledge in society, and typically have monopoly in the knowledge economy (Gramsci, 1971; Said, 1994; Burawoy & Von Holdt, 2012). They are further characterised as engaging in repetitive work from generation to generation, preserving the status quo through ties with the dominant class, yet thinking themselves “autonomous and independent” (Gramsci, 1971:51). Said (1994:68) argues that traditional intellectuals today would be “managers, professors, journalists, computer or government experts, lobbyists, pundits, syndicated, columnists, consultants”, all of whom society grants legitimacy as authoritative voices in the production and dissemination of knowledge in its various forms.

Organic intellectuals, on the other hand, are organisers of the masses. The organic intellectual is a “constructor, organiser, and permanent persuader” of the working class; himself often having his origins in it (Bundy, 1987:307). Although they are thinkers, they differ from traditional intellectuals most strikingly in that they are typically not paid to perform this function. Instead, their efforts align with the interests of the dominated class through active political participation; an endeavour that not only places them outside of the institutions of traditional intellectuals but also renders them unpopular with the dominant class and its agents (Said, 1994). Burawoy and Von Holdt (2012) argue that organic intellectuals are figures that generate a form of collective consciousness through dialogue, often becoming figures that the masses rely on in times of national crisis. Said argues that the intellectual becomes a beacon of light and an oracle of answers in times of crisis.

Gramsci’s distinction is useful in defining the intellectual beyond the constraints of paid intellectual labour. By presenting the intellectual in terms of their social function and in relative terms, it becomes possible to imagine intellectuals outside of, and in contrast with, the academy. That is, the notion that all people are intellectuals, by way of reasoning and thinking ability, and that this status is a matter of social function, allows for an engagement with the idea of student activists, and perhaps students more generally, as intellectuals standing in different relation to the academy than ‘traditional intellectuals’.

Furthermore, for Edward Said, the modern-day intellectual is someone who ensures that equality and justice, as material goals and not only as political rhetoric, continue to be fought for (Said, 1994). Such an intellectual, according to Said, is actively engaged in changing the world she conceptualises and, as a consequence of this, brings a richer and more considered perspective on reality.

This characterisation of the intellectual echoes the sentiments of both Mills and Bourdieu who critique the deification of the intellectual as an ivory tower figure abstracted from the empirical world, making no attempt to translate his/her sociological understanding into political participation (Burawoy & Von Holdt, 2012:151-174).

A concern with achieving justice further necessitates that the intellectual be “of [his] time” (Said, 1994:21). That is, be in tune with the mass politics and realities of the present. In post-apartheid South Africa, reality is often fashioned by contradictions as experienced by black students, notably from township and rural areas. (For a graphic account of these contradictions and how students navigate these, see ‘Out of Sight: Beyond these walls, inside this machine’, Shabangu and Currie, Chapter 8 in this volume.) For many black working-class students, reality is characterised by hanging between two contradictory worlds as a consequence of being thrust into prestigious institutions such as Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town. Academic institutions such as these express a form of intellectual elitism that relies on a technical mastery of English, or Afrikaans in some spaces at SU, which creates a hostile environment towards newcomers, especially black workers and students. As a result, many students feel displaced by what they perceive as the extent of white culture in the institution. Differently put, the student fails to find herself reflected in the material composition of the space in any form. Nyamnjoh (2017:1) argues that this leaves the student “frustrated over not having room at the table”. That is to say, the black student although having attained ‘whiteness’ as it is embedded in “opportunities, set of competencies [...]”, still finds herself reminded that she is not in fact white and thus has no room at the *table* (ibid.). Such discrepancy and contradictions are observed and critically engaged by the student activist, possibly marking the shift from academic sociological understanding to political participation.

Nyamnjoh’s analysis of Chumani Maxwele’s act of throwing excrement at the Rhodes statue in 2015 at UCT provides a case in point (Nyamnjoh, 2015). As an act committed in a public space against a statue considered a symbol of white domination, therefore the embodiment of contradictions and injustices in higher education, Nyamnjoh argues that Maxwele placed the frustrations of many students like himself within a greater and broader debate about inequality in South Africa. The ‘poo throwing’ incident not only signalled the challenges faced by black students in higher education, it also juxtaposed the realities and living conditions of black students against those of white students, drawing attention to the striking difference between the two. Said’s assertion that the

intellectual is of his time illustrates a concern with rectifying the injustices evident in the present empirical world, thus positioning the student activist more clearly as an intellectual and political figure.

Intellectuals in the Internet age

With the advent of the Web in the 1990s, society could be viewed through different lenses as mechanisms for the communication of knowledge became less constrained by time and geography and less controlled by centralised authorities. Scholars praised the internet for its many-to-many communication potential that made available access to information about issues that concerned citizens both locally and globally. The subsequent development of interactive media was understood as the long-awaited solution to the problematic top-down structure of traditional media (Lovink, 2011). Participatory platforms such as blogs, social media applications and discussion forums emerged, allowing users with an internet connection a space in which their freedom of speech and freedom of participation could be exercised. The Web became a hub for activist-intellectuals to participate in knowledge production and dissemination.

South African students at Rhodes University in the early 2000s, for example, had already started demonstrating the usefulness of social media platforms as a protest space against dominant cultural practices.² Goga (2010) argues that the Rhodes University Student Discussion Forums, a social networking platform for students at the institution, emerged as a space through which black students reflected on their alienation from the drinking culture at the institution, an important symbolic marker of institutional identification and belonging. The discussion forum became a space in which many black students could contest and problematise the drinking culture that left them feeling “out of place”, an experience that was strikingly different from white students’ feelings of “[belonging] to something unique and untouchable” (Goga, 2010:47).

Furthermore, through the integration of content production and consumption of information, new media technologies have expanded the communication opportunities of the wider public (Steenkamp & Hyde-Clarke, 2012). Driven by a user-generated content model, social media allows users to partake in content production and reach beyond their immediate and internal networks with incredible ease and speed. Lovink (2011:158) notes that interactive media has effectively provided a space to “[mobilise] and [accelerate] awareness of issues”

² Rhodes University is also referred to as the ‘University Currently Known as Rhodes’.

beyond the physical reach of users. The incredible speed and far reach of news about #RhodesMustFall and the call for removal of the Cecil Rhodes statue is illustrative of this assertion.³

News of protests for the ‘falling’ of the statue circulated quickly and across a much greater terrain because of social media. The result was a wave of support, laying the foundation for decolonisation movements and related conversation at various institutions around the globe (Magubane, 2016). Similarly, in 2014 news of the shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed African American teenager, spread all over the world within hours of his shooting as a result of Twitter (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015). In 2011, social media was also central in mobilising support for the anti-government protests in the Middle East, commonly known as the Arab Spring. Not only did it serve as a communication tool between protestors on the ground and supporters around the world, it also became a space for narratives of protestors and citizens to be told in “ways that inspired dissidents to organize protests, criticize their governments, and spread ideas about democracy” (Howard, Duffy, Freelon, Hussain, Mari & Maziad, 2011:2).

The production of public opinion,⁴ therefore, can no longer be thought of as limited to journalists and academics. In the age of social media, what is considered worthy to be on the public agenda is no longer limited to the imaginings of a Member of Parliament, political party representative or any traditional intellectual in Said’s sense. New media technologies have become a channel for the production and transmission of ideas, opinions and ideologies by people outside of these traditional formations. It is this very nature of the interactive Web that permits a consideration of the intellectual-activist as an intellectual-thinker more concretely.

Open Stellenbosch and the use of social media

In 2015/2016, the user-dependent many-to-many nature of social media rendered the technology most appealing to student movements such as Open Stellenbosch. In this movement, the Media & Communication working group

3 The #RhodesMustFall campaign captured national and international attention, inspiring a similar movement at Oxford University. In 2017, the movement had 17 883 followers on Facebook alone (#RMF, 2015).

4 Bourdieu’s ‘Public opinion does not exist’ (1979) piece suggests that what is concealed as public opinion is in fact an expression of particular political interests, making such polls a form of political action. He argues that opinion polls, used as a basis for claiming public opinion, are on the contrary bias formulations that represent the work conditions of those who formulate and produce such questionnaires, as well as those who can pay for such polls to be conducted.

ran the online space on a voluntary basis and managed all internal and external communication (Field notes [2015] for Mpatlanyane, 2018). Although the working group had this responsibility, all decisions regarding any external communication to the press or directly to the public via social media, had to be voted on by the collective before being operationalised by the working group.⁵ Open Stellenbosch notably used social media to articulate the movement's views in three primary ways, namely through event notices, secondly, allegiance posts and thirdly, in blatant statements of policy, views and stance.

The first type of post, event posts, typically alerted users of an event that the movement was hosting. Events posted were hosted by the movement itself or by a party that the movement considered noteworthy in that it aligned with OS values. Able to be viewed by anyone who visited the Open Stellenbosch page on Facebook, these posts generally provided information on the time, date and venue for the concerned event – a function that traditional media shares with social media (Steenkamp & Hyde-Clarke, 2012).

What is worth noting here is that the nature and content of the events posted alerted users about the interests of the movement, giving insight into its stance and ideological position. Consider, for example, the *End Rape Culture* post below.



Figure 22.1 End Rape Culture event post (OS, 2016a)

5 OS members could sign up for a working group of their choice on Facebook and Twitter. There were mainly six working groups: (1) arts and culture which focused on organising events that showcased Afrocentric art and cultures; (2) media and communication which handled press statements and all forms of communication with the external world; (3) intersectional feminist of OS (IFOS) which aimed to create a safe space for women and non-binary people; (4) patriarchal remediation which aimed to educate men about patriarchy; (5) research group which compiled the documentation and facts for the movement; and (6) wellness which was set up to deal with the physiological and psychological well-being of activists (Field notes [2015] for Mpatlanyane, 2018).

In 2016, OS put up an event post for a march against rape culture at Stellenbosch University. The post effectively indicated the prevalence of rape culture at the institution, and the movement's position on the matter. The event title "[but] one rape isn't rape culture" acted as a provocation against hegemonic beliefs about what rape culture was (OS, 2016a).

Similarly, the event post on *Ipotsoyi*, featured below, illustrated Open Stellenbosch's efforts to represent the interests of black students on campus.



Figure 22.2 Ipotsoyi Party event post (OS, 2016b)

Ipotsoyi, a social event organised with the intention of challenging the social norms of the annual institutional orientation week, was in line with OS's mandate to create spaces on campus in which black people could "breathe". The use of the vernacular was particularly telling in that the intended audience was scripted in the lack of an English and/or Afrikaans translation for the title, thus illustrating the movement's political position.

The second type of post was that of allegiance with other movements and parties. It was not uncommon to see on the Open Stellenbosch Facebook page a post inviting members and supporters of the movement to events hosted by or in favour of "allies" of OS. Likewise, it was not uncommon to see messages of solidarity with other movements at different institutions of higher learning around the country. Often these messages were accompanied by the hash (#) prefix – a punctuation mark associated with another social media forum, Twitter. These statements of solidarity often outlined the particular issue with

which the movement was in solidarity, the reasons behind the stance, and finally a sign-off signalled by the hash symbol summarising the concern or naming the organisation being supported.

The public declaration of solidarity, both explicitly and implicitly, expressed the concerns of the movement in the same way that event posts did. Solidarity messages could also be read as Open Stellenbosch's comments on a particular social issue, effectively publicising the movement's position on an issue by drawing attention to the particular cause. An example of this was the statement of solidarity with learners at Pretoria Girls' High in response to reports over the threatened suspension of black learners for wearing their natural Afro hair and also for speaking in their vernacular language during lunchbreaks.

Open Stellenbosch not only responded in support of the protest action at Pretoria Girls' High, as indicated in the post below, but raised questions about the racialisation of discipline through monitoring the appearance of black girls in prestigious racially mixed schools like Pretoria Girls' High.



Figure 22.3 Solidarity post to students at Pretoria Girls' High School, RSA (OS, 2016c)

Lovink (2011:51) notes that “[not] everyone can participate in every conversation. Not everyone gets to be heard. Some core group seems more connected than the rest of us”. Recognising its ability to draw public attention to particular issues, through the posting of events and showing solidarity, Open Stellenbosch drew attention to issues that might have been perceived as falling outside of their immediate university space but through which they forged communities through collective and high-profile messages of support on social media.

Official statements were the third way through which OS made explicit the movement's standpoint on issues. These were in the form of attachment

content as well as typed posts.⁶ In some instances, these posts were presented as press statements, while in other instances they were presented as responses to issues or events arising elsewhere. An example of such a statement was the movement's first post which served as the founding statement of the movement (OS, 2015a).

In addition to being a forum for the collective to literally write what they liked, social media was similarly used by individuals for information sharing and opinion exchanging. While responses to posts and comments were seldom entertained by the activist movement itself, Facebook still facilitated lively discussions amongst users themselves, thus putting the interactive feature in motion. Posts by Open Stellenbosch often had lengthy threads of comments in response. Aside from the request to write one's opinion in the status prompt, participation in a discussion was made possible by the comment function that allows users to respond to a post by someone else. On Twitter, users could contribute to a discussion by posting their view in the prompt box followed by a hashtag of the topic to which one wished to contribute. The hashtag – as in #StopRacismAtPretoriaGirlsHigh – is a convention used to add context to published tweets by categorising messages and highlighting topics that refer to the same or similar content (Yang, Sun, Zhang & Mei, 2012). This function allowed the categorical archiving of data on the forum, thereby allowing users to retrieve stored data about any topic by using an online search function. These interactive functions allowed users to exchange views and deliberate on issues – a feature that could be regarded as a sign of political participation (Steenkamp & Hyde-Clarke, 2012).

#Luister: a dynamic mode of activism

Much like the status updates and images posted on the Facebook page of student movements, visual material, in particular videos, have become a powerful way to protest and circulate original content and ideological stance, as illustrated by the online Open Stellenbosch documentary titled #Luister.

The video, published on YouTube, shows 32 students and a lecturer articulating the experiences of black students at the institution. In the video, students relay their experiences of being excluded from bars, clubs and other social settings on the basis of being black, with one student stating that he was once called

6 'Attachment content' is a term I use to refer to any additional content attached to a post that is not the general message typed into the text-box provided by the Facebook platform. Such content can be digital posters, digital photographs, digital graphics, short video clips, as well as embedded hyperlinks.

“kaffir”⁷ at a bar (Contraband Cape Town, 2015). Moreover, the video articulates the debates around ‘belonging’ as articulated through language use in the classroom setting. Students claimed that many black students were forced to leave the university because they could not take the “courses they need, because they cannot understand a word of what they are being taught” (ibid.). Nationally the video received over 200 000 views on YouTube, another interactive platform for sharing videos, and was the most popular topic on social media for over two weeks after its release in August 2015 (Nicolson, 2015). The publication of a video narrating the experiences of black students at the institution proved to be a powerful protest strategy and effective avenue for publicly articulating the issues plaguing black students in higher education.

It would be naïve to suggest that documentaries and biographical motion pictures have not, in the past and present, been used to communicate and mobilise against social injustices. It would be equally inaccurate to suggest that protest action has never been captured in motion pictures. However, I am suggesting that the power of this narrative lies not only in its immortalisation through the capturing thereof on camera, but in that it was a project authored by the protagonists themselves. Unlike pictures and videos of protest action captured by mainstream journalists as is common practice, #Luister provided a forum for black student activists to articulate how they saw themselves in the space.⁸ There was an element of ownership and active participation in content production. The activists were able to tell their own stories, on their own terms, and through their medium of choice. Like the status updates stating the stance and ideology of the movement, the OS #Luister video served to raise awareness around the issues facing black students on campus. Moreover, through the use of social media, the movement was able to direct attention towards the viewing of the video.

Open Stellenbosch drew on the ‘Luister’ video as a catalyst to promote critical self-reflection and discussion by students and others in and outside the university. For example, in response to the ‘Luister’ documentary one person commented on how her experiences of classes that she attended resonated with the sense of alienation conveyed by some of the students in the video because of her difficulty with Afrikaans. Yet Afrikaans was her first language,

7 ‘Kaffir’ is a racial slur, popularly used in South Africa to refer to a black African, although it has Arabic origins (Merriam-Webster [Online], n.d.).

8 Although I recognise that the technical production team, Contraband Cape Town, is predominantly white, what I am labouring to illustrate here is that ‘Luister’ was a collective of narratives told by and authored by black students themselves. They told their stories as themselves, they produced the content and they published it on their own terms.

but she was a person of colour whose Afrikaans was quite different from the version communicated in academia at Stellenbosch. In her own words the student commented:

The SAD reality AND IRONY of Stellenbosch University is that me as a person of colour with Afrikaans as MY FIRST LANGUAGE felt so ALIENATED AND IGNORANT, that it felt like I was being taught in A EUROPEAN LANGUAGE. I ended up doing most of my course work in English which is sad cause you think the university is in your alleged 'home language' until you realise that the Afrikaans they speak WAS NEVER YOUR AFRIKAANS and that AFRIKANER CULTURE CAN NEVER BE YOU. i CAN ONLY imagine how it is for those who dont have Afrikaans as home language [sic]. (OS, 2015b)

Another comment was less sympathetic with the 'Luister' video, stating that the claims made by black students were misguided and were:

[fabrications] people use to advance their interests when they are stricken by the shock that other people don't care for them in the big real world. (OS, 2015c)

A 32-comment thread on the 'Luister' video indicated a variety and polarity in opinions and views. Users replied to each other's claims and cross-examined the claims presented as facts. Lovink (2011) accounts for this phenomenon by stating that debates cluster around a few issues and on longer-running threads, therefore generating interest and faster turnover of posts, which in turn incline others to leave comments as well. Social media forums such as Facebook allow for the representation and exchange of opinions not only from comments to the initial person who submitted the post, but also allow deliberations between commenters themselves. Such exchanges between users may be indicative of new forms of political participation and democratic practices that are emerging – a sign of political sympathy as suggested by some scholars (Bosch, 2017; Steenkamp & Hyde-Clarke, 2012; Mbenga, 2012).

The use of videos as a strategy of protest goes beyond formalised videos like #Luister. The intentional capturing and publishing of confrontations between activists and law enforcement by students themselves via video recording is rampant. More so is the rate at which the videos circulate on social media. In 2016, a video of private security officers forcefully handling activists during the #FeesMustFall protests was widely circulated on social media (ENCA News, 2016). The incident, like many similar occurrences around the country, showcased the violent conflict and altercations between student activists and private security on campus. Supporters and activists demonised security officers, effectively portraying the student activists as heroes suffering at the hands of agents of an unjust system (Field notes [2015] for Mpatlanyane, 2018; FMF2.0, 2016).

Vividly and visually, students were able to demonstrate the failures of the institution and university management to protect and prioritise the student body. Like #Luister, videos of this nature captured the attention of media houses, politicians and celebrities, as well as members of the general public. As a protest strategy, video capturing and sharing in the age of social media presented an opportunity to communicate experiences as they happened to a larger group of people, thereby drawing attention to issues at hand as illustrated by OS's #Luister. More than this, the wide circulation of such material, and the public figures it drew, suggest that perhaps students as authors and content producers started to gain legitimacy as credible thinkers and knowledge producers.

New media, new activists, and the question of the intellectual

Being able to articulate themselves on their own terms, Open Stellenbosch demonstrated ownership over their material. Content, as it appeared on the online space, challenged the monopolisation of knowledge by “traditional intellectuals”. This observation ought to be considered carefully as one might fall into the trap that Bourdieu cautions against – that of making scientific what is common sense and opinion (Burawoy & Von Holdt, 2012:161). With this caution in mind, Open Stellenbosch's systemic manner of articulating and deciding what goes online suggests an endeavour that is beyond common sense and mere opinion. The fact that the movement had both a research and a media team responsible for the production of the movement's content, suggested a seriousness that is attributed to scientific work.

Related to the issue of knowledge as a scientific product, is that of audience. Every intellectual, as a political figure and philosopher, requires an audience to which she will present her ideas and views. Gramsci's organic intellectual persuades her audience in her favour. In the case of Open Stellenbosch, two audiences require persuasion. The first is institutional management as a representative of the institution's decision-making bodies. The second audience is the body of students and staff at the university whose support is necessary to make strong and broad demands on the first audience. In some instances, members of the broader public, such as potential financial sponsors, legal advisors and parents supplement the latter. Each of these audiences needs to be addressed in particular ways. Institutional management, as traditional intellectuals, is the group that most probably requires systemic representations of student grievances and assertions. In effect, this means that the movement's research and its communications team, were required to align

their articulations in ways that resemble the scientific endeavour suggested by Bourdieu. The facts and figures, research informed, and logical arguments evident in the movement's documents, exemplified in the revised language policy and formal press releases, illustrate this. Additionally, this audience required Open Stellenbosch members to attend lengthy strategy meetings and discussions, as well as present well-articulated and comprehensive lists of demands. As such, this audience may have forced a more overt shift from opinion and common science, into a more scientific, logical representation of the movement and its cause.

