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Editorial

Decolonising Education in South Africa: Perspectives and Debates

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The politics of knowledge in South African universities has recently witnessed a radical discursive rupture. The call for decolonising education was a cornerstone of students' recognition struggles at universities. Mobilising on the basis of their demand for free education, students across the university sector expressed the need for change in university knowledge and curricula in the light of what they described as their exposure to Eurocentric, racist, and sexist knowledge at untransformed institutions. They argued that such a knowledge orientation is at the heart of their experience of alienation at the university. They suggested that only the complete overhaul of the curriculum on the basis of a decolonising education approach would provide them the type of educational access that addresses their emerging African-centred humanness.

This special themed issue of this journal focuses on the decolonising education imperative, which has raised fundamental questions about reframing the purposes of education. Centring Africa-centric epistemology is at the heart of this educational reframing. This special themed edition is based on the view that what is required is a conceptual approach and languages of description that move the decolonising education debate towards consideration about the terms on which knowledge selection for a decolonial curricular approach ought to proceed. In other words, the debate should enter the substantive terrain about the bases on which curricula in universities, schools, and colleges are constituted. I argue that a decolonial politics of knowledge, despite exemplary activity at a few universities to develop decolonial curricular approaches, operates at the level of ideas, symbols, and politics. Instead, the debate should now turn to considerations about the terms of the knowledge and curriculum veracity of a decolonial approach. The discussion should therefore shift to what counts as curriculum knowledge based on decoloniality, and the conceptual bases on which university departments, programmes, and course modules would organise their curriculum knowledge assemblages based on such an approach.

Calls for decolonising education first emerged on the African continent in the context of decolonising struggles against colonial rule during the 1950s and 1960s. It is based on a negation of modern colonial education whose organising principle centred on shaping the colonised into colonial subjects, in the process, stripping them of their humanity and full potential. The knowledges of colonised groups, non-Europeans, and indigenous folk were suppressed or, as the decolonial scholar, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) explained, their knowledges suffered a form of *epistemicide* which signifies their evisceration from the knowledge canon.

The knowledge of the (colonial) university or school paid little to no attention to indigenous knowledges, the knowledges of the working poor, or the literacies of urban black female dwellers, for example. It favoured the Western canon, founded on a separation of the modern Western knowledge from its non-Western knowers, suggesting that modern knowledge would help instantiate modern subjects. Becoming a modern subject was the fulcrum of colonial education. This view has been called into radical controversy by the students' recent calls for decolonising education. They are demanding a type of cognitive justice based on an expansion and complete overhaul of the western knowledge canon. The call is also for knowledge pluralisation, which refers to incorporation of the complex ways of knowing of subaltern and all previously excluded groups. These calls represent a principled negation of a Western-centric knowledge orientation. Instead, decolonising education is based on the inclusion of all knowledge forms bequeathed to humanity including African, indigenous, Arab-Islamic, Chinese, Hindu, Indo-American, Asiatic, and Western knowledge forms. This all-inclusive approach to knowledge is based on an inter-cultural understanding of multiple and heterodox forms of being human. All knowledge forms have to be brought into play in intercultural education that promotes a type of epistemic openness to the knowledges of all human beings. This approach would seek to undermine *knowledge parochialism*, which is the idea that one's own knowledge system is superior and thus sufficient for complex living. The call is for schools, colleges, and universities to cultivate respect for people and their cultural and knowledge systems. These institutions should make available to their students knowledges across the widest possible human spectrum. University curricula should work across the various knowledge and science systems to establish dialogical platforms about actual and potential futures.

Decolonising education eschews static knowledge orientations. It is founded on a type of complex knowledge dynamism in fidelity to disciplinary and transdisciplinary foundations, and always alert to a type of problem-posing dynamism. In other words, knowledge constructions ought to be approached as dynamic, disciplined, and patient constructions that advance sustainable livelihoods. The call for decolonising education is nothing less that the full incorporation of humanity's knowledge systems into the curriculum and knowledge selection systems of universities and schools. The modalities of such incorporation, I believe, ought to be the subject of urgent conversation in policy circles, among curriculum workers, learning materials and textbook designers, and, crucially, among university lecturers and school teachers.