Fellow students and some members of staff required a different approach. One of the ways in which this audience could be reached and persuaded was through discussions and posts on social media, in addition to public protest demonstrations.⁹ Social media enabled the movement to represent itself in creative, relatable and accessible ways as demonstrated by the #Luister video and creative hashtags. As such, the use of social media became a political act. The shift in medium of articulation did not inevitably illustrate a decline in conceptualisation or intellectual prowess. In fact, it illustrated the movement's understanding of its audience, what needed to be said, how it would be best said, and how this content would be best circulated. In effect, the use of social media by Open Stellenbosch illustrates that knowledge does not stand on its own but is used, and has to be used, in a manner that is consistent with the audience it is intended for. In the case of an activist movement such as OS, succinct rapid messages are a necessity. The representations of the intellectual, therefore, are distinguished by speed, succinctness, sharpness and multidimensionality.

Social media may have created a space in which political debate and discussions take place. However, it does not inevitably become a space in which all voices are heard, responded to and attended to. OS ceased responding to comments on social media, leaving commenters to debate amongst themselves. By so doing, Open Stellenbosch illustrated the limitations of social media as a new avenue for political participation. This illustrated that the intellectual's audience is created and shaped; it is not an inevitable consequence of a many-to-many function of the Web 2.0. With that said, it cannot be denied that social media has increasingly become a force that sways political agenda and mainstream media, as observed by Bosch (2017).

9 I recognise that the content and form of the information required to persuade either one of the audience groups are neither fixed, static nor invariably confirmative to the distinctions I have made.

Open Stellenbosch recognised the power it had to draw mainstream media attention to the issues it needed publicised. Used in this way, social media became an avenue to legitimise activists as authoritative figures and knowledge producers. However, this was not without contestation. Although social media has reasonably weakened the traditional intellectual's monopoly over the knowledge economy, it was not uncommon for 'experts' and 'professors' to be interviewed or requested to verify what students had articulated. Television news shows and newspapers still required 'expert' opinion on issues raised by students. On social media, this behaviour was replicated by the 'share' or 're-tweet' functions. In order for a story to get maximum exposure and legitimacy, certain figures of authority, many "traditional intellectuals" themselves, were required to endorse the claims made by 'sharing' or 're-tweeting' a statement.

The power dynamics at play illustrate that social media does not exist in a vacuum. The platform exists within a complex system of existing social relations. That is, it functions within a space of biases and contradiction, dominators and dominated – a space in which some have more voice than others, and more authority than others. In the offline space, one may argue that the fact that it took movements at historically white and financially well-off institutions to speak about fees, even though the issue had been raised as a serious concern for years at historically black universities, for example, is already telling of these contradictions. In the online space, to assume that the Web 2.0 was rolled out in a vacuum would be misguided. Instead, both the Web and internet culture needed to be understood within the context in which they existed, that being, "caught between self-referentiality and [existing] institutional arrangements" (Lovink, 2011:3).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I considered the student activist as an intellectual at a moment in which social media had created new possibilities for producing and sharing knowledge in society and for democratising relations by enabling many more people to participate in its authorship. Drawing on Gramsci's definition of the organic intellectual, as well as Said's characterisation of the intellectual in contemporary society, I have argued that contemporary student activists involved in movements like Open Stellenbosch are intellectuals on the basis of being political actors, knowledge producers and disseminators.

Furthermore, as a thinker, persuader, and political actor immersed in the world and interests of the subaltern, the student activist not only articulated the issues in higher education, but further laboured to ensure equality and justice, thus demonstrating political prowess and synchronicity with the mass politics of the present moment.

In the age of social media, student activists publicly position themselves as intellectuals. Social media has expanded the communication opportunities of movements such that they can partake in content production and reach beyond their immediate and internal networks at a rapid pace. The notion that production and dissemination of knowledge can only be attributed to the traditional intellectual is therefore contested. Open Stellenbosch and its use of social media is a case in point. Not neglecting that social media emerges in a context in which authority and power are contested, the student protest movements reached thousands of people and informed political agendas and mainstream news. In effect, this suggests a weakening of the monopoly traditional intellectuals have on knowledge production and dissemination. More than this, the notion that only employed scholars have the capacity to observe, reflect and create meaning in the world is challenged.

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7

SECTION

The Politics of Language
and Transformation

Chapter 23

Whiteness, Afrikaans Language Politics and Higher Education Transformation at Stellenbosch University

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Introduction

The effect of prioritising Afrikaans in tertiary education over access for black students needing to study in English was core to the struggle for transformation at Stellenbosch University (SU) between 2002 and 2017. Attempts of successive managements to open the university to black students by increasing tuition in English led to a spiralling *taaldebat* (language debate) expressing the anxiety and anger of white Afrikaans-speakers. In 2016 the black-led student movement Open Stellenbosch forced a breakthrough, moving the focus on the right to language identity to the right to access. In the period framed by the shift from identity to access, the university moved from protecting the privileged position of Afrikaans to an 'inclusive multilingual' approach with equal status for Afrikaans and English, effectively diminishing the dominance of Afrikaans. In this chapter, we investigate the relation between Afrikaans language politics and whiteness in the transformation of SU. We see whiteness as the assumed dominant position of the standards and culture of whites that disempowers people of colour.

Both English and Afrikaans have carried the privileges and burdens of whiteness since colonialism in the sense that these main languages of South African whites were privileged in higher education. Reflecting the close connection between whiteness and Afrikaans, SU was established in 1918 by Afrikaners

(white Afrikaans-speakers) with the expressed intention to provide tertiary education in Dutch (later Afrikaans). The feeling of responsibility for honouring the wishes of SU's benefactors was often used to motivate why the university should remain Afrikaans, even in the new South Africa. As one university administrator put it:

Jannie Marais gave a little fortune to create a place where this language could be secured. It is dishonest to now say it does not matter what he donated his money for.

US became tied to the nationalistic and 'white race'-based Afrikaner project, increasingly used Afrikaans for tuition and was known to be a *volksuniversiteit* (people's university) in the apartheid years. By the 1970s, however, the first black students were allowed to register at the university, a sign of things to come. In the post-1994 democratic South Africa the challenge for SU was to weigh up former policies and practices that upheld white exclusivity against the demands of the constitutional principle of equality.

We look at discourse, policy-making and protest in the intersection of language rights and rights to higher education at SU before Open Stellenbosch fundamentally changed the situation. Our aim is to explore how the deep investment in Afrikaans at SU articulated with transformation and whiteness. We investigated views of alumni, staff, management and students through an analysis of contestations around Afrikaans and transformation. Our research made use of literature and ethnographic fieldwork, building on earlier work (Van der Waal, 2002, 2008, 2012). We conducted 18 semi-structured interviews in 2013 with selected staff and students, including managers, administrators, individual members of the SRC, academics and others through 'snowball sampling'.

Transformation of the South African higher education system

Post-apartheid higher education inherited a highly segregated and unequal sector. Velile Notshulwana (2011) defines transformation of higher education as a process that changes institutional culture by altering underlying beliefs and values. It refers to meaningful changes in academic, economic, demographic, political and cultural domains of institutional life. This definition emphasises transformation as an intentional, enabling process that occurs over time, fundamentally changes identity and affects the whole institution (DoE [Department of Education], 2008; Kezar & Eckel, 2002). The chosen language of tuition could be considered an integral part of this process.

No special status could be negotiated for Afrikaans in 1994 and it was clear that the *de facto* strong position of English in public life would become even more important as a new black elite, educated in English, moved into political and economic power (Giliomee, 2009a:638–644; Nash, 2000). After 1994, black speakers of Afrikaans were included in cultural organisations promoting Afrikaans and the re-standardisation of Afrikaans towards inclusivity of Kaaps, spoken by the majority of its speakers (Webb & Kriel, 2000:43). The new political situation undermined ethno-nationalism and the symbolic position of Afrikaans as the main ethno-nationalist marker of Afrikaners. This change manifested in the difference between an older generation holding protectively onto previous symbols and a younger generation growing up without social structures controlling the boundaries of Afrikaans (Davies, 2009:107). However, the new minority status of Afrikaans did trigger a return of linguistic nationalism. Given the new pressures and the lack of political mechanisms, a new Afrikaans movement attempted to present itself as more inclusive, hiding its residual ethno-nationalist and whiteness dimensions (Kriel, 2003:167). The continuities of the ideology and practices of whiteness were evident in the discourse on Afrikaans in higher education.

By the late 1990s, it was clear that a number of factors worked against the maintenance of Afrikaans as a dominant language of instruction in former Afrikaans-medium higher education institutions. One was the need to address the issue of access, based on the constitutional values of non-racialism and equality. Another was the limited number of Afrikaans-speaking students willing to be mobilised for ethno-nationalism. The English–Afrikaans bilingualism among white students was a limited form of cultural capital working in the favour of English. For black South Africans, Afrikaans had less attraction as a higher education language as it gave only limited opportunities in the world of education and work. Furthermore, the academic development of African languages, or even the idea of multilingualism (despite its pedagogical merits) were not broadly supported in the new South Africa (De Kadt, 2006:52; DoE, 2008:17). University managements at the former Afrikaans universities were caught between demands of white conservatives who desired a strong place for Afrikaans, and the expectations of transformation (implying improved access for black students) from the side of the national government. It was clear that ‘race’ and language were to be core issues in the transformation debates in higher education, as several universities had been established on the basis of the link between white forms of ethno-nationalism and Afrikaans (Mwaniki, 2012:222).

In 2002, the government decided that, while it was in favour of retaining Afrikaans for teaching, higher education institutions would no longer be allowed to teach only in Afrikaans. Neither would the task of promoting Afrikaans be assigned to two universities only, since the idea of Afrikaans universities was irreconcilable with the transformation of higher education (Leibowitz and Van Deventer, 2007:90). This was followed by the strengthening of parallel-medium teaching at former Afrikaans-medium universities. A social justice argument underlies the broadening of access through the use of language in higher education. Mariana Kriel mentions that a defence for an Afrikaans-only institution comes down to denying others the right to education (2003:168). Mwaniki argues that “language perpetuates a system of injustice in South Africa’s higher education” (2012:214) and indicates that “language rights as currently entrenched in South Africa’s higher education are apparently designed to protect Afrikaans and in the process bestow competitive advantages on Afrikaans-speaking students, with concomitant social and economic benefits” (2012:215). Leibowitz and Van Deventer (2007:89, 105) convincingly argue that the right to participate in public life (including higher education) is higher than the right to the recognition of identity.

A Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions reported on the nature and extent of racial discrimination (DoE, 2008, known as the Soudien Report). Language was identified as a critical element of transformation, with multilingualism and the development of African languages into academic languages as a core aim of transformation. The report made clear reference to identity and language as custodians of a hegemonic order. This was demonstrated in the covert discrimination experienced by black students and staff in the use of specific forms of language, aggravated by an insensitive institutional culture that took ‘white’ experiences as a given, and insensitive knowledge dissemination with regard to engaging with Africa. The report made several recommendations regarding governance, accommodation, orientation practices and language policies (DoE, 2008; Oloyede, 2009). It remarked that “...students that are not first language-speakers of English continue to face challenges” and “the implementation approach to the parallel-medium language policies that are in place in a number of historically Afrikaans-medium institutions discriminated against black students” (2008:16). We heard this sentiment in a remark by a black student about parallel-medium teaching at Stellenbosch:

There are parallel streams in first year and then in the second year it is all in Afrikaans. It is very difficult to understand academic Afrikaans. If I didn’t have a strong work ethic, I would not have made it. I ended up ditching some of the lectures.

The clear references to the discriminatory nature of language policies at historically Afrikaans-medium institutions in the Soudien report increased governmental pressure on SU to deliver on its transformational promises in its policy documents as a matter of urgency. Legal advice to the university indicated that a language policy that was a barrier in terms of access and success would not withstand constitutional scrutiny (DoE, 2008:100). The report also referred to the contestation between internal and external constituencies and identified the “ghost of the alumni” as wandering across Afrikaans-medium higher education institutions as manifested in claims about the ownership of these institutions (DoE, 2008:98, 106).

In the period post-1994, broad consensus was reached in higher education that the ‘additive multilingual paradigm’ would be best suited as a basis for language policies. However, a huge gap remained between the policies that were developed and the practical situations that tended to perpetuate systems of linguistic inequalities, with English, and to some extent Afrikaans, dominating the institutions of higher learning. Derek Greenfield (2010) used a critical linguistics and ethnographic approach for analysing discourse about languages in higher education to investigate what lay beneath the unquestioned frameworks of language in higher education. What he found was that black students were, for obvious economic reasons, resigned to the dominance of English, but were also positive about the use of their vernacular in situations of learning. He therefore emphasised the need for translanguaging and incremental bilingualism in education, as already practised by students in informal contexts. The emphasis on the use of vernacular languages linked to educational needs differs from a whiteness-driven emphasis on preserving Afrikaans as an exclusive language of teaching.

Whiteness in the language debate at SU

The support of struggle activist and Afrikaans poet Breyten Breytenbach to the renewed language activism for Afrikaans after 1999 gave it some legitimacy. Aptly called the “new politics of Afrikaans” (Nash, 2000), this politics seemed to seek a future for Afrikaans separate from racial domination and Afrikaner nationalist politics. A white manager at the university reflected:

I honestly thought after Mandela’s speech when he was awarded a doctorate at Stellenbosch University, that suddenly I can go and work at a place that promotes Afrikaans again. We are now free. There is a place for Afrikaans as a public language ... I really believed that Stellenbosch could be an island where Afrikaans as academic language could continue to exist and positively contribute to the new South Africa.

This ambition was strengthened by the acknowledgement of Afrikaans tuition at SU by the first two presidents of the democratic South Africa. However, as Andrew Nash (2000) points out, the new activism for Afrikaans did not succeed in demonstrating solidarity with the majority of the population. The aim of this movement was to preserve Afrikaans for 'higher functions' and to strategically unite those who spoke Afrikaans into an 'inclusive speech community' (Webb, 2010:107, 108). The public discourse of *die taaldebat* remained mainly a white elite affair (Alant, 2006). While support for Afrikaans is not equal to ethnic mobilisation (Blaser, 2007:136), the mobilisation of white Afrikaners around Afrikaans retained elements of white ethno-nationalism, expressed in essentialist notions of language and identity. The drive for the protection of Afrikaans also attracted extremely conservative Afrikaner voices, e.g. that of author-activist Dan Roodt and his movement PRAAG (*Pro-Afrikaanse Aksiegroep*, Pro-Afrikaans Action Group) (Jansen van Rensburg, 2003).

The Vice-Chancellor of SU from 2002 to 2007, Chris Brink, promoted the idea that the university should be less exclusive, in line with government policy on access for all. He indicated the dangers of an Afrikaans university remaining white and isolated in the international world (Scholtz & Scholtz, 2008:305). In the language policy and plan that was accepted in 2002 under his leadership, three language options were specified, with Afrikaans-medium, as the 'default language' option. The other two options, strategically introduced to enable a more diverse student and staff body, were English-medium and dual-medium. Brink argued for less emphasis on ethnic identity politics around Afrikaans and the need to promote English next to Afrikaans. Moreover, he promoted the idea of 'transformation through Afrikaans' to overcome the former exclusion of black Afrikaans-speakers. The university started to invest heavily in bursaries for attracting black Afrikaans-speaking students, but it soon became clear that this source of students was limited (Daniels & Damons, 2011:150).

The activists for Afrikaans accused Brink of undermining the position of Afrikaans and promised that the language struggle would become bitter. They called for an Afrikaans-supporting language policy and 'auditing' the amount of Afrikaans in dual-medium teaching. The pressure on those seen as guilty of selling out Afrikaans culminated in the departure of Brink in 2007. His successor, Russel Botman, focused on reconciling the factions in the university community and made assurances about the continued salience of teaching in Afrikaans, while moving the transformation process forward towards greater inclusivity. In 2007, the language policy and language plan were revised again, with a stronger emphasis on multilingualism intended to allow undergraduates

to study in the language of their choice (Afrikaans or English), with exposure to the other language.

Meanwhile, in a survey done by the university's Centre for Teaching and Learning among third-year students in 2006, it emerged that the majority of white and 'coloured' students were strongly in favour of maintaining Afrikaans, while staff were more open to a policy of language accommodation. The views of students often reflected an exclusive attitude to the university and a feeling that Afrikaans culture and language were threatened, while expecting other students to 'fit in' with the white Afrikaans majority (Leibowitz & Van Deventer, 2007:98). The survey also reported that black students had difficulties with the use of Afrikaans in the classroom: "[t]he findings suggest marginalisation of black, non-Afrikaans-speaking and especially African students" (Leibowitz, 2006:3). In the same way, the university's aim to support 'Afrikaans in a multilingual' context proved to be a contested phrase. A black student in our research group remarked that:

This is a clever phrase, especially for people who want to keep it Afrikaans. They will say that we want to promote Afrikaans, Xhosa, and Sotho but use it to twist multilingualism and then go on and promote Afrikaans. It's manipulating multilingualism and I don't buy into it and don't think we should keep it there.

The heated *taaldebat* occurred in cycles in 2002, 2005/6 and 2009 (see Scholtz & Scholtz, 2008; Van der Waal, 2008; Van Niekerk, 2012). Activists working for the protection of Afrikaans at SU insisted that students should have a good knowledge of Afrikaans and that lecturers should teach in Afrikaans a few years after appointment. Hundreds of emotional letters to the editors of Afrikaans newspapers, articles in the press and protest documents were produced in an outpouring of loyalty to the Afrikaans language and white Afrikaner identity every time a small change in the language policy was perceived as a loss for Afrikaans. Emphasising the right of Afrikaans-speakers to language rights without considering the right of black students to university access reflected underlying normative perceptions of whiteness. The emotional intensity of the debate can be linked to the symbolic role of Afrikaans as the core marker of white Afrikaner identity, especially after the loss of the apartheid aspiration for a separate political future (Van Niekerk, 2012).

Amidst internal contestation, a compromise in the university Council in 2009 emphasised parallel teaching and committed to a 60% use of Afrikaans in undergraduate tuition in an attempt to appease the strong white Afrikaans lobby and at the same time move towards greater access for black students.

Prof. Russel Botman (2013) stated that SU wanted to continue to promote Afrikaans in a multilingual context, but that Afrikaans student numbers were not sufficient for justifying a mainly Afrikaans university. Indeed, first-language Afrikaans-speaking students at the university had dropped from 60% in 2005 to 53% in 2009 (Van Niekerk, 2012:222). By 2013, Afrikaans-speakers formed 48% of the total, indicating a significant tipping of the demographic scale. Language activists on the university Council were strongly opposed to parallel-medium teaching: Giliomee (2009b) accused the university of promoting hybridity and that multilingualism would eventually lead to the death of Afrikaans. The language of the activists often included violent metaphors, e.g. 'language war' and 'ethnic cleansing' (Giliomee, 2009b; Kriel, 2003:162-164; Kriel, 2006:105). The activists did not contextualise the language debate in terms of national or historical dimensions that would contextualise their claims in relation to the needs and experiences of black students. Neither were the challenges of transformation in a racially highly unequal society or a costing of an Afrikaans dominant university included in their argumentation.

Language movements are political movements in disguise (Webb & Kriel, 2000:27). The language struggle at SU exemplified an Afrikaner whiteness defending the continued dominant place of white Afrikaans-speakers in higher education and ultimately access to work opportunities, networks of economic power and the protection of symbolic power in the face of the threat posed by demands for transformation and access for all to higher education institutions (Van Niekerk, 2012). Increasingly, this focus on the promotion of Afrikaans revealed lines of division between black and white Afrikaans-speakers and undermined the process of post-apartheid racial integration. In this regard a 'coloured' lecturer commented:

I am totally opposed to people that want to politicise Afrikaans. I am totally opposed to people that want to sustain a sort of neo-apartheid and fight that battle in the name of Afrikaans and they do worse than the government of 1976 because they are hypocrites.

A black student reported on the struggle of black students, without any proficiency in Afrikaans, in the classroom setting:

The lecturer would write on the board and pronounce in Afrikaans: "*My hand is in warm water*" and rewrite the same words in English and say: "See there is no difference between the languages, I don't know what you are complaining about."

A white lecturer commented that the language policy and its intention to increase the Afrikaans proficiency of students put a "psycho-linguistic load" onto students:

Take some of the Xhosa students that come to Stellenbosch. They already receive their classes in their second language [English] and now they must also learn Afrikaans. You are placing a psycho-linguistic load on them that will further increase their struggles and they will not be able to keep up with students who are fully bilingual.

Transformation, policy-making and Afrikaans

After 1990, when transformation became imminent, executives at SU repositioned the university in such a way that it would be a valuable asset in the South Africa's higher education landscape. For that purpose the research profile of the university was strongly supported to make the university more competitive and a leading institution. Furthermore, internationalisation was vigorously pursued and initiatives were launched to link the university to educational and research needs in South Africa and on the continent.

Following the national higher education directives on transformation, stated in the Higher Education Act and the *White Paper on Higher Education of 1997*, SU embarked on a process of extensive internal consultations that resulted in Council approving the *Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Beyond* in March 2000. Redress and institutional access were listed as two of twelve themes for scrutiny. In a discussion about accessibility, a decade later, language was framed as a possible impediment, but the status quo was justified by stating: 'All universities' choices regarding their primary language of instruction naturally place restrictions on their accessibility to people not proficient in the language concerned' (SU, 2010). This subtle positioning of the language as a strategic end in itself required what Oloyede (2009) refers to as a narrow interpretation of transformation where ownership of social spaces was still occupied by a dominant group (in this case a mostly white language group), despite significant demographic shifts within the institution. The interpretations of SU transformation entailed a decisive move away from the intentional racism of the past, but failed to engage with the embedded discrimination based on assumptions of whiteness.

Management attempted to manage the deadlock caused by the subjection of the right to access to the right to language identity in undergraduate teaching and learning by an initiative in 2013 relying on technological support. In this way a balance was sought between retaining the privileged position of Afrikaans and increasing access. Translation services were introduced where classes were smaller than 150 students while larger classes were divided into Afrikaans and English streams (the parallel-medium approach). Although the language debate and the changes in language policy occupied the university over a long period

as a core issue of transformation, initiatives by students and management moved the transformation debate beyond the focus on language. Meanwhile the controversies around Afrikaans continued to surface regularly and exposed the ideologies and practices of whiteness that were increasingly forced into a resistance mode.

The impact of language on transformation and institutional culture was described by a 'coloured' manager as:

Language significantly slowed down the pace of transformation and sits at the heart of identity, authority, power and submissiveness. The approach to Afrikaans and multilingualism did not lead to accessibility for Africans. You feel if someone enters certain environments, you are setting them up to fail because they are not Afrikaans proficient.

And a white administrator remarked:

The university lost a lot of public credibility. The statement "You can come and study here in the language of your choice" was not true. You couldn't. It was flexible and there were options, but it still was predominantly Afrikaans.

Some of the academic spaces adapted teaching practices, including increasing the use of English in the classroom to maximise student success, but social and living spaces relied heavily on whiteness-infused residential traditions. One example of the impact of these practices was the academic support system where black students dropped out of mentoring groups because conversations took place exclusively in Afrikaans. While the university invested resources in this important form of academic support, what was not noted was how language would predetermine who would ultimately benefit from the support system.

Demographic changes were proving to be a stronger force for transformation than the inconsistent and contradictory attempts of the institution. SU recognised the Soudien report's recommendations and the need to accelerate a more representative demographic profile when Council approved institutional goals and priorities with regard to transformation for the period 2010–2015. This included that the percentage of black, 'coloured' and Indian undergraduate students should increase from 24% in 2008 to 34% in 2015, a growth in the number of black staff members and stronger support for black students.

Ironically, it was not the formulation of these transformation targets, but the Yach report in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences that exposed high levels of resistance to the effects that more open access would have on

the privileged position of Afrikaans. Commissioned by the dean in 2011, the survey reported on issues related to equality, diversity and transformation, and recommended that much more should be done to provide an inclusive training and work environment for its diversifying staff and student corps, including the need for increasing the use of English in training and administration. Significantly, it was the feedback on Afrikaans that elicited the strongest allegations of 'unscientific work' in letters to the press, specifically the 'insensitive' association in the report between a preference for Afrikaans and 'narrow-mindedness'. As a result of the reactions to the Yach report, Council formulated a transformation brief: '[Council] requests the Stellenbosch University management to develop an action plan which will institutionally create a welcoming environment in which equality, diversity and transformation may flourish.' Two task teams were formed to separately report on the status of a welcoming culture and transformation at SU and to make recommendations regarding priority interventions (Botman, 2013; SU, 2013).

The consultation process on a proposed policy for placement of students in residences illustrated how language and identity dominated discussions about transformation at SU. Access to residences and associated privileges were in the past monopolised by white Afrikaans-speakers. Opposers of the proposed policy tabled their concerns at a Convocation meeting and the highly polarised debate received extensive publicity in the Afrikaans media as yet another iteration of the protracted language debate. The effect of more diversity among students was seen as undermining the 'constitutional right' to preserve Afrikaans in the residences.

Against this background of contestation between Convocation and the management team, supported by a significant group of student leaders, a Transformation Plan of Stellenbosch University was submitted to Council in April 2013 as part of a broad institutional framework plan. The plan unpacked the notion of inclusivity and representation as referring to race and ethnicity, but also to gender, disability, language, sexual orientation and religion as well as characteristics like socio-economic and academic status. It argued that the intersection of these dimensions created an institutional centre of gravity and that a robust engagement with transformation should address the embedded institutionalised relations of power and influence. The submission of the plan was followed by months of negative publicity in the Afrikaans press with almost exclusive reference to a specific paragraph in the plan stating that:

...the SU culture may be theoretically described as reflecting a normative bias towards: a white majority ... a broad Christian-based religious orientation ... male dominance ... heterosexual partnerships ... a student and staff corps free from special learning needs and disabilities ... Afrikaans dominance ... attaching disproportionate significance to the views of older-generation alumni and members of the Convocation ... and ... to reports and views contained in the Afrikaans media. (SU, 2013)

The above reference to socially constructed institutional norms that illustrated the complex interactions between language, power, whiteness and institutional bias sparked a new cycle of debate. Media headlines posed the question whether SU was 'too white and too Afrikaans' and anonymous sources accused the university's newly established Centre for Inclusivity of trying to slip rejected transformation strategies through the back door. The unexpected passing of Botman in the midst of the criticism in the media shocked the country. Botman was honoured as a transformation champion and praised for the way he united various communities at SU. Council repeated its commitment to inclusivity.

In the transformation processes at SU debates on language and whiteness dominated conversations above other dimensions of transformation (e.g. gender or disability). The battle to secure a safe status for Afrikaans became the legitimating cause for predominantly white interest groups to network and mobilise support in the Afrikaans media and quickly became a discerning criterion for getting elected to Council via the alumni election process. The Language Policy remained the focus for retaining the image of an Afrikaans-oriented university, masking the issue of whiteness by stating that the US was promoting Afrikaans and claiming that the main issues were diversity and multilingualism (SU, 2014). Much of this was symbolic, as in practice, teaching increasingly moved to English. The mainly white staff members were at that stage not yet ready to remove the protection of Afrikaans that was preventing black student access.

The appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Wim de Villiers, early in 2015, coincided with highly publicised reports of racial discrimination. The Open Stellenbosch movement became a powerful student activist voice on campus focusing on language policy in campaigning against structural racism and the exclusion of black students. The movement communicated the lived experiences of black students related to racism and language exclusion in the classroom and social spaces. Within months of its launch, Open Stellenbosch dominated media attention with public protests, classroom disruptions and a controversial documentary that appealed to the rest of South Africa to support their cause (Du Toit, 2015). This climate of protest introduced a new era of outspoken criticism against whiteness and Afrikaans dominance by especially black students, in

contrast to the alumni campaign to safeguard and advance Afrikaans. In 2016 the Language Policy of SU finally discarded its commitment to promoting Afrikaans and based itself on the Constitution with a policy characterised as ‘inclusive multilingualism’:

The Language Policy aims to give effect to section 29(2) of the Constitution in relation to language usage in its academic, administrative, professional and social contexts. The Policy aims to increase equitable access to SU for all students and staff and to facilitate pedagogically sound teaching and learning. (SU, 2016)

Embittered convocation leaders in the *Gelyke Kanse* (Equal Opportunities) movement attempted to turn the new policy back through court action in 2017, but student activism and classroom practice had led to a new situation in which the SU language policy, based on decades of white Afrikaans dominance, had to give way to demands based on constitutional rights. SU had moved from an emphasis on language rights to an emphasis on language justice.

Conclusion

At SU, the entrenched position of Afrikaans, associated with whiteness through its central symbolic place in Afrikaner identity politics, was challenged since the early 1990s by increasing numbers of students in need of higher education in English. At first students who wanted more English teaching were white and had a residual knowledge of Afrikaans. Black students without such knowledge of Afrikaans were then accessing university education at Stellenbosch with difficulty. The assumed natural dominance of Afrikaans was increasingly questioned, resulting in a defensive emphasis on its conservation among an influential language lobby, strongly associated with the mainly white Afrikaans-speaking alumni. At the same time, all South African universities developed language policies that promoted multilingualism, while the state demanded a process of transformation in higher education in which access and student success were prioritised above language rights. The changes in the language policy of SU in the last decades reflected the faltering moves from Afrikaans as the default language to Afrikaans in a context of multilingualism, then to Afrikaans as an issue entangled with wider questions of transformation and ultimately to the removal of Afrikaans from its privileged position. In the debates at the university the politics of conservation, entangled with whiteness-based claims around Afrikaans, clashed with the politics of transformation. Arguments and practices that assumed that standard Afrikaans should be the natural point of departure, as well as the claim that the promotion of one language should trump access, brought elements of whiteness thinking openly to the surface.

Language loyalty among Afrikaans-speaking students at SU is shifting towards English, and Afrikaans has lost its firm place. However, the multilingual language policy of SU provides teaching possibilities in Afrikaans, free from the burden of whiteness now that access for all has been achieved. Afrikaans is increasingly seen as one of the indigenous languages that should be used with isiXhosa to assist English second-language students with conceptualisation and bridging towards English linguistic skills which they need for postgraduate studies and the international and national world of work.

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Chapter 24

Negotiating Belonging through Language, Place and Education: An auto-ethnography

Ronelle Carolissen

For over 20 years, the Athlone Institute, in collaboration with five churches in Paarl in the Western Cape, have raised and managed money to assist disadvantaged coloured and African students from the broader Paarl community to further their studies at University. Stellenbosch is one of the universities where these students study. A few years ago, I addressed a gathering of 65 proud students and their even prouder parents at a bursary award ceremony. I asked one of the board members in which language I should prepare my talk. She asked me to “please address the students and their parents in English ... most are proficient in Afrikaans, but some don’t understand it at all. But all will understand you, if you speak English.”

The university where I teach was historically not designed with my body in mind (Ahmed, 2012; Puwar, 2004). Stellenbosch University is the place where apartheid, a now infamous theory of white supremacy, was conceptualised and where the majority of South Africa’s apartheid ministers were trained. White, male, heterosexual bodies, combined with white Afrikaans, Christian and heterosexual narratives were particularly valorised in this space. Over the last 16 years, my place of work has been Stellenbosch University. My university’s language policy has been revised at least three times over the years that I have been there, with the most recent revision taking place in June 2016. The core principle of the latest revision is encapsulated in the statement that “language at SU should promote access to and success in academic, administrative,

professional and social contexts, and should not constitute a barrier to students or staff. This is particularly important given the constitutional imperatives to redress the results of past racial discrimination and to ensure no direct or indirect unfair discrimination against present or prospective SU staff and students” (Language Policy, Stellenbosch University, June 2016). This policy should ensure that all those starry-eyed students that I addressed in Paarl will not be excluded from success at Stellenbosch. However, implementation is the nexus of praxis and therein lies the politics of ideology, place and power that incorporates past, present and joint futures for democratic education to flourish. In this chapter, I will track my personal and political history with language across primary, secondary and higher education and in my work as an academic at Stellenbosch that, in its policy, encourages plurilingualism but often, at best, manages bilingualism in practice. I will engage in an auto-ethnography, a difficult form of writing, precisely because it is so personal and requires me to draw deeply on my intellectual *and* psychological resources.

Auto-ethnography is a powerful tool that allows us to explore subjectivities and relationality in cultural context (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Relating narratives about experiences allows us to give or receive the story of another person viscerally while providing insights into the complexities of human experience as well as the micro politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Auto-ethnographies further highlight personal and cultural contradictory intersections as well as providing connections of personal stories with the socio-cultural (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). It therefore provides a useful lens through which to consider my experiences of language at my university and earlier education. It also becomes a useful tool to strip away veneers of social inclusion (Ahmed, 2012) constructed by dominant ideologies and discourses that conceal the working of power. In this way, stories that are not heard often in public spaces embody an aspect of decoloniality (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2009), a restorying that de-centres dominant narratives. Autoethnographic tales also have the potential to highlight the personal and cultural tensions and contradictions as well as the importance of intersectionalities, especially those from the margins.

Negotiating language since birth

I was born in a small Afrikaans, coloured rural fishing community of Hawston, about 120 km from Cape Town. My mother still lives there and my father’s grave and parents’ education legacy remains there. In that context, 52 years ago, access to good quality secondary schooling for coloured and black people was minimal, irrespective of the fact that well-resourced schools were available

in the nearby white holiday town of Hermanus. I was born to first-generation middle-class parents, primary school teachers, who were staunch supporters of the Unity Movement's Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA). The Unity Movement (NUM) (and the TLSA) were political movements, popular largely among 'coloured' professionals such as teachers and lawyers. It espoused the motto: "Let us live for our children" and the focus of liberation in this movement was societal transformation through education.

In our home this meant that my siblings and I had to speak English at home, in spite of living in a coloured Afrikaans community and later attending a coloured Afrikaans primary school. While preparing our educational futures, speaking English also distinguished us from other families in that community and the Overberg region. I remember a learner from another school referring to my father as "die man met die hondjie wat Engels praat" (the man with the dog that speaks English!). For me, as for many coloured families at the time, being able to speak English well, promised the possibility of social mobility. Social mobility meant the opportunity to become a professional teacher, doctor, lawyer, social worker or nurse as opposed to labouring in low-paying jobs as domestic workers, fishermen, shop assistants and road construction workers.

I also had to speak English well as my siblings and I attended a coloured high school in Cape Town (Harold Cressy High School), where many of the leadership of the NUM and TLSA were teaching. The image of the school was that learners there excelled academically as a result of committed teachers. It was a school of the urban coloured middle class and aspiring middle class. It also attracted less complimentary stereotypes especially from learners in poorer areas on the Cape Flats. All learners from Harold Cressy were commonly viewed as snobs or, more derogatorily, as "stirvy coloureds". In this apparently homogenous setting there were powerful inclusionary and exclusionary experiences with language. My English had a prominent Afrikaans rural accent and I spoke what was perceived to be reasonably "suiwer" or pure Afrikaans. As an adolescent, my Afrikaans was not the (as I now know) Cape Afrikaans with many words originating from a Malay slave history. The urban Afrikaans Malay words, used generously among learners at our school – "tramakasie" (thank you), "kanalla" (please), "djamang" (toilet), "barakat" (parcel of cakes/food to take home) – were unintelligible. I had simply never heard these Afrikaans words before! I was also nevertheless privileged and powerful because I was in the Latin class for "clever" children, my parents knew the leadership of the TLSA and I excelled academically and at sport ... and I routinely received the prize for Afrikaans! Yet, I knew that in my educational community Afrikaans was the less preferred language. Posh people from Cape Town "did not know how to speak Afrikaans".

My home resonated with these reminders: “Speak English well. It is your gateway to education” juxtaposed with “the posh coloureds pretend not to be able to speak Afrikaans, but let them bump their toes!” The assumption was that we would hear an exclamation of “Eina!” (ouch). But ... speaking English was also about maintaining dignity in my context and trying to escape assumptions based on our bodies and what our bodies meant in public spaces (Ahmed, 2012). My parents regularly reminded us about apartheid politics and education: “Education is the one thing they can’t take away from you.”

During my early childhood, Hermanus, the white seaside village, was a place we frequented weekly. Working-class people from Hawston went to Hermanus to shop, to labour in the kitchens and gardens of white people, and to raise their children. Middle-class people from Hawston, like my parents, went to Hermanus “on business”. It is only here that, once a week, I saw white people from Hermanus, black African people from Zwelihle (the black African residential area between Hawston and Hermanus) and coloured people from Hawston and Mount Pleasant (the coloured residential area closer to Hermanus than Hawston) in the same physical space. Language ability was about disrupting on an interpersonal level the symbolic power of whiteness while envying white peoples’ amenities – white libraries, white swimming pools, white schools with beautiful sports fields, of which I could only dream.

Destabilising whiteness through language on an interpersonal level was about speaking English to white Afrikaans-speaking people, to show up their own perceived incompetence and deep Afrikaans accents when speaking English. I must confess that the satisfaction that I derived from this was immeasurable. I always spoke English to Afrikaans-speaking white people even though I was completely bilingual. It was restitution and an infliction of pain in one single moment. In Toni Morrison’s award-winning novel *The bluest eye*, Claudia says of Rosemary, “We stare at her, ... wanting to poke the arrogance out of her eyes and smash the pride of ownership that curls her chewing mouth. When she comes out of the car we will beat her up, make red marks on her white skin, and she will cry...” (p. 9). It was this symbolic destabilising of the arrogance of *whiteness*, not Afrikaans, that made me at times take immense pride in this quietly “defiant” act. It was much later in my life, shortly after I joined the Stellenbosch University in 2002 as an academic staff member, that I started to speak to students and staff members in English or Afrikaans depending on their preference as I was always recognised by others’ attempt to address me in English. The experience of mutual recognition changed my practice.

During my high school years, I became competently conversant in English as academic language and a written and spoken Afrikaans with extended vocabularies from my urban setting. There was no question that I would attend an English University. During my matric year in 1983, I had to consider the political discourses about universities from our school, political legislation about race-based acceptance at universities as well as my course of study. In the Western Cape, my options were the University of Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape. Dominant discourses at Unity movement schools like mine actively discouraged learners from going to “bush colleges” like the University of the Western Cape, created for coloured people. Even though that norm was disrupted by some learners from my school by going to UWC, the majority went to UCT, as it was perceived to offer a better quality education.

During the early 80s, English white universities like UCT “allowed” black, coloured and Indian applications to white universities. We had to complete ‘quota’ forms that provided motivation as to why we could not study at coloured universities. Usually the answer was to choose career paths like medicine which were not offered at UWC, or subjects that were not offered at UWC in other degrees. When I applied to Natal University in 1983, I received the quota forms, but did not have to complete them. Decades of university access privileging white South Africans at our country’s top institutions was starting to fray at the edges.

In Durban, where I did my undergraduate and Honours degrees, I spoke very little Afrikaans. This was reserved largely for holidays and during Afrikaans-Nederlands lectures up until my second year of University. I was welcomed into that department with “Welkom hier, julle in die Kaap weet mos hoe om Afrikaans te praat!” (Welcome, you from the Cape know how to speak Afrikaans!). I wasn’t always sure how to respond to that.

Language as cultural capital

My habitus did not afford me many of the Bourdieuan cultural capitals that are deemed so important in building educational trajectories. Bourdieu’s (1986) concept of “cultural capitals” suggests that an accumulation of cultural knowledge, skills and abilities possessed and inherited by privileged groups in society is essential to succeed in social institutions, in this instance, HE. Language is one of these cultural capitals that are acquired through family and schooling networks, but are the preserve of those who have access to dominant groups and are further reproduced through education. These capitals, he argues,

can be accessed by marginalised people to enable their own social mobility. Yosso (2005) contests Bourdieu's theory and proposes the importance of community cultural wealth; that which students who do not emanate from dominant hierarchies in society bring to higher education. Instead of viewing the skills and resources of marginalised people in deficit ways, she details the value that community cultural wealth can bring. These include various capitals such as aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational and transformative resistant capitals. Aspirational capital is the hope that marginalised families and students have that the next generation may progress beyond the parents' social status, despite structural inequalities. Linguistic capital, the ability to speak multiple languages and dialects of languages, is viewed as an asset. Familial capital or the commitment to community well-being and community "funds of knowledge" is also considered an asset. The social capital of marginalised people is important as it allows them access to networks of people and community resources. Navigational capital is central to asset-based knowledge as it entails having skills to negotiate through often hostile campus contexts. This form of capital acknowledges individual agency within limiting institutional barriers. The final form of capital that Yosso identifies is transformative resistant capital, the knowledge and skill acquired through oppositional behaviour that is a resistance to subordination as a result of their knowledge of an oppressive system. Gofen (2009) elaborates on these capitals and argues strongly for family capitals and values that support education as laying the foundation of later educational success, even in families of first-generation students.