Simphiwe Sesanti takes the bull by the horns in the first article of this themed edition. His article is a carefully argued plea for teaching ancient Egyptian ethics and history as a cornerstone of an Afrocentric decolonial curriculum knowledge approach. Such a perspective, he suggests, challenges the continuing dominance of colonial scholarship in African universities. The article uses the concepts of *Afrocentricity* and *Africa-centredness* as an interpretive framework to inform Sesanti's unfolding perspective and arguments. The article centres the study of Ancient Egypt in African higher learning, and Sesanti suggests that such an approach will go a long way in framing the manner in which philosophy and ethics are taught.

In the next article, Noor Davids uses the case study of urban forced removals as central to his argument for a decolonising pedagogy. He argues that, notwithstanding the dominance of negative memories of such removals, a productive, decolonised version of forced removals can make a positive contribution to social cohesion. Davids offers as framework, a multiple historical case study of three pre-apartheid cosmopolitan spaces that were destroyed by the Group Areas Act (1950), to indicate how *ideology critique* can be employed as a decolonising pedagogy. A critical notion of cosmopolitanism is appropriated, via Davids' use of the notion of *production of space* to explain the role of political and social engineering in the making of place during the colonial-apartheid period. The article presents a conceptual approach for integrating notions of cosmopolitanism, segregation, and forced removals with a robust decolonising pedagogy based on what he calls ideology critique. Such a perspective

mobilises memory work to develop critical understanding of the past and its ongoing impact on contemporary discourses of spatial place-making practices.

Elizabeth Walton's article presents a reading of inclusive education informed by a decolonial perspective. She problematises the dominant perspective of inclusive education as constituting a neocolonial project, and an unwelcome imposition on countries of the Global South. She suggests that inclusive education can be seen as a form of coloniality in that knowledge from Euro-American countries dominates the field. Responding to this critique, Walton presents an Afrocentric model of inclusive education, citing scholars who claim that inclusive education is congruent with traditional African culture and community and resonates with *ubuntu*—a perspective that she suggests is not entirely unassailable. She posits an alternative perspective, which suggests that inclusive education might be harnessed to further the decolonial project, and that aspects of inclusive education can resist the coloniality of knowledge, of power, and of being. Such a position, she admits, may also be problematic, given that it could represent what has been termed *settler innocence*. The article ends with a useful set of suggestions for further research informed by a conceptual connection between inclusive education and decolonial perspectives.

Talitha Calitz's article is founded on a participatory approach to questions of students' (mis)recognition and decolonisation in South African higher education**.** The article is based on presenting narratives drawn from a participatory research project in which students contributed to the everyday work of decolonising higher education. As part of the scholarly and activist impetus for decolonising South African universities, the narratives draw attention to patterns of misrecognition of undergraduate student experiences. The first part of the article outlines an intersectional approach to student experiences to illustrate how binaries underpin epistemologies, pedagogy, and relationships at the university. In the final section, she outlines principles drawn from student narratives that can be used to reframe student recognition as part of the broader process of decolonising South African higher education.

Zayd Waghid and Liesel Hibbert's article is a discussion of the application of what they call a defamiliarisation pedagogy to interrogate the "colonialist" thoughts of preservice teachers. They start off by suggesting that social, political, and economic inequalities continue to shape the higher education landscape of the country. Using a case study at a university of technology that explicates teaching and learning through the use of creative illustrations as a form and means of defamiliarisation, the authors show how spaces can be created to facilitate deliberative engagement and contestation regarding instances of colonisation in higher education and society. They conclude that defamiliarisation should be considered a possible pedagogical technique in higher education as a way of deepening students' social, economic, political, and cultural awareness in relation to identity, language, and hierarchies of power in educational and other contexts.

Neo Maseko's article is a conceptual exploration of a decolonial perspective of the notion of *access with success*. The article draws attention to the significance of students' schooling backgrounds in the perpetuation of inequity that accrues from coloniality. Maseko presents the view that, what she calls, colonial cultural capital among students has ramifications for their access with success. She offers a counter strategy based on the decolonial turn as a tool to inform the development of students' emergent professional identities where a culture of critical consciousness is central to an emergent transformative praxis. This tool is used to draw attention to a critical decolonial social justice agenda that conceives of the university as a site for the inculcation of multidimensional critical change agency. She argues that a decolonial strategy of breaking the cycle that is informed by mentalities of coloniality is poised to play a pivotal role in the interests of social transformation.