While I had relatively fewer of Bourdieu's traditional cultural capitals, I had greater access to Yosso's aspirational, linguistic, navigational and transformative resistant capitals as well as excessive amounts of Gofen's family capitals (2009) that allowed me access to secondary and higher education and to do well in these contexts approximately 50 years ago. We were a first-generation middle-class coloured family as *both* my parents were teachers. Their mother tongue was Afrikaans. As mentioned earlier, in order to prepare us for English-medium high schooling away from home, my parents spoke only English in the home during our primary school years. This happened against a backdrop of us attending an Afrikaans-medium primary school. I then attended an English-medium high school in Cape Town and English universities subsequently. I tell this story because in terms of my history, Afrikaans is my mother tongue but in order to have access to good quality, politically critical schooling through my parental political networks, I had to be educated in English. The value of education was part of the family capitals that Gofen (2009)

highlights as making it possible to realise educational aspirations. An English education was a family strategy for social mobility and access to good quality education. Therefore, in spite of my mother tongue being Afrikaans historically, I am not deeply emotionally attached to English or Afrikaans today. I enjoy using both languages interchangeably (and colloquially) in spaces and with people where I feel confident and comfortable to do so. I also use these languages interchangeably when common use and recognition of my colleagues and students dictate language use as is evident in plurilingualism.

The idea of plurilingualism at universities is an important and a just one and in fact a position to which all organisations should aspire in a democratic society. Plurilingualism refers to the use of two or more languages and plurilingual resources as skills that students may exhibit using different languages to negotiate meaning (Fielding, 2016). The question of language, either English or Afrikaans, as dominant South African languages has been an extremely contentious issue in South African higher education, both at historically white English and Afrikaans universities such as Stellenbosch. Steyn and Van Zyl (2001), for example, suggested that one of the complex issues involving transformation at UCT is language. The ability to use English well becomes a focal point for racism and stereotyping as well as gatekeeping to maintain the status quo. They reported students saying that lecturers are patronising and intimidate students who speak in “black accents”. In this report, Steyn and Van Zyl go further to highlight the crevices and intersectional complexities and discontents among black students in relation to language. The assumption was that white and black students who could afford Model C schools post 1994, as well as black international students who spoke English well, benefited from English dominance in the teaching and learning experiences at the institution. Black international students also highlighted their feelings of marginalisation as other black students often assumed that they could speak Xhosa and discriminated against them when they could not.

What this study clearly highlighted were the multiple intersectionalities of race, class, urban background, age and culture, with language. Many of the issues highlighted in this study were also highlighted by Kiguwa (2014) at Wits. At Stellenbosch, Siyengo (2015) interviewed a group of black African first-generation students about their psychosocial and educational experiences at Stellenbosch University. They said that the institutional practices are different from documented language policy. This included some lecturers telling them that they should go to another university and that Stellenbosch is an Afrikaans university if they asked if the question could be repeated in English.

However, other lecturers took their time to explain work in English when speaking Afrikaans. Siyengo's research participants also demonstrated how other students excluded them from group work by speaking only Afrikaans. These were some of the issues about language also highlighted by student movements such as Open Stellenbosch during the 2015 student protests at Stellenbosch University.

Dominant narratives about Afrikaans at Stellenbosch University

There have been numerous dominant narratives about Afrikaans, actively disseminated by the print and social media. Part of the role of auto-ethnography is to talk back to dominant narratives from the standpoint of being an insider-outsider (Harding, 1991) and to disrupt some of these narratives (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014) to foreground often hidden counter-narratives. I would like to focus on two narratives. Firstly, it is important for Stellenbosch University to maintain Afrikaans as a primary language because coloured people in the Western Cape largely speak Afrikaans. By maintaining Afrikaans as the primary language of instruction, it will continue to provide university access to coloured people. Let's call this the "access for coloureds narrative".¹ The second narrative that I have often heard is the fact that minority languages are protected in the constitution and Afrikaans, as a minority language, should be protected. This narrative is not specific to Stellenbosch University but extends to other universities that use Afrikaans as one of the languages as medium of instruction. Let's call this the "Afrikaans as minority language narrative". I will discuss these two narratives, in turn, based on my experience at the institution. I will close the chapter by focusing briefly on typical language-related experiences in my classroom and broad implications for aspiring towards language equity at Stellenbosch University.

The coloured access narrative

This view has been most popular during language debates among many black, coloured and white English and Afrikaans speakers, across the political

1 The notion of "coloured" is a contested one. Black people in South Africa have diverse, politically inspired views about this notion. Many black people oppose the term and have done so historically, when they ascribe to philosophies of Black Consciousness and non-racialism. Others, in contemporary understandings and practices, embrace the term but reinvent disruptive ways of thinking about the term "coloured". By doing this, it resists the original racist motivation, reclaims the term and reinvents it with new multiple and fluid meanings. The reconstructing of association is evident in ways in which youth engage with the concept in rap poetry and similar artistic expressions.

spectrum. Seemingly liberal as well as politically conservative Afrikaans activists ostensibly support the same cause. I am particularly interested to see how narratives of coloured, rural disadvantage are invoked to support whiteness. I will provide counter-narratives to this argument on the basis of history, demographics and the intersections between Afrikaans, race and place.

Historical love-hate relationships where a political process of white Afrikaans-coloured seduction was followed by rejection are not new. I will give two examples. Coloured men in the Western Cape were on a common voters' role with whites before 1948 and assisted in voting the white Afrikaner Nationalist Party into power in 1948. Shortly after the Nationalist Party came into power, they wanted to secure white supremacy and feared that the coloured vote would in future support the United Party as a result of the Nationalist Party entrenching white privilege. While not uncontested, they broke their promises and struck coloureds from the voters' role in the 1950s to secure largely uncontested whites-only elections (Loveland, 1999). Another story about deceptive white Afrikaans betrayal of coloured people, lies in the humble "hertzoggie" or "tweegevreetkoekie" (which means two-faced, deceitful cookie). As a child, the hertzoggie formed part of our Christmas baking and I always wondered why my parents called it "tweegevreetkoekies" (pronounced "tweegevrietkoekies")! Herein lies a story of political resistance and tenuous white Afrikaans-coloured histories, marked by suspicious cohabitation. Apparently Hertzog, prominent Afrikaans general and later Prime Minister, was electioneering and made promises to Malay women that they would have voting rights and that their voting rights would be equal to those of whites. Malay women named a jam-filled pastry, covered with a mix of coconut and egg white, in his honour in anticipation of his promise. When he was elected, he reneged on his promise. The Malay women covered one half of the hertzoggie with brown icing and the other half with pink and called it a tweegevreetkoekie. These humorous symbols of political resistance are not peculiar to South Africa. Goldstein (2013) reports raucous laughter from spaces in Rio de Janeiro that she would consider so oppressive as to drown out laughter. She realises that the laughter is an act of resistance against oppression. It is these kinds of painful histories that need to be remembered thoughtfully *and with humility* when thinking about questions of language among the descendants of white Afrikaans speakers, coloureds and blacks so that *joint* futures may be carved in contemporary South Africa.

A further argument that is not considered when exploring colouredness, Afrikaans and Stellenbosch is a demographic one. In terms of demographics, it is well known that coloured students constitute the smallest demographic

group of students in higher education. This is so in spite of a common argument that Afrikaans at Stellenbosch is important because most coloured people in the Western Cape speak Afrikaans. The reality is that the majority of coloured people never enter universities and secondly, do not select Stellenbosch as their university of choice. Lewin and Mawoyo's (2014) report on student access and success in HE suggests a 14% participation rate for coloured students in HE in SA. In 2015, only 18% of students at Stellenbosch were coloured students (5 300 students). What is even more interesting is that in 2015 approximately 2 500 coloured students who are *first-language* Afrikaans speakers were registered at our neighbouring University of the Western Cape, an English-medium university. This is approximately the *same* number as the number of Afrikaans *first-language* coloured students registered at Stellenbosch University. This is not new and the data suggests this trend as far back as 2011. Prior to 2011, I recall that all my cousins who were first-language Afrikaans speakers, who attended Afrikaans high schools and who have a university education, received that education at the English-medium University of the Western Cape. This demographic split between Stellenbosch University and the University of the Western Cape is also true of the very small number of young people of this generation who come from Hawston, my community of origin, and attend university. We need to ask questions as to why coloured Afrikaans first-language speakers attend our neighbouring English university when there is a university available that offers instruction in Afrikaans. Clearly, one cannot simply assume, therefore, that the availability of Afrikaans at Stellenbosch University will attract coloured Afrikaans-speaking students to Stellenbosch. Perceived and actual institutional cultures and histories also impact on decisions on which universities to attend (Carolissen & Bozalek, 2017).

A further consideration when invoking the coloured access narrative in relation to Afrikaans at Stellenbosch University, are place and identity (Taylor, 2010; di Masso, 2015). Place and identity are central to the Afrikaans debate and plurilingualism. Place and identity incorporate ideas and feelings of membership, belonging and emotional attachments to particular geographical areas, institutions or spaces. These feelings and attachments are socially produced (Ahmed, 2004). Often it is not acknowledged that although Afrikaans as a language in and of itself is not exclusionary, its histories and *current* actual and symbolic practices in H.E. are deeply exclusionary. The way in which Afrikaans is used and constructed implicitly and, at times, explicitly deters a large number of students, especially coloured and black students, from entering institutions identified as Afrikaans and once there, impacts on their ability to learn optimally (Siyengo, 2015). Afrikaans in academic spaces at Stellenbosch

University is not the same as Afrikaans in Idas Valley or Khayamandi (coloured and black communities surrounding Stellenbosch) or Bo-Kaap or Hawston. Afrikaans in academic spaces at Stellenbosch is felt as deeply embedded in historical *and* contemporary practices of white supremacy and domination by some, while some white Afrikaans speakers feel an inalienable cultural heritage in Afrikaans at Stellenbosch University. As a bilingual speaker, with English as my main academic language, I remember how intimidated I felt when I attended my first few years of faculty and especially committee meetings. A sea of white faces with a few coloured and fewer black ones, expensive-looking furniture in boardrooms and an Afrikaans that I understood but which felt foreign, evoked many feelings. The *feeling* that this space allowed only an “official Afrikaans” combined with memories of accents that in all my being, history and internalised memories invoked mostly fear and fury, silenced me in that space. It was more than that. In a dominant deficit narrative of affirmative action as valorising mediocre black academics and students, my deep fear of being “found out” to be incompetent, to be that stereotype so commonly projected in speeches and the media, was central. I feared that my unpolished Afrikaans would evoke that narrative painfully. I also feared what it would mean if I spoke English as resistance, in that space, as I had so often done in the past when encountering white Afrikaans-speaking people. This extended to lecture theatres where my largely white undergraduate students commented on me speaking too much Afrikaans and too much English (in the same lecture!) and commented on their inability to understand black colleagues’ accents. These disruptions of place and normative expectation were painful for both me and my students. Our historical contexts and specific university cultures and practices had left many of my students to expect that they could feel entitled to have white Afrikaans-speaking lecturers. Many were resentful at having to adapt to these changes, even unconsciously so, and projected these hostilities onto coloured and black lecturers as well as fellow students. Many black and white students, however, welcomed different views (but complained about the many prescribed readings!). Today I speak mostly English and at times, Afrikaans, in meetings. When I am with my students, I speak the language (English or Afrikaans) that they would prefer. I am aware that I still exclude first-language Xhosa speaking students from the privilege of us conversing in their first language in an academic space. I can now, after many years, write about these painful momentary and ongoing traumatic thoughts and feelings that often consumed me while in meetings and elsewhere on campus. I can do this now as I seldom enter that psychological space shaped by domination and oppression, and when I do, it is fleeting. Every day I have to work hard, along with many colleagues, at changing my engagements about Stellenbosch as a

white and male place, to affirmative ones that frame Stellenbosch as *my* place too. This is an ongoing process of acknowledging my ownership of this space. My experiences do however give me a deep understanding of what students who are not conversant in Afrikaans (or English) may feel when entering a lecture theatre where little Afrikaans (or English) is spoken.

Place and identity also connect with narratives of coloured homogeneity, so often reflected in dominant debates about Afrikaans at Stellenbosch. I often feel as if I am cast into a mould, along with all others who look like me. When Kaaps is suddenly valorised as the “new” Afrikaans, I recognise and understand it. When I hear accents from my mother’s place of birth, the rural Moravian town of Goedverwacht on the West coast, I recognise and understand it. I recognise and understand colloquial Afrikaans spoken on the Cape Flats and can mimic belonging in working-class areas on the Cape Flats when I have to, by speaking the same vernacular. Afrikaans is not homogenous and my experience in Afrikaans coloured communities is not homogenous either. The multiplicities of Afrikaans are important to recognise intellectually and in practice when we think of “broadening Afrikaans coloured access”. This also means that we cannot expect the deep humiliation of self-erasure which is the assimilation into white forms of speaking Afrikaans (Akhtar, 2014). It necessarily means a decentring of white Afrikaans, even in its radical forms and subcultures (Moldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2009; Biko, 2015). I now turn to the narrative of Afrikaans as minority language.

Narratives of Afrikaans as minority language

Common to an aspect of the language debate at Stellenbosch is the narrative that Afrikaans is a minority language and should be protected in terms of the constitution which provides for the protection of minority languages. Akhtar (2014) eloquently highlights the fact that the term ‘minority’ exceeds statistical minority. Afrikaans is extremely powerful in some academic spaces as a result of its histories of domination through apartheid. The way in which Afrikaans, above all other indigenous languages, is powerfully supported by financial capital, mitigates against its status as a minority language. For example, South African universities receive research incentives from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for publishing academic articles in accredited academic journals and for books approved by the National Research Foundation (NRF). Academics who publish receive a small portion of this money in university-held accounts that we may use for our research. The amount of money that academics receive is determined by universities and

strict accounting practices ensure that the money is used for research-related activities only. As academics we do not generally receive *personal payment* for peer reviewing journal articles or having our work published in academic journals. In this context, many academics receive up to R18 000 (in pocket) from some Afrikaans journals if they publish in those journals and R1000 for reviewing Afrikaans academic articles. Many of my colleagues and I are routinely approached by the editor of a prominent Afrikaans journal to review an article for R1 000. This is the financial capital attached to Afrikaans that allows academic Afrikaans to thrive.

Afrikaans furthermore holds a painful educational history for the majority of black South Africans. Afrikaans and education have a bloodied history in South Africa. In 1976, students literally died at the hands of police for protesting against the enforcement of Afrikaans in schools. Afrikaans as a compulsory language was part of a Nationalist Party's strategy to ensure white Afrikaans domination through its symbols, language and culture *at the expense of* all other cultural and historical influences on Afrikaans. Many of these symbols are synonymous with Stellenbosch. For example, the Wilcocks building, diagonally opposite the building in which I work, is named after the supervisor of H.F. Verwoerd, the architect of the theory of separate development that led to apartheid. This symbolic centring of Afrikaans whiteness that led to mass destruction and privilege entrenches black pain for some (and white shame and guilt for some) on campus every day.

Narratives of fear, loss and rage

It is clear that Afrikaans generates deep emotional attachments. Emotional attachments in belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011) stem from the determination to maintain cultural traditions, histories and legacies that are important in family and interpersonal contexts. A common expectation is that public assets such as universities should continue to entrench a cultural domination of bygone years. When this certainty is threatened, a sense of fear, loss and nostalgia become central themes in public discussions on language. Given this scenario, alterations in language and language policies at Stellenbosch University are experienced by some as huge losses and betrayal, accompanied by heightened hostility and aggression towards those perceived to threaten the status quo. On the other hand, Afrikaans becomes a symbol of historical and contemporary exclusion for many students, academics and families who were overtly excluded from Stellenbosch University during the apartheid years. The intergenerational pain of exclusion from participation lingers, and an insistence on imposing

dominant cultural traditions and language in residence meetings, for example, incites anger and the rage of misrecognition and condemnation to invisibility (Ahmed, 2012; Mirza; 2014). As a result of deep engagement with this issue on campus, I became aware of how the politics of inclusion/exclusion through Afrikaans is experienced as a huge burden for many of my white Afrikaans-speaking colleagues at Stellenbosch as well. Many of my white colleagues feel that if Stellenbosch University adopts English as the primary language, within the context of plurilingualism, the burden of a discriminatory history will be lessened, leaving us all to continue with our intellectual and academic projects.

Afrikaans in my classroom

In 2016, I signed a form to accept two international students, a German and a Norwegian, into one of my postgraduate classes. I saw the class list with my students' addresses. Apart from the German and Norwegian student, there were two students from Namibia and the rest of the 35 students were South African. The class further consisted only of women, of whom three were coloured, 1 was black and 31 were white. Of the South African students, 15 indicated their first language as Afrikaans, one student indicated her first language as isiXhosa and 19 indicated that their first language is English. This is the typical demographic of my postgraduate class in this particular module. All these students can understand English. All the prescribed readings are in English. Students can hand in assignments and take exams in English or Afrikaans. (I set exams in two languages.) Translation services have been suggested as a solution to the language "problem". It is not an ideal solution as it often detracts from the learning process in my class and students still ask me to repeat in English or Afrikaans! The biggest challenges arise when group work is assigned. Students tend to group on the basis of the intersections of race and language. White Afrikaans-speaking students mostly group with each other and seldom with coloured Afrikaans-speaking students unless I manage group composition. This is similar for white English-speaking students and coloured and black English-speaking students. This trend is not unique to Stellenbosch and is not new as has been noted in Steyn and Van Zyl (2001) at UCT. In this context, I speak both English and Afrikaans, knowing that I exclude more when speaking only Afrikaans. Sometimes I wish the solution were as simple as on that Friday evening in Paarl when I addressed bursary recipients and their parents.

Afrikaans was my parents' mother tongue. The politics of my educational journey and negotiation of histories have erased Afrikaans as *my* mother tongue. Afrikaans, however, is still a central part of who I am. I enjoy speaking Afrikaans

in my workplace when I choose, as I do when I speak to my 89-year-old mother and elsewhere. I nevertheless recognise the pain of surrendering something that has deep emotional connections, but I also recognise the importance of the recognition of others when that which I value, denies others access and opportunity. My auto-ethnographic tale has drawn on multiple theoretical strands ranging from Ahmed's embodiment to Bourdieu and Yosso's cultural capital and Gofen's family capital. My story has highlighted the personal and cultural tensions and contradictions as well as the importance of intersectionalities, especially those from the margins in considering the complexities inherent in social inclusion (Ahmed, 2012). It has also interrogated dominant narratives that attempt to conceal aspects of the working of power and has provided a decentring and restorying of hegemonic narratives.

Though much has been achieved at Stellenbosch University in terms of wrestling with workable language solutions, the major challenge for language policy at Stellenbosch University and similar universities lies in what Yuval-Davis (2012) refers to as a transversal politics of belonging. We will, with urgency and committed political will, have to move towards *joint* futures with non-negotiable imperatives of affirming difference while decentring narratives of domination and privilege. This may mean that when we share our stories about language and education, we recognise our own privilege and oppression, both personally and structurally, and are prepared to hear, with humility, the stories of others. This is not enough. The *implementation* of plurilingualism enshrined in the June 2016 revision of the language policy at Stellenbosch University demands that we, as academic staff (and students), can no longer tell non-Afrikaans-speaking students that this is an Afrikaans university. This will also imply much active shifting of public perception of Afrikaans as the dominant language at Stellenbosch University.

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Chapter 25

Rhodes Had to Fall, but King George Still Stands: Two South African universities compared

Stephanie Rudwick

Introduction

In early 2015, the #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) movement at the University of Cape Town (UCT) sparked off a broader South African student campaign through Twitter- and FB-media. The #RMF campaign succeeded in having the statue of imperialist Cecil Rhodes removed from the premises of UCT and it continues to exist as “a student, staff and worker movement *mobilising against institutional white supremacist capitalist patriarchy* for the complete decolonisation of UCT”.¹ For black UCT students, the statue of Rhodes was symbolic for the lack of ‘real’ transformation of the institution.² At the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), the statue of King George V at Howard College was also defaced in the upsurge of student protest. However, it still stands strong today without anyone seemingly bothered about it.³

In the meantime, other student campaigns have taken precedence, such as the #FeesMustFall movement which was successful in achieving a Government commitment to a zero fee increment at all universities. Against the backdrop

1 For more detail on the activities, see <https://www.facebook.com/RhodesMustFall/posts/1671684269773731>

2 The #RMF campaign turned quite ‘high profile’ and led not only to a countrywide protest movement but also spread to an Oxford University RMF movement.

3 <http://www.thedailyvox.co.za/statue-of-king-george-v-is-part-of-our-history-say-ukzn-students/>

of the 2015/16 protests (for details, see Badat 2015), I compare and contrast the two above-mentioned elite tertiary institutions in terms of some of their institutional strategies regarding transformation. The fact that the UCT statue of Rhodes had to fall but the one of King George V at UKZN could remain is taken as an entrance point into the discussion of transformation discourses and differences specifically at UCT and UKZN. I compare and contrast the mission statements of the institutions as well as their propagated language policies and implementations in order to ascertain their respective routes to transformation in these areas. Banda and Mafofo (2016:5) recently defined mission statements as to “serve as articulations of institutional purposes and [...] to help publicise institutional values”. I aim to show in this chapter how the different institutional purposes of these two universities were reflected to some extent by the varied concerns of their student protest actions. At UCT student campaigns have been characterised by a broad concern about de-colonisation and a fight against white male supremacy in the institution. At UKZN, in contrast, student protest has focused less on race and gender issues⁴ but is concerned with students’ financial worries, such as loans structure, fees or lack of access to, for example, prescribed private notebooks. Against the backdrop of recent student protest actions, this chapter explores meanings of transformation and Africanisation in the higher education system more generally and the two institutions more specifically.

I discuss UKZN as representative of what can be described as an essentialist approach to transformation, while the vision at UCT, in particular in terms of language policy, is termed a tokenistic gesture. These very different approaches result in diverse institutional identities and cultures in the two universities and have influenced the concerns of student protests to a large extent. In the next two sections I provide first, a very brief general socio-historical background to higher education dynamics in South Africa post-1994 and, second, I discuss various conceptualisations of the meaning of Africanisation in this context. In the section that follows, I shift the focus to UKZN and UCT respectively, considering their mission statements and examining their institutional culture in lieu of their language policies. In conclusion, it is argued that the essentialist and autocratic approach at UKZN as well as the more ‘hybrid’ but arguably tokenistic vision at UCT, are platforms for controversy and protest in contemporary South African society.

4 This is not to say, however, that race and gender dynamics play insignificant roles at UKZN campus life (see, for instance, Pattman, 2007).

Higher education in South Africa post-1994

The apartheid order was not merely an oppressive socio-political system but it was a fundamental knowledge project (Suttner, 2010:515), and as such it was not least propagated by some of the country's higher institutions of learning. All universities designed for white people were bound more or less to the racist ideology of the Nationalist Government and this system was maintained until the democratisation of the country in the early 1990s. The effects of these legacies continue to affect South Africa's universities and while this is more pronounced in some institutions than in others, all South African higher education institutions continue to be entangled with the past. I employ the term 'post-1994' rather than 'post-apartheid' in order to give expression to this continuity (Maré, 2014). The dynamics of race, gender and language that are at work in South African tertiary institutions today, are constructed on the basis of complex combinations of past discrimination, continuous social, racial and linguistic injustices and pervasive inequality (Pattman, 2007; Chetty & Merrett, 2015; Steyn & Van Zyl, 2001).

Since 1994, many different domains of South African higher education have been scrutinised in terms of their potential for transformation. For reasons of scope, I cannot provide any comprehensive assessment of transformation processes in higher education but I address institutional identity and language policy as two domains where certain changes might be observed. In the early years of the 2000s, some of the country's higher education institutions 'merged' into larger universities. The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) is an example of this, constituting since 2004 campuses of the prior 'white' University of Natal (UN) and the previously 'disadvantaged', primarily Indian University of Durban-Westville. Although the university management, lead by the controversial vice-chancellor M. Makgoba immediately engaged in the official propagation of a 'united' UKZN institutional identity, grass-roots level processes were jeopardised to an extent that scholars went as far as to call the merger as a 'tragic mishap' (Cebekhulu & Mantzaris, 2006).

An institutional identity is obviously linked to institutional culture and literature on this topic has recently proliferated in South Africa, not only in reference to the higher education sector, but also more generally in the context of the debate of structural racism in the industry and economy. One of the primary concerns of the student movements was 'the culture of whiteness' as institutional norm and the alienation it constituted for many black students in South African higher education institutions. According to Metz (2015), transforming an institutional culture of a university comprises (at least) five spheres: curriculum, research, language, aesthetics and governance. I consider

these five functional spheres not as separate entities, because they are inextricably interlinked, and language policy, for instance, is mostly intertwined with a more general governance of an institution.

The Department of Higher Education has requested all tertiary institutions to include race classification in their reporting as to be able to measure the demographics of race (Ruggunan & Maré, 2012:49). Hence, universities make usage of forms on which the term 'African' stands next to the term 'White', 'coloured' and 'Indian'. However, the problem persisting in this context is that categories of race are socio-politically constructed, and never neatly defined. In the context of South Africa, they always constitute an array of often dangerous social, cultural and linguistic meanings (Dolby, 2001). Diverse student debates suggest that the term 'African' is a self-reference label for a racially diverse group of South Africans (Matthews, 2011). Some scholars have searched for indicators of (dis)advantage other than race, such as gender and class (Erasmus, 2012) but continuous 'white privilege' complicates skepticism towards the value of race categories for redress measures.

As regards language, the *Language Policy for Higher Education* (South African Ministry of Education, 2002) mandates to specifically develop and promote African languages as Languages of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) at university level. More specifically, the Department of Education report (2003) stipulates that each tertiary institution should identify one African language and develop it as LoLT. Among most sociolinguists in the country it is considered an imperative that multilingualism of some sort becomes a reality at all levels of South Africa's educational system (Mda, 2004). However, universities responded in very different ways to the requirement to incorporate the stipulations of the Higher Education Report. The two institutions in focus, or rather their leaders, have approached African language promotion, Africanisation and 'transformation' in strikingly different ways, as I will attempt to show below. But before the institutional specificities of UKZN and UCT are provided, the concept of transformation will be linked to the idea of Africanisation as has been common in South African discourse.

'Africanisation' in higher education

There is a broad body of research on the issue of Africanisation in African higher education and it includes a vast variety of approaches. The term 'Africanisation' *per se* is notoriously difficult to define in a precise way, as is also the case with 'transformation'. First, these concepts mean vastly different things to people and second, these two terms have become exceptionally ideologically loaded and

politically contested in South Africa. It is therefore not surprising that scholars have had contrasting and at times contradictory voices regarding Africanisation and transformation in education. The conjunctures of colonialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism and globalisation have left extremely contradictory legacies in African education (Zezeza, 2006:22).

Some of the work on Africanisation has been characterised by undefined and yet quite essentialist language: Okeke (2010), for instance, writes about the “neglected impediment to *true* Africanisation of African higher education curricula” without, however, defining at any point, what *true Africanisation* precisely entails. Some scholars advocate for entirely “jettisoning” Western perspectives (Lebakeng, Phalane & Dalindjebo, 2006:77). Other authors have criticised the idea of ‘Africanisation’ on the basis that it is *per se* ‘essentialist’ because of its monolithic approach of what it means to be ‘African’ (Parker, 2003; Horsthemke & Enslin, 2005; Horsthemke, 2004).

Essentialist ‘European’ practices and structures were institutionalised during apartheid, and from this perspective alone, critical perspectives on essentialism are certainly vital in contemporary South Africa. Essentialism posits ideas as strict polar opposites, instead of accounting for gradation and contradictions (Fuchs, 2011). Although Spivak (1990) once argued that strategic employment of essentialism may be useful in deconstructing oppressive systems, she has more recently disputed an uncritical understanding of what has been termed ‘strategic essentialism’. Spivak herself may be the first to admit that any essentialism, even a strategic one, bears the risk of being abused by those who have become more powerful than others – whether they be researchers, editors, or politicians (Eide, 2010). Arguably, in the multicultural, multilingual and exceedingly hybrid South African society, essentialism yields very little insight into the complexities of human life. Especially in South Africa, essentialism is often an “ontological claim in the service of ideological contestation and identity politics” (Van der Waal, 2008:54).

While this chapter does not reject ‘Africanisation’ as a way to create more socio-cultural and racial equality at universities and is accepted as one potentially fruitful transformation strategy in South African higher education, it nonetheless argues for a critical interrogation of certain interpretations of the paradigm. In other words, I do not see Africanisation *per se* as a problem but rather the essentialised ways in which it has been framed and conceptualised in some of South African political discourse. One important point of the debate on Africanisation in higher education is that it needs to move beyond any simplistic, binary and oppositional constructions of ‘the’ Western/Eurocentric

on the one hand and the indigenous/Afrocentric approaches on the other. Africanisation does not need to polarise between Africa and the West. Arguably, for instance, there are African Englishes and an English Africanness; identities, also institutional ones, can be fluid and flexible. I would want to argue that research, as well as teaching and learning can blend the already existent European-based approaches with African ideas and knowledge systems.

Some have described Africanisation of knowledge as moving African philosophy and indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) to the centre of research and teaching (Viriri & Munwini, 2010). It was also argued that focus on the concept of *ubuntu*,⁵ for instance, may transform learning and enable students “to become successful knowledge workers in Africa” (Nkuna, 2013:82). As an example of an epistemological strategy of transformation in South African (higher) education, Africanisation can provide fertile ground to restore African pride and remedy the disadvantage of African students (Suttner, 2010). Such Africanisation would not be a radical advocacy against the West and would respect and foster human diversity (Letsekha, 2013; Msila, 2014). It is an ideal to further democratisation and social justice in South Africa that all youths, irrespective of socio-economic, racial or linguistic background, are given equal opportunity in higher education and that, perhaps, could represent the most crucial prerogative of Africanisation.

With respect to language, Zaleza (2006:22) stresses that “neither African nor European languages emerged with unsullied Africanness or Europeanness from colonialism”. For instance, every single one of South Africa’s eleven official languages has an extensive body of lexical items adopted from other languages. Zaleza continues arguing that any binary dichotomising “of languages that are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ for African identities and development” are futile because the main challenge is to understand how “people in each community and country navigate their linguistic continuum or multilingual heritage” in order to become glocal (ibid.). To be and live ‘glocal’ is a process that captures the sociolinguistic trajectories of many university students in South Africa, even without themselves being aware of it. Most African students come to university speaking an African language as a mother tongue, a local dialect, English as the primary language of their academic repertoire, perhaps an urban mixed-code and possibly another African language. The sociolinguistic life of university

5 The philosophy of *Ubuntu* is based on the significance of community and communal good in society and focuses on humanness as a vital element of intellectualism. For a detailed account of the concept applied to education, see Venter (2004).

students is characterised by extensive code-switching, mainly between English and an African language. The following quote of a UKZN student captures this:

When I'm interacting with my friend on campus, it is likely *ukuthi* [that] we will use English even if *kuyenzeka sifake nesiZulu* [it just so happens that we also use isiZulu] but it won't be long before we switch back to English.

With these fluid linguistic practices in mind, scholars have moved away from previous standard language ideologies and have started to acknowledge, that “‘impure’ languages are indeed the norm of ordinary use” (Makoni, 2003:148). Concepts such as ‘disinvention’ (Makoni, 2003) and ‘hybridisation’ (Banda & Peck, 2015) are all key terms that lie within such a paradigm shift. It is, however, not clear, in how far these new sociolinguistic approaches have been applied at tertiary institutions in the country. In the next section I turn more specifically to the two universities in focus and provide some extracts from their mission statements, official research reports and their language policy documents as facets of their propagated institutional identities. While Banda and Mafofo (2016:17) recently found through textual analysis of the mission statements of three South African universities that post-1994, “the commodification of struggle and transformation discourse has blurred the trajectories of the historicity of the universities in such a way that they appear not dissimilar”, I aim to demonstrate in this chapter that UKZN and UCT differ markedly as regards their propagated mission and language policy.

Mission and vision: UKZN *vis-à-vis* UCT

As mentioned earlier, the current University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) merged in 2004 with the former University of Durban-Westville (UDW) and the University of Natal (UN).⁶ The University of Cape Town (UCT), in contrast, remained in its sole institutional status and with it its Victorian roots. UCT's mission statement stresses the goal to be “a premier academic meeting point between South Africa, the rest of Africa and the world”. Its vantage point is a commitment to “innovative research and scholarship” that grapples “with the key issues of our natural and social worlds”.⁷ The mission statement and grand slogan of UKZN also includes the aim to be a “premier” university in the context of scholarship, however, one that makes a specific commitment to Africa by striving to “be the Premier University of African Scholarship”.⁸ The emphasis in

6 See for detail, Cebekhulu and Mantzaris (2006) and Chetty and Merret (2014).

7 https://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/apply/handbooks/fac_law_2012.pdf

8 <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/about-ukzn/vision-and-mission>

reference to the continent is significant; it flags the Africa-centred approach to knowledge as African scholarship has been defined as having “special interest in addressing issues from African perspectives” (Kamwendo et al., 2014:3).

UKZN’s vision further includes the aim to be a “truly South African university that reflects the society in which it is situated not only in terms of race, gender and class – but in terms of how it structures its values and priorities and how it responds to social needs” (UKZN Research Report, 2005).⁹ There is an implicit perspective of *ubuntu* incorporated in the above sentence by referring to “social needs”. Arguably, as mentioned earlier, UKZN can be regarded as one of the most racially transformed institution in terms of its staff component. The university prides itself on the fact that the percentage of white academic staff in the institution is notably lower than the average of white staff in the national university system. Certainly the demographics of the institution have changed quite dramatically since the 2004 merger. Whereas in 2004, only 16 per cent of academic staff members were African South Africans, in 2015 African staff members made up 28 per cent.¹⁰ These demographic statistics of the academic staff body stand in contrast to those at the University of Cape Town where transformation in terms of academic staff, and particularly the professoriate, has been very slow. Nyamnjoh (2015:56) argues that in 2013, there were only forty-eight African South African academics out of a total of 1405 at UCT, so roughly only 3 per cent. In such a white hegemonic space mimicry and hypocrisy become means of survival for black students and staff (ibid.). So if one looked merely at these demographics as indicator of ‘transformation’, the picture looks bleak for UCT. However, as social scientists we need to also remind ourselves that racial identity, like all other identities, are constructions (Maré, 2011, 2014). While it is not denied that a racial profile of a South African university can be one indicator of transformation or possibly lack thereof, I want to also suggest that numbers themselves only convey one aspect of a bigger picture.

At UKZN, there have been enough controversies to justify its own Wikipedia entrance entitled “Controversies at UKZN”. This webpage provides details about the “legal and disciplinary actions taken by senior university management against academics for speaking in public about the university” which have drawn wide criticism, including critique by UNESCO. It a monograph written by two ex-UKZN staff members in which management practices and executive strategies at UKZN between 2004 and 2015 are described as deeply autocratic and a severe threat to academic freedom (Chetty & Merret, 2014). One of

9 <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/publications/ResearchReport2005.pdf>

10 <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-09-04-00-transformation-part-of-everyday-business-at-ukzn>

the initial affairs started already in 2005, when the then vice-chancellor, Malegapuru Makgoba, suggested in an article printed in the weekly *Mail & Guardian* newspaper that white male South Africans were behaving like “dethroned baboons”.¹¹ This racial provocation was perceived offensive to many inside and outside the institution and it deeply racialised the social fabric of the university. While ‘race’ was an insignificant variable in the conflicts that played out at UKZN, it needs to be emphasised that UKZN governance, more generally, was perceived as too autocratic among staff members of all races. There was a general sense that academics were no longer appreciated to be critical interrogators of the internal affairs of the institution. In an interview conducted with a Zulu language professor in 2013, he fatalistically announced that ‘we just no longer have any say’. While Makgoba’s tenure ended in February 2015, it cannot be denied that staff and executive dynamics at the institution continue to be tense. On the executive level, one recent example was accusations of ‘racist tendencies’ thrown at the new UKZN vice-chancellor, Albert van Jaarsveld, in 2016. However, he was cleared of the allegations and the conflict led to several African executive staff members losing their jobs.¹²

The year 2016, more generally, has been a year of unprecedented post-1994 racial animosity in South Africa which led *City Press*’s Mondli Makhanya to argue that the country’s most challenging issue and one that should have all South African citizens “shudder with fear” is racial tension.¹³ Certain levels of racial tension have characterised most elite universities in South Africa during this year, but as far as media coverage on the student movements is concerned, the University of Cape Town seems to have been troubled with more racial tension than the University of KwaZulu-Natal. A general sense at UKZN is that ‘race’ as a subject of contention and conflict has been more an issue among staff members than among students.

In certain ways, the mission statement of the University of Cape Town could be seen as an antithesis to UKZN’s ‘truly South African’ propagated institutional identity. As arguably the most prestigious tertiary institution on the continent, UCT has engaged precisely a kind of anti-essentialist transformation strategy which was formulated as *Afropolitanism*. The idea of *Afropolitanism* propagates the ‘interweaving of worlds’ (Mbembe, 2007:28) and approaches African life

11 <http://mg.co.za/article/2005-03-25-wrath-of-dethroned-white-males> [accessed October 2014].

12 <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/ukzn-embroiled-in-racism-fracas-20170114> [accessed 2 April 2018].

13 For more detail to this excellent article, see: <http://city-press.news24.com/Voices/fanning-flames-of-hatred-20160109>

as multiple and heterogeneous. Evoking Bhabha's (1994) work, an Afropolitan is often characterised as an individual with a hybrid identity, a person "who has realised that her identity can no longer be explained in purist, essentialist, and oppositional terms or by reference *only* [my emphasis] to Africa" (Eze, 2014:240). UCT's vice-chancellor Max Price has been cited as regarding the syllable 'Afro' as the reference to the university's location and focus on Africa, and '-politan' as signifier "for a cosmopolitan and metropolitan view of a continent that is developing fast and is involved with the future".¹⁴ While this notion of 'Afropolitanness' at UCT acknowledges that excellent scholarship is produced in Africa, there is also a very clear orientation towards the world and international scholarship. Afropolitanism includes "scholarly incentives for UCT academics to engage in research that looks to our continent, as well as to the global south, Europe or the US" (Nhlapo, 2011). Currently at UCT, nearly 20% of students and 25% of academics are from outside South Africa. Nhlapo emphasises as a strategic goal of UCT 'internationalisation', but within and through an Afropolitan niche.

The institutional identity of UCT is clearly phrased with a global outlook and the aim to represent an internationally attractive tertiary institution. The mission statement assures this by guaranteeing students "internationally competitive qualifications". While UCT makes no explicit use of any language of Africanisms besides its Afropolitan vision, there is a clear commitment to promote diversity. Banda and Mafolo (2015:14) evaluate the mission statement at UCT as "forward-looking" and an "ideal for cultivating the society that was once tormented by the ruthless hand of the apartheid regime". While officially and on paper UCT's vision may appear progressive, grass-roots level dynamics suggest that there is a certain level of tokenism involved. Several studies (e.g. Bangeni & Kapp, 2007; Kapp & Bangeni, 2011; Kessi & Cornell, 2015) have shown that 'whiteness' is perceived as the normative institutional facet of this university and that black students and staff feel alienated in the institution. It is argued that "black students have to put in the extra effort to fit in, to prove themselves, and to defend their right to be at UCT" (Kessi & Cornell, 2015:12).

While UCT merely acknowledges its place in Africa in its mission statement and stresses internationalisation and academic excellence to a much larger degree than Africanisms, the propagated institutional identity of UKZN is phrased within a perspective that moves Africa to the centre and with a prime goal of "African-led globalisation". These two different perspectives are also reiterated in the language policies of the institutions as will be seen below.

14 <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20121124180508500>

Language policies and discourse

The differences between the language policy documents of UKZN and UCT are indeed quite striking.¹⁵ While the UCT policy is one and a half pages short and stresses the English language as the (implicitly only) medium of instruction and administration at UCT, the UKZN seven-page policy document stipulates the “development and use of isiZulu as an additional medium of instruction” (UKZN LP, 2014:2). The former has internationalisation in mind while the latter has an African-centred approach. Both language policies, however, recognise to some extent that the university constituency should represent active agents in the fostering of multilingual practices.

During the merger of the University of Durban-Westville and the University of Natal in 2004 it became evident that a language policy promoting isiZulu would be formulated. In 2006, the UKZN Language Policy was publicised and five years later the University Language Board (ULP) was launched. Part of this Board was also the inauguration of the University Language Policy and Development Office (ULPDO). The specific mission of this office is postulated as to “embrace and foster functional bilingualism at the University of KwaZulu-Natal through the promotion of equitable use of the English language and isiZulu”.¹⁶ In December 2014, the Language Policy and Plan documents were further revised, and the recognition of Afrikaans as one of the official languages dropped. The Language Policy cannot be elaborated here in detail¹⁷ but, in a nutshell, it aims for “isiZulu to have the institutional and academic status of English”. All UKZN staff and students are encouraged to develop communicative competence in isiZulu sufficient for academic interaction. Since the first semester of 2014, there is also a compulsory isiZulu module that all undergraduate students without proficiency in the language must take (independent of their area of studies). This kind of language learning by decree at university has stirred some controversy and the module politics have been described as socio-culturally and pedagogically problematic (Rudwick, 2017). The commitment to the development of isiZulu as a language of learning and teaching is indeed noteworthy in relation to UCT.

15 Both language policies can respectively be downloaded from the web at http://registrar.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/policies/Language_Policy_-_CO02010906.sflb.ashx and <http://www.uct.ac.za/about/policies/>

16 http://ulpdo.ukzn.ac.za/About_Us.aspx

17 For the 2006 version of the Language Policy, please see http://registrar.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/policies/Language_Policy_-_CO02010906.sflb.ashx or request a copy of the revised version from the UKZN ULPDO office: http://ulpdo.ukzn.ac.za/Contact_Us.aspx

Although the UCT language policy states as its objective “the need to prepare students to participate fully in a multi-lingual society, where multi-lingual proficiency and awareness are essential”, this commendation appears to be more of a perfunctory gesture than a practical target for learning and teaching. There are some projects in place that aim to foster multilingualism but there are clearly no intentions, as is the case at UKZN, to promote and develop an African language, such as the dominant isiXhosa in the Western Cape, as medium of instruction at the institution. The Multilingualism Education Project (MEP) aims to foster African students’ mother tongues (primarily isiXhosa) at undergraduate level but it is unclear how many students actually make use of the Centre. There is no overarching compulsory African language module for undergraduates as is the case at UKZN, but at the medical school isiXhosa has been taught mandatorily since 2004. The urgent need for doctors to be able to communicate with their patients is self-evident. Also worth mentioning is the *Masithethe isiXhosa* (isiXhosa Communication) module taught to students and staff which provides communicative skills in isiXhosa on an extra-curricula basis.

At UKZN, in contrast, isiZulu has been quite aggressively promoted in research where recently, three scholars (Kamwendo, Hlongwa & Mkhize, 2013) ask the rhetorical question whether UKZN can become “a *truly African* (South African university) and a premier university of African scholarship without taking indigenous African languages on board?” Four ‘theories’ find application in support of isiZulu promotion at UKZN in this context: (1) African scholarship; (2) Africanisation; (3) African Renaissance; and (4) transformation (*ibid.*). While the development of isiZulu at UKZN is considered commendable, an essentialist approach to the promotion of an African language might be deeply problematic in the current South African socio-political climate. A ‘truly African’ institution assumes a monolithic approach and meaning that is constructed as constant throughout time and space. The phrase ‘truly African’ alludes to an objective ‘truth’ or a specific typology of what it means to be ‘African’ which fosters a profound essentialism and is linked also to a sense of purism. African people differ in their perceptions of the precise characteristics of an African person and, by extension, an African university. Clearly, being African means different things to different people (Rudwick, 2015). It is not only a controversial claim that one African institution could be more ‘African’ than another; it is also a futile one. UKZN’s language policy and the teaching of isiZulu per decree appear to be entwined with the more general socio-political agenda of promoting a ‘truly African’ university. This essentialist view of Africanisation is regrettable, because it polarises the university community and also re-constructs ‘language’ as inextricably linked to race.

Concluding thoughts

In this chapter, I have tried to show how UCT and UKZN exhibit very different approaches to transformation and Africanisation. Neither approach has made the institution free of controversy. The current socio-political and racially charged climate in South African higher education makes it rather difficult for tertiary institutions to reconcile the interests and needs of their diverse constituencies. Jansen (2009:176) warned that ‘by sharply juxtaposing African and European culture, all the worst excesses of apartheid’s construction of racial identity are not only resurrected but also reinforced’. In some way, UCT has aimed to blur the lines between European and African language, culture and identity by promoting its Afropolitan vision. However, for many black UCT students, this vision has not provided the desired transformation of the institution. The statue of Rhodes was regarded as symbolic of the lack of ‘real’ racial and socio-political change. At the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), in contrast, the statue of King George V at Howard College still stands strong. Arguably, the statue there has not triggered more rejection because the white supremacy he reflects might be no longer the normative condition of socio-political dynamics on the campuses of UKZN. While this is per se commendable, it appears that the institution paid a high prize for its kind of transformation. Many of its most prolific and acknowledged academics have left the institution during the past decade.

At UCT student movements have accused UCT’s management of maintaining institutional racism. It has been argued (Kessi & Cornell, 2015:12) that “despite the increasing numbers of black students at UCT, their sense of belonging to the university remains limited”. At UKZN, quite contrarily, two ex-staff members have described the institution as an autocratic machinery that abuses “the language of Africanism” in order to make “minorities feel their time is literally running out” (Chetty & Merrett, 2014:193). When people don’t have a sense of belonging and feel their presence is not welcome, as is the case in the two above-mentioned quotes, something is wrong with the space itself and the way people of power inhabit that space. Mbembe (2016:30) points to the “possibility to inhabit a space to the extent that one can say, ‘This is my home. I am not a foreigner. I belong here’” within the borders of higher education but also beyond. By invoking the project of non-racialism, it is argued that “radical sharing and universal inclusion” is necessary (Mbembe, 2016:44). It remains to be seen, in years to come, whether South African universities will represent spaces where students and staff of all backgrounds can have a sense of belonging and purpose.

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8

SECTION

Schooling and
Transformation

Chapter 26

Standard Disruption: Transformation and language use in places of learning

Adam Cooper¹

We must admit that few people are committed to the protection of all forms and all faces of Afrikaans in the new South Africa. We must admit that the development and maintenance of Afrikaans as an academic language, as a culture, and as a powerful economic and social tool never was intended or destined to protect a black population. (Nwadeyi, 2016)

Arguably, the most pressing pedagogical issue in the current debate (around language policy at Stellenbosch University) is the role of written language, and increasingly English, in fostering academic literacies across a range of knowledge areas, or domains, not just nationally but globally. The argument that universities need to reflect regional demographics and promote 'mother tongue instruction' rides roughshod over this issue. (Hill & Robbins, 2015)

They want to catch you out man. They want to see if you're on that level man. How good is your Afrikaans... (School learner in the current study)

Introduction

The Council on Higher Education has described transformation in its sector as actions that will address or redress inequalities caused by apartheid and colonial rule, actions that will help to serve a new social order (Republic of

1 Parts of this chapter previously appeared in Aslam Fataar (Ed.) (2018). *The Educational Practices and Pathways of South African Students across Power-marginalised Spaces* (pp. 135-152). Stellenbosch, South Africa: AFRICAN SUN MeDIA. <https://doi.org/10.18820/9781928357896>

South Africa, 1997). In this chapter, I would like to explore some ideas about what transformation might mean in relation to how language is used and evaluated in educational places, such as universities. In general, language policies in official state institutions, including educational ones, function to validate certain languages and versions of language. This occurs through the production and reproduction of language ideologies: belief systems regarding appropriate and valued language usage, or ideas about certain languages being more sophisticated, erudite and pure than others (McGroaty, 2010). Language ideologies are inscribed with classed, raced and gendered power dynamics and usually function to denigrate the language of young people on the margins of society. Language ideologies do not only operate from the 'top down' through policy documents, they also permeate the ongoing, everyday social interactions that take place in educational settings, surreptitiously communicating to students whether they belong and are valued in these places.

In this chapter, I explore how language ideologies operated in a range of formal and informal educational sites in one poor neighbourhood on the Cape Flats, an area in which I spent a great deal of time conducting an ethnographic study. I analyse how marginalised young people engaged with these educational sites and how these settings transmitted subtle messages to students regarding 'who belonged' in these places and who was an 'authentic' student. The fieldwork describes young people in secondary rather than tertiary education; however, the language ideologies that existed in these places operate in similar ways in secondary schools, higher education institutions and society more broadly. The status of the version of Afrikaans spoken by these young people remains the same, regardless of whether it is used in high schools or universities, because the raced, classed and gendered associations attached to it are reproduced across different societal sites.

The research took place in one poor neighbourhood in greater Cape Town, an area that was reserved for people classified as 'coloured' under apartheid. I call this neighbourhood Rosemary Gardens. In classrooms at Rosemary Gardens High School students learnt that the language they brought to school was inferior to standard Afrikaans and that they needed to 'elevate' themselves, linguistically, if they desired to progress and succeed in this setting. Subsequently, only 15% of students who entered Grade 8 completed their secondary schooling at Rosemary Gardens High School. Similarly, when participating in a community youth radio show called 'Youth Amplified', young people from Rosemary Gardens were told by learners from other elite schools that the language they spoke was of a lower 'standard'. By contrast, my observations of a local hip-hop crew from the same neighbourhood

illuminated how this group used language naturally, mixing and matching as they did in other settings of their lives. Using language in this way facilitated critical engagement with the environments in which they lived, catalysing socially relevant forms of learning. This methodological approach, which I call multi-site linguistic ethnography, highlights the value of tackling issues of transformation by investigating the micro, everyday practices and interactions that occur in educational sites. An analysis of practices can complement macro-level language debates, such as the thorny conflict between those who argue for the right for cultural preservation, versus others who prioritise the right to access higher education.

From the ground up: Transformation as engaging with local practices

Debates around language and transformation at universities that have historically used Afrikaans as a medium of communication and instruction generally involve people committed to the preservation of standardised Afrikaans, in conflict with people who complain that Afrikaans renders the university inaccessible for large numbers of black students. This debate squares up language rights against those fighting for the right to higher education. It is, as Van der Waal and Du Toit (Chapter 23, this volume) point out, not really language which is at stake, but a political movement invested in the preservation of particular practices and ideologies of whiteness.

The shape that the language and transformation debate generally assumes, of “language preservation versus access”, rarely draws on the lived experiences of language use in educational sites, or theory from the field of socio-linguistics. If lived experiences are explored, they usually involve people’s accounts of acts of blatant racism in historically white universities. This is not to downplay the importance of documenting and eradicating the most distasteful actions that occur on our campuses. However, the way that the issue is approached means that the more mundane connections between language, race, class, gender, residential neighbourhood and the acquisition of knowledge, remain relatively un- or under-explored.

A good starting point for unpacking some of these more mundane, everyday issues related to the connections between language, race, class and education, is provided by the inspirational Chidinma Nwadeyi, from her convocation speech at Stellenbosch University in early 2016. Nwadeyi (2016) stated that the Afrikaans used in powerful educational settings “was never intended to protect a black population”. This phenomenon is not unique to Afrikaans. The ways in

which language is used on the ground – in the marketplace, working-class pubs or on the factory shop floor – differ from official versions of language that are standardised and disseminated in school curricula and used in places of higher learning. For example, the elite Parisian version of French that was standardized and elevated to the status of the official language devalued other regional and rural dialects which were classified as forms of *patois* (Bourdieu, 1991). In England, the varieties of English spoken in the political and economic centre of London, as well the English used in the academic centres of Oxford and Cambridge, formed a prestigious geographical triangle within which the basis for standardised, modern forms of English were agreed upon (Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert & Leap, 2009). Similarly, the version of Afrikaans that is used in formal educational contexts is the variety that white Afrikaners campaigned to have officially recognised as part of their political project. The standardisation of languages is always bound up in the formation and aspirations of nations, states and empires, the control of citizens and validating the cultural and linguistic capitals of powerful groups (Bourdieu, 1991).

The use of language works quite differently when viewed ‘from the ground up’. Rather than languages being circumscribed as discrete, bounded entities, people have access to a variety of signs and symbols that transcend individual language boundaries. Language operates instead as a set of mobile resources that people use in context-specific ways (Blommaert, 2010). Instead of speaking about monolingualism or bilingualism, language use is increasingly being understood as translingual practice: people use a range of signs and symbols from different sources to communicate and to assert their identities (Canagarajah, 2013; Garcia & Wei, 2013; Martin-Jones, Blackledge & Creese, 2012). However, these words are always inscribed with classed, raced and gendered power relations, involuntarily positioning the speaker in various social hierarchies.

This process of translingual practice is nothing new, although interesting examples of it are emerging in the global era. The language of the group of young people described in this chapter emerged through interactions between Khoi and San peoples, British and Dutch colonial settlers and slaves from East Africa and India. Their language, which could be classified as an informal version of Afrikaans, consists of a mixture of words from different sources, bound up in the history of Cape Town and interactions between groups of people during the colonial and apartheid periods.

Despite never being officially standardised, the words that the ‘great grandchildren’ of this legacy used were interpreted by others as linked to raced,

classed, gendered and neighbourhood-specific identifications. Their words were perceived as low in status and not able to be used for knowledge production and serious educational engagement. This had ramifications for their desire to participate in these spaces and pursue educational aspirations. In the following section I describe my study and its findings, before unpacking what it/they might mean for language transformation at tertiary educational institutions.

Three educational places involving young people from one Cape Flats neighbourhood

The data from this chapter is taken from a multi-site linguistic ethnography that comprised my doctoral research. The three sites that formed the research settings all involved young people from one poor Cape Flats neighbourhood, an area that was reserved for people classified as ‘coloured’ during apartheid. The neighbourhood was established when people were forcibly removed from District Six and pockets of the innercity and suburbs in the 1970s. The three sites that I researched, included: (1) classrooms at the local high school; (2) a community-based hip-hop crew that performed lyrics that they wrote; and (3) a critical pedagogy-based youth radio show where young people from the same neighbourhood, along with peers from three other schools, debated education-related issues.

My research was held together by the fact that it involved youth from Rosemary Gardens in each site and, more specifically, how these youth used language. In each of the three places young people used their language to engage with ideas, as peers and adults made sense of and evaluated their contributions. The young people’s words and the judgments of others held immense significance for their learning endeavours in each of the three sites.

Language at Rosemary Gardens High School

At Rosemary Gardens High School, students and educators remarked that the language that learners used was inferior to standard Afrikaans, a state of affairs which was interpreted as stunting their academic development. One educator said:

The biggest problem is that learners come with a cultural deficiency ... no books at home. The only proper English or Afrikaans they hear is from teachers. Their oral tradition is good, but we need to get them studying and reading. It’s the basis of the education. Once they have good command of the language, they can be fine.

This teacher implied that the linguistic capital that youth from Rosemary Gardens brought to school and which they spoke at home could not be used for school-based learning. While I agree with much of this educator's sentiment, that reading books and learning powerful, standardised language varieties is an invaluable asset, this does not mean that young people's languages are worthless or that they cannot be used in order to make connections and build bridges to powerful forms of knowledge. Much international research shows that teachers can foster academic literacies by making links between concepts and discourses that young people are familiar with, connecting these to the languages and knowledges of the classroom (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992; Lee, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 1995). The kind of attitude and value judgment displayed by the teacher quoted above communicates to youth that 'people like them' do not belong in the classroom unless they radically 'upgrade' their linguistic and cultural resources. It was therefore no surprise that 85% of students who entered Grade 8 stopped attending this school by Grade 12. Teachers' attitudes towards students' language were linked to prejudices related to forms of morality. One teacher said:

You can see by their accents that maybe my values and theirs doesn't merge because of their backgrounds.

The different accents with which students and teachers spoke were interpreted as underpinned by different values, ethics and notions of morality. The educator referred to differences in 'backgrounds'. Although almost all of the students and teachers at this school would have been classified as 'coloured' under apartheid, differences in social class, education levels and residential areas were clearly linked to the way that students spoke, with concomitant assumptions about their characters.

Students who remained at school until matric generally agreed with educators' sentiments regarding the language that they spoke. Focus groups with the matric class found the following:

The words are very high this year. We never hear those kinds of words. Everything we get is in Afrikaans but it's high Afrikaans. Not the Afrikaans that we speak. That's the Afrikaans that they train us in. It's the Afrikaans that we ought to speak...

[Translated from the Afrikaans]

Students that endured the school system, such as the one quoted above, were indoctrinated to believe that standard Afrikaans was the only appropriate medium for communication at school. She said that "it's the Afrikaans that we ought to speak", meaning that standard Afrikaans, the random variety of this

language that was canonised through the white Afrikaner nationalist project, held legitimacy in the school setting and that it was students' responsibility to acquire this version of the language. Standard Afrikaans was associated with superior forms of culture and knowledge; it was assumed to be 'high up' in comparison to students and their supposedly 'low' culture and language. One student said in relation to the language that she spoke:

That Afrikaans isn't right. It's not at the standard that it must be.

Particular versions of language were therefore bound up in colonial and apartheid ideas about 'standards', a concept that had specific race- and class-based connotations. Adhikari (2005) describes how one segment of 'Coloured' people in mid-nineteenth century Cape Town aspired to assimilate with 'Whiteness' and create distance from the African majority, in the process endorsing liberal or colonial values of 'self-improvement, civilization and standards'. Although there is no such thing as racial purity, Adhikari (2005) contends that some 'Coloured' people have, at times, militated against the dominant discourse of 'Coloured' as 'mixed race', through attempts to demonstrate affiliations with markers of 'Whiteness, purity' and, hence, 'higher standards'. The ways that linguistic 'standards' have been and continue to be understood in the past and present are therefore inseparable from notions of race and class and from how some groups purport to establish themselves as more learned than others.

The language that young people brought to RGHS classrooms was therefore not interpreted as 'equal but different' to the medium of instruction. Nor was it understood as a set of living resources that could be used, educationally, to learn about the social relations that produced these youth, as well as the city and society in which they lived. Instead their language was dismissed by both educators and students who remained at the school and who described it as a burden that militated against their educational ambitions.

These kinds of attitudes resulted in some students who continued to attend the school becoming highly suspicious of this institution and its personnel:

- D They use big words. Things that a person never heard before. We do an exercise in class. Furniture. We understand that language. But then the exams come and they ask the question in a different way man. You don't know ... The work looks familiar, but you think "what are these people talking about?" You feel as if they are speaking in another language to you.
- I And why do they do that?

- D They want to catch you out man. They want to see if you're on that level man. How good is your Afrikaans, how good is your knowledge of consumers [consumer studies].

[Translated from the Afrikaans]

A handful of students perceived the school, its practices, curriculum, dominant languages and forms of assessment as one component of an oppressive system that did not try to empower these young people educationally. Instead, the school was understood as attempting to expose these young people as ignorant, contributing to youth disengaging in classrooms and many, ultimately, discontinuing their schooling.

Language use at Youth Amplified

Youth Amplified participants attended four diverse schools: a former whites-only school, a new elite residential government school for gifted township students, one working-class former 'coloured-only' school (Rosemary Gardens High School) and a school located in a former black African township. Students from the two elite schools regularly transported discourses that they were exposed to at these institutions, ideas about 'standards', 'proper behaviour' and 'hard work breeds rewards', disseminating these ideas at the radio show. The following heated debate followed the viewing of a documentary called *Afrikaaps*. The film explored the possibility of using local Cape Flats Afrikaans as a medium of instruction at schools:

- G So you people in support of Afrikaaps, you do Afrikaans at school right ... so you say that you understand Afrikaaps and that at school you do Afrikaans and so that's a problem for you cause you have to come and do your subjects in that language. So here's the solution then, eradicate Afrikaaps, do the formal Afrikaans as it should be, then you won't have a problem at school.

[All talk at once]

- T Why don't the teachers come down to my level?

- G No, it's not supposed to be like that.

- Tracey Why don't teachers come, okay they don't even have to come to my level, why don't they just find a slight way of changing how they explain things?

- G That's the problem, you want to lower the standards, the standard has been set and now we want to lower it, it's wrong.

- T Slow and steady wins the race.

- G Slow and steady might win the race but with this education system we're in now is it time to be slow and steady?
- T The thing is [all shout at once] the thing is we are being taught, we have to learn to get to those standards. So they have to come to our standards to bring us up.
- G We wanna come and simplify Afrikaans in the most wrongest way by bringing this slang about ... Afrikaans is the formal language, it's the legal language, it has its own set of grammar and everything of how it should be spoken, now suddenly you want to come and say "no it's a bit too difficult".
- T It's not that we want the language itself to change, but if the teacher finds a easier way of explaining, then we might learn the language better don't you think? How can we get to that level if we don't really understand?
- G So you saying the teacher should use some of your language in-between?
- T ... and then give us the real meaning afterwards. Don't you think?
- G ... but then that's just gonna, that's just gonna ... prolonging things. You can, you just need to start reading ... baby Afrikaans.

In this debate, Greg, a learner who attended the elite residential school, proposed that 'standards' can be aligned with different versions of the Afrikaans language and that Rosemary Gardens High School students needed to elevate their linguistic standards in order to succeed academically. His perspective could have been contested by the other participants: the fact that a language has gained superior status does not mean that it is inherently more sophisticated or valuable. His proposition that standard Afrikaans has a grammar – and that Kaapse Afrikaans does not – is flawed: all languages 'have a grammar', sets of rules that govern the structure and syntax of the language (Gee, 1990).

However, the power that this language ideology held resulted in young people from Rosemary Gardens accepting the linguistic hierarchy, with subsequent debate focused on whether it was the responsibility of educators or learners to ensure that students acquired these supposed standards. The idea that students bring rich forms of linguistic and cultural capital to the classroom and that these resources could be used to enhance teaching and learning was never raised. Tracey's reference to teachers needing to dumb down classroom language for the sake of students and then reveal the "real meaning", indicated that she believed that her own language was inauthentic and invalid.

The debate between the various participants confirmed that the notion of ‘standards’, a prominent colonial-era discourse, continues to permeate former whites-only schools and other elite institutions like the one that Greg attended. This discourse functioned to validate certain practices and cultural forms, including language, as more sophisticated, civilised and conducive to knowledge production than others. Such notions are bound up in class- and race-based assumptions and prejudices. As one student at Youth Amplified said:

...there’s actually different standards of ‘coloureds’ ... if I step into Hanover Park, people will say ‘no she’s not ‘coloured’ but I actually am because of my background and heritage ... it’s just the way you look after yourself.

“Standards” were therefore related to where one lived, “looking after yourself” – presumably through grooming and hygiene – and, as the previous section demonstrated, to ideas about moral conduct. At both the radio show and at RGHS these race- and class-based ideas about standards were inextricably woven into attitudes towards language.

In response to Greg’s insulting assessment of their language, the students from Rosemary Gardens retaliated, dismissing Greg as illegitimately abandoning his race- and class-based roots through seeking upward mobility in the form of linguistic and educational aspirations. In an individual interview, Tracey repeatedly called Greg ‘a girl’, directing homophobic remarks at this young man.

Peers’ attitudes towards the informal Afrikaans that Rosemary Gardens youth spoke were perceived as insulting by young people from this neighbourhood, who interpreted these attitudes as others declaring a social hierarchy, one in which they were placed towards the bottom. This hierarchy was based on the links between language, race, class, residential neighbourhood and the schools that youth attended. On many occasions the conversation would not even need to revolve around issues of language. Learners who attended elite schools would simply speak, using English and particular accents, and I could sense the resentment that Rosemary Gardens youth felt. This led to conflict at Youth Amplified and hampered young people engaging in dialogues and learning from one another.

Language use amongst the Doodvennootskap

The Doodvennootskap (DVS) was a crew of approximately 10 young men from Rosemary Gardens, a group that publicly performed lyrics which they wrote. Three members of the crew worked for an NGO that promoted children’s rights,

attempted to eradicate child abuse in the area and contributed to other child participation projects, such as a research project with the representative council of learners at Rosemary Gardens High.

I was drawn to researching DVS due to the confidence that I observed in members of the group. I met the crew at a meeting on school dropout at the house of an older white woman who volunteered at Rosemary Gardens High School. During this session parent representatives from the School Governing Body did not utter a single word, whereas DVS members were outspoken, participating in the conversation and regularly disagreeing with other people's perspectives. Their engagement in this context was very different from the kinds of interactions that I observed in RGHS classrooms. I have written elsewhere about how the group gleaned concepts from their NGO interactions and from global hip-hop culture, ideas which they reiterated across different spaces in their daily lives (see Cooper, 2014).

What I would like to highlight here is the way that the group unashamedly used the language that they spoke at home, engaging in a range of different educational settings, asserting themselves and stimulating active forms of learning. To do this I will analyse the lyrics of one song from an album produced by a member of the crew, but to which the entire group contributed. The album was called *Skollyhood*,² the name indicating how these young people grappled with the contradictions inherent in experiencing both the glamour of being community artists, performers and musicians and simultaneously, in the eyes of some, common Cape Flats hooligans.

Members of the DVS crew wrote their lyrics in an organic mix of English and Afrikaans, similar to the way in which they spoke. For example:

My self-confidence se boosters het bruises, ek is 'n problem as ek wil unique is

[My self-confidence boosters have bruises, I am a problem if I want to be unique]

In this line, the artist called Slang (snake) moved effortlessly between English and Afrikaans, illustrating Alim's contention that hip-hop actually inverts Bernstein's typology of elaborate and restricted codes. Youth such as Slang used the genre of hip-hop to play with words, challenging the linguistic boundaries and structures of prescribed rule-bound codes and standardised linguistic forms, expressing complex ideas in the process (Alim & Pennycook, 2007).

2 A 'skollie' is slang for a hooligan or lower-class and badly mannered person.

Engaging with ideas that had direct relevance to these young people and using language with which they were comfortable, catalysed instances of reflection, another line in the song said:

Organisations are competing doing it for charity.

This lyric is a commentary on the range of NGOs that stream in and out of Rosemary Gardens on a daily basis, involving residents in a fleeting manner, as they compete for precious funding and other scarce resources.

Slang commented on the effects that globalisation has had on under-resourced areas like Rosemary Gardens, as he observed residents' obsession with international satellite television shows. Rows of satellite dishes speckle the roofs of houses in Rosemary Gardens:

My porridge bowl is nou [now] a satellite dish.

The paradox of people spending money on expensive entertainment when many people in the area did not have sufficient food to eat is communicated in this line. A similar idea was also observed in the following lyric, as he observed that a number of mothers prioritised their own entertainment needs ahead of their children's dietary requirements:

Babies lost their toys want their tannies wil rattle.

[Babies lost their toys because their mothers want to rattle]

Slang used the word 'rattle' as a pun, as he commented on the fact that babies's toys, like rattles, were being exchanged for a mother's 'rattle' or 'party'.

Using language naturally to think about the environment in which they lived allowed DVS members to gain the confidence to express themselves and assert their ideas without feeling intimidated that their language was not of the appropriate 'standard'. Another one of Slang's lines declared:

Sick of living up to other people's standards,

Why must I be compared to Brad Pitt if I've got my own life to live?

A safe space amongst peers who acknowledged his value and creative potential gave Slang the self-assurance to dismiss externally validated standards and publicly assert his ideas.

I observed DVS's confidence in the community centre where they interacted with NGO staff, local government officials and visiting funders, at Rosemary

Gardens High School with the teaching staff and with myself, a middle-class white researcher who came from a very different world. Conversing in a language that they did not believe was inferior undoubtedly contributed to their ease and willingness to participate in these places.

The notion of 'standards' therefore transcended the three sites, with a range of effects. Both the high school and Youth Amplified illustrated how schools reinforce broader societal hierarchies through validating specific varieties of language and colonial- and apartheid-era discourses. On the other hand, the DVS rapper dismissed standards imposed on him from elsewhere. DVS produced a critical, reflexive site that stimulated this young man to assess how standards are created and to question why he should be judged by global ideals of fame, beauty and masculinity. The use of language was therefore central to how young people from Rosemary Gardens made sense of themselves and engaged in learning in the various educational sites.

From the Cape Flats to the academy

So what could this study of youth from one Cape Flats neighbourhood, in dusty classrooms, ramshackle hip-hop recording studios and a community radio station possibly mean for lecture halls and campuses at South African universities? Language is the most important tool used for knowledge production and learning in higher education institutions. It is the medium through which we communicate our ideas, both orally and in the form of written texts. However, language also communicates subtle messages to students about their place in the world. Language is inscribed with meanings that demarcate the social status of a speaker or the values of an institution. It can have an immense impact on whether young people are made to feel welcome and valued in educational sites and whether they believe these places will enhance their lives, rather than lead to ridicule. The subtle messages students receive in educational sites indicate their place in the social hierarchy and whether they belong in these places. These messages have a profound effect on whether students invest and engage in educational sites.

My research in Rosemary Gardens showed that language ideologies often make marginalised young people extremely suspicious of formal educational sites, as these places communicate that their cultural resources are 'sub-standard', evidence of supposed class- and raced-based inferiority. Youth are 'on the lookout' for signs that they will be judged or humiliated in these settings, with the operations of language a key indicator that 'danger is imminent.'

While students at RGHS were told that their linguistic resources were inferior, leading to widespread discontinuation of their schooling, the young hip-hop crew's capable engagements with Kaapse Afrikaans rendered them experts in this language and facilitated the group's continued interest in the activities of the group.

This data emerged amongst youth who were not yet at the age when they would be eligible for university. However, its implications are just as relevant for institutions of higher learning as they are for secondary schools. At the heart of the transformation challenge to give all groups, including those who have been historically oppressed, an equal chance of educational success, is the need to change the powerful message systems integral to educational institutions. This messaging manufactures the social relations of pedagogy (Munns, 2007) and it sets the terms of engagement between students and institutions.

Powerful educational institutions therefore need to do two things simultaneously if they are to retain marginalised students and empower them with valuable resources. These institutions need to affirm all of the local cultural resources and languages young people bring to these places, enabling students to see themselves as authentic learners with a rich future in educational settings. They also need to make powerful knowledges/languages available to students. High-status languages and knowledges will be invaluable to youth in the future, as they enable young people to enter places of employment and participate in a range of other civil society interactions. There are a number of ways of contributing towards the dual goals of promoting academic languages/literacies and validating local language varieties in South African universities. I will suggest three strategies, all of which are intended to militate against powerful language ideologies. These strategies include the urgent need to utilise South Africa's rich heritage of linguistic resources for learning purposes, improve student agency in classrooms and interrogate the relationship between cultural objects/practices and supposed 'standards'.

The first strategy regards the study of local languages and their histories, in higher education institutions. This should become an educational imperative fundamental to developing students' historical consciousness and a sensibility for social justice. The history, use and educational potential of Afrikaans is a case in point. While Afrikaans was the language of apartheid, it is also a language that is spoken by more people of colour than whites, more of the working than middle-classes. Its first written forms were documented in the Koran. A great opportunity therefore exists for historically Afrikaans-medium universities to pioneer the transformation agenda by creating

courses for students on the history of multiple versions of Afrikaans and its role in both oppression and resistance. Such a course would speak to many groups of students, laying the groundwork for institutional inclusivity. South Africa has a rich linguistic heritage, including 11 national languages, all of which could provide insights into its people and be used for academic purposes, demonstrating to students that their cultural resources have epistemological value.

The second strategy relates to student participation in university classrooms. It is now widely accepted that unidirectional lectures do not optimise learning, that multilingualism is a resource and that technology and social media hold great potential to democratise and enhance education. While not abandoning the traditional lecture, norms around who speaks and how they speak in university classrooms can be changed by facilitating inputs from students, promoting group work as well as multi-modality – the use of sensory experiences and bodily practices that do not primarily focus on language. Ensuring that student-led sessions take place would aid intentions to promote student participation. There will always be a place for the traditional lecture, but this is not the only way that information can be shared, especially in the ‘technological era’. Sometimes undergraduate class sizes make it difficult for students to contribute to lectures, but academic staff need to be creative and find ways for students to speak in university classrooms.

Finally, debunking some of the assumptions and myths around educational ‘standards’ and exposing the ways in which ‘standards’ become established, is an urgent matter to be explored in South African higher education institutions. Part of this process requires us to interrogate many of our everyday assumptions in the academy. These assumptions relate to the ways that we write and speak. It involves questioning whether we are referring to concepts and practices that are genuinely fertile for the production of knowledge, or are we simply following conventions which have been decreed from random authorities to be ‘learned’ and ‘scholarly’? The kind of transformation which I am referring to requires us not to merely accept the status quo, but to question our everyday practices relating to language and the production of knowledge.

Last words

In South African higher education institutions, ‘transformation’ usually means counting numbers of categories of people that exist in a faculty or department, making sure that there is at least one black woman in a senior executive position, or creating a committee to look into the issue in a new way.

It very rarely entails an examination of the foundational, everyday practices that constitute teaching and learning on our campuses. Part of the reason for this is that, in the post-apartheid neoliberal university, measuring and describing this kind of mundane change is very difficult. However, the everyday use of language in universities goes to the heart of educational praxis and our willingness to engage authentically with our collective history. As a white South African who makes the bare minimum linguistic effort, it never ceases to amaze me how surprised black South Africans are when I greet them in an African language, here on the African continent! Their reaction demonstrates how little effort has been made by whites in this country to take a genuine interest in the cultural resources and people that exist in this context. While the decision has been made, correctly in my opinion, to differ from countries like China, Japan and those of Latin America and conduct university teaching and research predominantly in English, the use of languages on our campuses remains integral to transformation efforts. It is an important component of creating inclusive institutions, recognising that violent conquest is integral to our history, forcing privileged students to reassess taken-for-granted norms and for showing marginalised youth that they belong in these institutions and that their cultural resources may be used to produce knowledge.

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Chapter 27

Transformation as a Matter of State rather than Degree: Thinking beyond desegregation

Chana Teeger¹

What do we mean when we talk about the transformation of educational spaces? Often, we think about transformation as a matter of degree: more bodies in spaces from which they have historically been excluded. In higher education, small numbers of black female professors, for example, point to a lack of transformation; while high numbers of first-generation black students are conversely marshalled as evidence of change. Similarly, universities speak of throughput rates for black and white students, while school-based researchers point to racial disparities in educational attainment and achievement.

But educational spaces reproduce inequalities in a myriad of ways. While changing the demographic profile of access, achievement and attainment is a necessary condition for transformation, it is not a sufficient one. In what follows, I argue that we need to think of transformation as a matter of state rather than only of degree. Doing so requires unpacking how desegregated educational spaces continue to reproduce racial inequalities beyond access and outcomes. It means revealing and dismantling cultural milieus that continue to privilege whiteness and thereby reproduce inequalities.

In arguing for transformation as a matter of state, I focus on inequality beyond access and outcomes. I begin by reviewing scholarship that points to the various

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ways in which desegregated schools continue to reproduce racial inequalities. Next, drawing on 18 months of fieldwork in two former Model C schools, I build on this literature to highlight several ways in which these post-apartheid schools that have racially desegregated (transformed as a matter of degree) continue to reproduce racial hierarchies (failed to transform as a matter of state). In the process, I point to how thinking of transformation as a matter of state pushes us to focus on two understudied dimensions of racial inequality in schools: (1) How schools structure unequal experiences for students of different races; and (2) How schools feed into a larger transformation agenda by teaching broad lessons about the problems of, and remedies for, racial inequality in the society.

Although focused on high schools, this chapter has implications for our understandings of transformation in higher education too. First, it pushes us to think about the myriad, and often subtle, ways in which universities – like schools – have failed to transform as a matter of state. Second, if we are to address these processes in high schools, it is important that we engage with teacher education programmes in universities. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of these issues.

Schools and inequality

In their seminal work, *Schooling in Capitalist America*, Bowles and Gintis (1976) debunked the idea of schooling as a great equaliser. Instead, they developed a “correspondence theory” which argued that schools teach dispositions and orientations conducive to functioning in a hierarchical capitalist corporation. Schools attended by children from middle- and upper-middle-class families tend to develop skills compatible with middle- and upper-management, for example, critical thinking. Schools attended by children from working-class families tend to privilege dispositions compatible with factory work, for example, compliance. Paul Willis (1977), however, challenged the idea that students passively internalise the orientations transmitted in schools. Instead, he used ethnographic data to demonstrate that adolescents from working-class backgrounds often actively resist school rules and practices aimed at disciplining them into compliance. Rejecting dominant norms articulated in schools, these students fail to achieve well in school. In so doing, they inadvertently play an active role in reproducing the class hierarchy. According to Bourdieu (1974; see also Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), however, it isn’t so much that schools teach particular dispositions to particular classes of students. Rather, schools reward certain dispositions, tastes and norms – in Bourdieu’s

terms, “cultural capital” – taught at home and effectively mobilised by middle-class students at school.

Recent scholarship on the role of schools in mediating the effects of family background on academic achievement has predominantly been taken up by quantitative researchers (Brint, 2013; Stevens, 2008). Beginning with status attainment models (Blau & Duncan, 1967), researchers began to identify the paths through which family socioeconomic status affects occupational and educational attainment. While these quantitative models helped researchers to document the intergenerational transmission of inequality, they were criticised for treating schools as “black boxes” (Bonikowski, 2004; Lareau, 1987). Using multivariate models, these studies fell short of observing and documenting the micro-interactional processes within schools that generate inequality. So, for example, while these studies could tell us that parental involvement is correlated with educational outcomes (Stevenson & Baker, 1987), they had a more difficult time explicating how or why this happened.

Identifying this gap, a growing body of literature in the sociology of education has drawn on ethnographic and other qualitative methods to build on the scholarship of Bourdieu (1974), Willis (1977), and Bowles and Gintis (1976) by specifying the dynamic and nuanced processes through which schools contribute to social reproduction. Like the bulk of quantitative research, researchers in this qualitative tradition often explicitly motivate their studies by highlighting the role played by the processes which they identify in determining educational outcomes. Lareau (1987:73), for example, argues that, while much research has focused on “educational outcomes; very little attention [has been] given to the *processes* through which ... educational patterns are created and reproduced” (emphasis in the original). Her research attends to this gap by examining how social class structures differences in parental involvement – a variable shown to influence educational performance (Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Her findings demonstrate that underlying the correlation between these variables are different expectations about the proper role of schooling among working- and middle-class parents. The middle-class parents in Lareau’s study viewed education as a collaborative encounter between teachers and parents. They therefore approached the parent–teacher interaction in ways that resonated well with teachers’ own orientations. Working-class parents in the study, on the other hand, who tended to view schooling as a discrete process that occurs on school grounds, found themselves unable to effectively advocate for their children. This work thus adds a detailed empirical account of the processes through which social class affects parental involvement and, by extension, educational outcomes.

Expanding the focus to the intersection of race and class, Lareau and Horvat (1999:37) further specify the processes “whereby social and cultural resources are converted into educational advantages” by documenting how race (and specifically parents’ concern over racism in schools) mediates the effects of class on parental engagement with schools. The contextual nature of capital and its successful activation has also been a key focus of Carter’s (2002, 2005, 2012) work which explores situational variation in what counts as cultural capital. Specifically, she argues that researchers need to expand their focus beyond the “dominant cultural capital” valued by gatekeepers and powerful institutions to theorise and document the role of “non-dominant cultural capital” in the lives of black youth. Framing her work within the educational outcomes literature, Carter (2005:138) argues that “the differential values placed on both ‘dominant’ and ‘non-dominant’ cultural capital by students and educators ultimately affect the prospects of mobility for low-income African American students” (see also Carter, 2002, 2012). Similarly, in a comparative study of immigrants in the US and the UK, Warikoo (2011) finds that second-generation immigrants often adopt behaviours labelled as “anti-school” by teachers (for example “talking back” or displays of hip-hop culture). Like Carter (2005), Warikoo finds that these behaviours have little to do with orientations towards schooling and rather reflect peer-group status considerations (see also Dolby, 2001).

These studies add important knowledge about the mechanisms and processes through which social inequality is reproduced. However, their significance is to be found not only in explicating how school norms and practices contribute to unequal educational outcomes. They also show how schools structure unequal experiences for children. When schools reward the styles and dispositions associated with one group over another, they create a tension for students who must carefully navigate the different worlds which they inhabit. The “balancing acts” (Warikoo, 2011) and “code switching” (Carter, 2005) demanded of certain students but not others present challenges which are not equally distributed across schools and classrooms. When students are penalised for displaying “non-dominant cultural capital” (Carter, 2002, 2005) in school, this can not only affect their educational outcomes but also their experience in school.

In focusing on young people’s experiences in and of themselves, I draw on a body of literature called the “New Childhood Studies”. Scholars in this tradition argue that we should not think of children only as ‘adults in the making’. A 15-year-old, in this perspective, should not be thought of only as a future adult, but rather as a complete and fully formed 15-year-old with her/his own

unique experiences, political orientations and belief systems (Gordon, 2010; James, Jenks & Prout, 1998). This perspective moves us away from a unitary focus on childhood as a process of socialisation where children are always in a state of becoming but never truly being. Drawing on this literature, I argue that focusing on schooling predominantly through the lens of social reproduction obscures the meaningfulness of the present-day experiences of children and adolescents. Conceptualising research in terms of educational outcomes and what these mean for job prospects subsumes our understandings of children's experiences under a framework that views them as important only as future workers. In thinking about transformation as a matter of state rather than only of degree, I argue that we need to attend not only to the labour-market trajectories of learners as they become adults. Instead, we also need to examine inequalities in how young people experience the process of schooling in and of itself.

I add to this literature by documenting several ways in which the schools that I studied have failed to transform as a matter of state, including: (1) reinscribing boundaries by proxy; (2) framing victims as “the problem”; (3) using humour to mask racism; and (4) validating the perspectives of dominant groups. Before detailing each of these processes, I briefly outline my methodology.

Data and methods

The data in this chapter are drawn from a larger research project examining how South Africans are grappling with their apartheid past in the educational system. Data were gathered over the course of 18 months in two top-performing former Model C schools in Johannesburg.² I call these schools Glenville and Roxbridge High.³ I focused on two top-performing former Model C schools because, today, these are the most racially and socioeconomically diverse schools in the country (see Dolby, 2001; Soudien, 2012) and I was interested in how histories of racial oppression are taught in contexts of racial diversity. Table 27.1 describes the racial composition of the schools.

2 The term “former Model C” refers to schools that were designated for whites during apartheid, but desegregated during the transition to democracy. For more information about the desegregation of South African schools, see Carrim and Soudien (1999) and Soudien (2012).

3 Names of schools and respondents are pseudonyms.

Table 27.1 Schools by race of learners (percentages)

School	African	Coloured	Indian	White
Glenville High	60	5	30	5
Roxbridge High	40	5	5	50

During my fieldwork, I began to reflect more broadly on the relationship between schools and inequality. For many of the students at Glenville and Roxbridge High, attending these schools offers the opportunity for upward mobility. The schools both obtain close to 100% pass rate on the standardised matriculation exams and are top feeder schools into one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in the country. Thus, on traditional measures of inequality – which explicate the role of schooling in mediating the effects of family background on educational outcomes – these schools have the potential to be transformative. Furthermore, the demographic composition of the student body in both schools reflects a high degree of transformation. The same cannot be said for the teaching staff, which remains predominantly white in both schools, but more so at Roxbridge than at Glenville. In other words, both schools reflect some degree of transformation. At the same time, however, my data revealed that students were having very different types of experiences within schools, indicating a lack of transformation as a matter of state.

The data I present were collected through a combination of in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations. The research included five months of daily observations in 17 Grade 9 history classrooms.⁴ In addition, I conducted formal, semi-structured interviews with a randomly selected sample of students (aged 14-15), stratified by race⁵ and gender ($N=160$). The response rate from students was 82.5%. I also conducted formal semi-structured interviews with all Grade 9 history teachers (9) in both schools ($N=10$). Tables 27.2 and 27.3 describe the samples.

4 I focused on Grade 9, because this is when students across the country learn about apartheid in a formal and systematic way for the first time in the educational system.

5 I use the term “black” to refer inclusively to Africans, coloureds and Indians, and in contrast to whites. When respondents in my study used the term “black”, they tended to do so to refer to black Africans only. I have maintained their terminology in direct quotations and fieldnote extracts.

Table 27.2 Educators by race and school

Educator	School	Race
Ms Devin	Roxbridge	White
Ms Green	Roxbridge	White
Mr Lane	Glenville	White
Ms Lesley	Roxbridge	White
Ms Mokoena	Glenville	African
Ms Ndlovu	Glenville	African
Ms Prescott	Glenville	White
Mr Pretorius	Glenville	White
Ms Roux	Roxbridge	White
Ms Viljoen	Roxbridge	White

Table 27.3 Learners by race and school

Learners	Glenville High	Roxbridge High	Total
African	28	18	46
Biracial/Mixed	5	0	5
Coloured	19	18	37
Indian	20	17	37
White	16	19	35
Total	88	72	160

In addition to formal interviews with history teachers, I spent many hours in the schools' staff rooms chatting informally with educators across subject areas. Formal interviews with teachers and students lasted an average of one hour. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. I analysed the data using descriptive and analytic codes (see Miles & Huberman, 1994) with the use of the qualitative data analysis software program, Atlas.ti. I employed an inductive grounded theory approach to the analysis of the data (see Charmaz, 2001). In the first round of coding, I applied descriptive codes to the data and wrote detailed memos about emerging themes. In the second round of coding, I applied analytic codes developed from the first round of analysis. The process resulted in over one hundred unique codes.⁶

⁶ For more detail on case selection, data collection and data analysis, see Teeger (2015a and 2015b).

Desegregated but unequal

Thinking about transformation as a matter of degree, we can say that both Roxbridge and Glenville have evidenced a great deal of change. These former apartheid-era “whites only” schools are now racially diverse. The teaching staff at both schools, however, reflect a slower rate of transformation than the student body. On both counts (learner and educator diversity), Glenville would score higher than Roxbridge. One could say then that while both schools have transformed, the degree of transformation at Glenville is higher than at Roxbridge.

However, as soon as one starts to focus on transformation as a matter of state, one finds a variety of practices in both schools that point to the persistence of institutional cultures that have not changed and that continue to reproduce racial hierarchies. Below, I point to four such practices: (1) Reinscribing boundaries by proxy; (2) Framing victims as “the problem”; (3) Using humour to mask racism; and (4) Validating the perspectives of dominant groups.

Reinscribing boundaries by proxy

At the most basic level, transformation can be stalled by school practices that reinscribe racial boundaries by proxy. For instance, research has shown how tracking (streaming) can lead to racial boundary formation within supposedly desegregated schools (Tyson, 2011; Lewis, 2003). Similarly, Ispa-Landa and Conwell (2015) have documented how targeted interventions can serve to stigmatise black youth from urban areas who are bussed into affluent majority-white neighbourhoods to attend well-resourced suburban schools.

At Glenville, I witnessed school practices that served to create a type of internal segregation within this desegregated post-apartheid school. Specifically, while English was the language of instruction at both Glenville and Roxbridge, the two schools differed in terms of their second language policy. At Roxbridge, all learners were required to take Afrikaans as their second language. At Glenville, learners could choose between Afrikaans and Zulu. On the face of it, then, it might appear that Glenville was more transformed than Roxbridge in terms of its second language policy. A closer look, however, revealed this to be a case of transformation as a matter of degree rather than state. Glenville had added Zulu as an optional second language, reflecting a change from an apartheid-era choice of English or Afrikaans only. However, it did not disrupt notions that privilege English and Afrikaans over the other nine language recognised

officially in the post-apartheid era. Moreover, the ways in which Glenville implemented its second-language policy resulted in a type of resegregation of the school space.

While learners of all races were technically free to choose either Afrikaans or Zulu as their second language, in practice only black African learners took Zulu as their second language. Several white learners told me in interviews that although they had considered choosing Zulu, they were strongly encouraged by educators to take Afrikaans. They were told that although this was a second-language choice, the Zulu classes were taught at a level that required first-language proficiency. The result was that although the Afrikaans as second-language classrooms were racially diverse, the Zulu as second-language classrooms were composed entirely of black African students.

Importantly, Glenville used learners' second-language choice to divide learners into classes. In other words, learners who chose Zulu as their second language also took every other school subject with other learners who had similarly elected Zulu as their second language. The same was true for those who chose Afrikaans. Although classes were designated with letters (e.g. Grade 9A, Grade 9B, and so on), they were also referred to informally as the "Afrikaans classes" and the "Zulu classes".

This practice reinforced both social and symbolic boundaries. According to Lamont and Molnár (2008:38) social boundaries refer to "objectified forms of social difference manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources". Symbolic boundaries, while often related to social boundaries, are analytically distinct and comprise of "conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, and even time and space ... [they] separate people into groups and generate feelings of similarity and group membership". On the level of social boundaries, this practice divided cohorts in a way that meant that this desegregated post-apartheid school contained classrooms with only black African learners in them. This type of internal segregation was reinforced symbolically by naming these classrooms "Zulu" or "Afrikaans". In addition, discourses around the comportment and behaviour of learners in these different categories of classes created a hierarchy where the "Afrikaans classes" were conceptualised as well-behaved, while the "Zulu classes" were viewed as having discipline problems. School practices around second language thereby reinserted a framework that privileged English and Afrikaans (whiteness) and denigrated Zulu (blackness).

Framing victims as “the problem”

In addition to discourses that constructed the so-called “Zulu classes” at Glenville as having disciplinary problems, black students also told me of incidents where educators disciplined them using racist constructs and language. In the excerpt below, for example, Zinhle, a learner in one of the “Zulu classes”, tells me how, among other things, educators have disciplined her and her classmates by telling them not to “bring their ghetto behaviour to school”:

[T]hey're always complaining and saying like we're bringing our ghetto behaviour into the school ... [The African students doing Afrikaans] do get into trouble now and then but not as much as the Zulu – it's always Zulu classes. Because our grade head ... every assembly that we had she would shout at the Zulu classes. 'Zulu classes, you're bringing your ghetto behaviour, you must go to the university of Soweto and learn hijacking' and stuff like that. So what is she trying to say about us Zulu people? That we most of the time hijack and stuff?

As I detail elsewhere (Teeger, 2015a), black learners did a lot of work in interviews to explain to me why apparently racist incidents were not really about race. Reflecting on my own positionality as a white woman roughly the same age as many of the educators in the school, I concluded that these interpretations do not necessarily reveal what black learners think about these incidents. Instead, they show how these learners think they *ought* to explain racist incidents to white authority figures in their local school context.

My data point to various ways in which school practices may have reinforced black learners' hesitance to name incidents as racist. Zinhle, for example, told me how when she and her friends complained about racism, the school responded by bringing a psychologist in to speak to them. Helen, another black African learner at Glenville, also recounted a time in primary school when she was sent to see a psychologist because she had accused educators of being racist:

Helen I used to go to a school [where] we never had black teachers. All the teachers were white ... So then like every time I had a temper tantrum they would have to like take me out of class and take me like to the office. So ... when they locked me like in the sick room, I started screaming “You're all racist” and stuff like that. And then like the school actually hired like a psychologist like for me and my mom because they thought maybe my mother's teaching me that “Okay, white people are racist” and stuff like that.

Interviewer What did you discuss [with the psychologist]?

Helen Like they just asked me like, “Have you been like an outcast? Do teachers give you low marks? Does your mother tell you like white people have done us wrong?” or something like that, you know, “Do you hang out with white people?”

It may indeed be useful to provide psychological support for individuals and groups who experience racism and discrimination. However, in the descriptions provided by learners, the psychologists seem to take on a role not of supporting victims but of problematising the very accusations of racism. In her recollection, for example, Helen tells of how the psychologist tried to unpack the “real” cause of her accusation. Helen does not remember being asked about her experiences of racism. Instead, she recounts being asked whether her mother tells her that “white people have done us wrong”, whether she has white friends, and whether she receives low marks. By being sent to see a psychologist when they express that they are perceiving incidents as racist, students are taught that coding incidents as racist is a reflection of having some sort of psychological and individual-level problem. In these descriptions, it is the victims of racism who are framed as “the problem”. The institutional culture that allows educators to make statements about learners’ “ghetto behaviour” remains unexamined and untransformed.

Using humour to mask racism

My study also revealed a normative climate operating in schools that framed racially charged incidents as “jokes” (see Teeger 2015a).⁷ Students of all races told me over and over again in interviews that there was no “real” racism at school. For example, when I asked Charlene, a coloured female at Glenville, whether there was racism at school, she answered: “I think there is but ... when they do say like a racist remark they mean it in a joke or something like that.” Sizwe, an African male at the same school also explained “there are a few racial jokes here and there but it’s nothing serious. It’s nothing to offend anybody”.

Learners often described the ability to joke racially as an example of what it means to be South African. In describing what being South African means to him, Nathan, a white male at Glenville, explained:

I think we’ve learnt to laugh at ourselves instead of it being mean. So ... I find it – *yoh*, it’s like part of me to be culturally diverse and mingle with other guys. So *ja*, I couldn’t imagine it much different.

7 For an analysis of how humour can be mobilised as a tool to both resist and reinforce power relations, see Pattman and Bhana (2010).

The descriptions of the few students who refused to characterise these incidents as humorous revealed how difficult it would be for black students to challenge these types of utterances. For example, Kagiso, an African male at Roxbridge, explained how other students' insistence that they were only joking, left him with little option but to ignore racist incidents:

[T]hey're in a crowd. They make jokes and then everyone's laughing and you just go, [you're] one person, and [you] say, "Don't make jokes like that." And they say, "We're just trying to have a good time." So I'm just avoiding it, staying away from those people that are making those jokes and [I] just do what I do.

Aiden, a coloured male at Roxbridge, explained that because racist utterances were said "with a smile", it becomes difficult to know the true intention of the speaker:

- Aiden [T]he new South Africa, it's a lot of a joke. People can't really – like for me, I can't differentiate between serious and joking...
- Interviewer So what do you mean when you say that can't tell the difference?
- Aiden Like the way people say it. Like they won't say it like in a serious face, they'll do it with a joke, with a smile so it's kind-of hard to differentiate if it's given directly as an insult or if it's just a play, joking thing.

These descriptions point to a normative climate that pushes learners to interpret racially-charged incidents as jokes. They also point to what scholars have termed "subtle", (Essed, 1991; Waters, 1999) "covert" (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009) or "smiling" forms of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2014) that gain prominence in the aftermath of *de jure* racism. These forms of racism can result in what scholars term "attributional ambiguity": When prejudice is ambiguous rather than blatant, individuals can struggle to determine the cause of apparently discriminatory practices and this, in turn, can result in heightened levels of stress and impaired cognitive functioning (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007). By failing to recognise, challenge and address these forms of racism, schools privilege certain perceptions of reality over others. For black learners, this often means not only experiencing racism but also having one's perception of reality questioned and invalidated. When institutions fail to address racism in all its manifestations, they reproduce power relations and remain untransformed as a matter of state.

Validating the perspectives of dominant groups

In addition to dealing with interpersonal racism that occurred on school grounds, schools also transmitted lessons that hindered learners' abilities to understand structural racism. Elsewhere (Teeger, 2015b), I have shown how educators taught about the country's apartheid past in ways that served to construct a strong boundary between past and present. The narratives they presented resonated with similar discourses produced in institutions such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (see Teeger, 2014; Teeger & Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2007; Posel, 2001; Wilson, 2001; Mamdani, 1998). Educators focused on individual victims and perpetrators, but sidelined discussions of beneficiaries. The economic dimensions of apartheid, which remain highly relevant in terms of understanding contemporary inequality, remained muted. Learners were left with very individualised notions of merit and a lack of understanding of the constraints and opportunities provided by social structures. In their interviews with me, educators indicated that they wanted students to develop a sense of individualism and to stop thinking about race and redress. Ms Viljoen, a white teacher at Roxbridge, for example, noted in her interview:

If it's [the apartheid section] not taught correctly, it can lead to more division because you can have that whole idea of "But that's how much we suffered" and "I should get this." But if it's taught correctly it should not do that; it should do the opposite.

Ms Mokoena, a black African educator at Glenville, responded as follows to a question of what she hoped would be the one or two things that students took with them from learning the apartheid section:

I'd hope that they learnt that hard work will get them through life. That they should stop sitting down and blaming somebody for the wrongs that were done in the past. They should get on with it and make something out of their lives. Black, white or Indian, it doesn't matter.

Many of the students seemed to take in these messages. For example, Nomvula, a black African learner at Glenville told me of how her father still holds on to the pain of the past. She explained that she tries to get her father to see things differently. She recounted that she tells her father the following:

You have to stop blaming them for what happened. You have to move on. If you want me to have a bright future, you have to let go, you have to teach me that that thing is just over, that boundary is over, there's nothing left of it and [I] have to just work on getting on with everybody, just not minding skin colour and just like move away from the fact that there was apartheid.

It is not difficult to see how these lessons dovetail with some of the storylines of colourblind racism identified by Bonilla-Silva (2014) – most obviously, with the notion that “the past is in the past”. As Bonilla-Silva (2014) has shown, racial discourses that deny the effects of histories of legislated racism on the present are mobilised in the era of *de jure* equality to provide ideological support for a racially unequal status quo. In teaching young people about the irrelevance of the past, desegregated schools transmit political messages that naturalise inequality and individualise responsibility. These messages – if taken forward by adolescents as they become future voters and decision-makers – have the potential to thwart transformation on a societal level.

Discussion and conclusion: Thinking beyond high schools

In this chapter, I have argued that we should think of transformation as a matter of state rather than only of degree. Thinking of transformation as a matter of degree dovetails with concerns in the literature on the sociology of education about inequality in access and outcomes. In other words, it entails examining which groups get into which schools; how different groups achieve academically relative to each other; and where individuals from different groups end up in the labour market. If we are to tackle racial inequality in education, asking these types of “how much” and “how many” questions is crucial. However, it is not enough.

Glenville and Roxbridge High have in many ways transformed as a matter of degree. These former “whites only” schools are now racially desegregated and their student body is diverse. Glenville seems more transformed than Roxbridge on this measure. This is true also when considering the degree to which the teaching staff has transformed. Although the majority of educators in both schools is white, Glenville has more black educators than does Roxbridge. Attending to important questions around demographics allows us to examine the degree to which these schools have transformed in terms of access and outcomes.

Still, qualitative data collected during 18 months of fieldwork reveals practices in both schools that serve to reinscribe racial boundaries and hierarchies. Like other studies that have shown how desegregated South African schools continue to privilege whiteness (e.g. Carter, 2012; Pattman and Bhana, 2010; Soudien, 2012), my research at Glenville and Roxbridge uncovered institutional cultures that remain resistant to change. These institutional cultures structure unequal experiences for black and white learners within educational spaces.

They also produce knowledge that validates the perspectives of dominant groups and ultimately acts to protect an unequal status quo from challenge.

Although focused on high schools, this study has implications for higher education. First, as recent student movements have shown, formerly white universities – like formerly white high schools – have failed to transform as a matter of state. As more research on structural racism in universities emerges, it would be useful to adopt a comparative perspective with high schools. What are the similarities and differences in how inequalities are reproduced in these two types of educational spaces? What role do varying authority relationships play in these processes? Does resistance to racist practices in one educational sector affect mobilisation in other sectors? If not, why not? Addressing such questions will allow us to better understand not only the conditions under which inequities continue to be reproduced in different educational spaces, but also how they can be challenged.

Second, this chapter has implications for teacher education programmes. Elsewhere (Teeger, 2015b), I have documented how the critical discourses that some pre-service teachers articulate as university students can get muted as they enter their role as high school teachers. A challenge for teacher education programmes is to find ways of promoting critical and decolonial perspectives in university lectures and then encouraging students to take these perspectives with them as they transition into their roles as educators. An initial step might be to include compulsory modules on the reproduction of inequality in schools. That said, the transformation of educational institutions cannot be left in the hands of educators alone. Schools and universities both reflect and reproduce broader social structures and discourses. True transformation will require not only changes at the school and university level, but also a broader societal conversation about the limits of transformation as a matter of degree and an embracing of policies and practices that will lead to transformation as a matter of state.

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