The final article in this edition is by Maren Seehawer who discusses how South African science teachers integrate indigenous and Western knowledges in the classes. The article is based on a research project that aimed to understand how these teachers are integrating indigenous and Western knowledges in their classrooms. Following a participatory action research, the project explored whether and how indigenous knowledges (IK) could be integrated into the teachers' regular classes. While the South African science curriculum explicitly invites teachers to integrate indigenous knowledges, there is very little guidance about how this should be done—and there are no teaching materials available to inform their efforts at integration. Nevertheless, the article shows that all the teachers who formed part of the project were attempting to integrate indigenous knowledges in their science teaching by, for example, the use of learners' communities as resources—a strategy that worked well in both primary and secondary grades. The article calls for challenging the view of knowledge integration as untenable or difficult to pursue. While advocacy for top-down changes in education policy and practice, as well as theoretical debates on the unsolved questions regarding IK integration, remain important, Seehawer argues for a bottom-up approach, which places the work of science teachers at the centre of the integration efforts. Her article is an example of how education and IK stakeholders such as teachers, parents, learners, elders, traditional healers, teacher educators, and academics can exercise their agency and collaborate on implementing knowledge integration in education.

This special edition concludes with a conference report by Jasmine Matope on the 5th annual conference of the South African Education Research Association (SAERA) held in Port Elizabeth in October 2017.

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Teaching Ancient Egyptian Philosophy (Ethics) and History: Fulfilling a Quest for a Decolonised and Afrocentric Education

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Abstract

Despite the granting of "independence" to African countries more than 50 years ago, colonial scholarship continues to dominate in African institutions of higher learning. The genesis of ethics, a branch of philosophy, is attributed to the Greeks as if James Breasted's study of ancient Egypt did not, in the early 1930s, demonstrate convincingly that the ancient Egyptians were the first to seriously engage with issues of right and wrong in the world. In political science, the notion of the *philosopher king* is attributed to the Greek philosopher, Plato, as if Plato introduced this concept. When students in South Africa are putting pressure on institutions of higher learning to abandon colonial scholarship in favour of a decolonised and Afrocentric curriculum, this article, in fulfilment of the students' quest, invokes and echoes Cheikh Anta Diop's call for centring the study of ancient Egypt in African institutions of higher learning. Such an approach will go a long way in affecting the manner in which philosophy in general, and ethics in particular, are taught. The same will apply to other disciplines such as history, political science, and exact sciences. This exercise is philosophical and uses Afrocentricity or the Africa-centred approach as a theoretical framework.

Keywords: Afrocentricity, ancient Egypt, colonialism, decolonisation, ethics, Eurocentrism

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Background and Introduction

In 1974, Cheikh Anta Diop, published his book, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*, in which he argued that "ancient Egypt was a Negro civilization" and that the "ancient Egyptians were Negroes" (1974, p. xiv). His insistence on ancient Egypt's blackness or Africanness was informed by

persistent and consistent attempts by Eurocentric historians to project ancient Egyptians as white (Diop, 1974, p. 27). In 1987, 13 years after the appearance of Diop's work, Martin Bernal, a white British scholar published his work, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, in which he pointed out that ancient "Egyptian civilization was fundamentally African" (p. 1991, p. 242) and that "many of the most powerful Egyptian dynasties which were based in Upper Egypt—the 1st, 11th, 12th and 18th—were made up of pharaohs whom one can usefully call black" (1991, p. 242).

The objective of this article is to trace ancient Egypt's origin of ethics, and to argue that African institutions of higher learning must reclaim and centre this African heritage in the curricula. Reclamation in this case means the restoration of African heritage on Africans' own terms. It implies, in other words, re-Africanising the African heritage which was de-Africanised and Europeanised by Eurocentric scholarship. This refers to, specifically, to Eurocentric scholarship's attempt, as pointed out by Diop (1974), to whiten ancient Egypt. The concept *re-Africanisation* is preferred over the traditionally used concept *Africanisation* because the former dispels the unintended dissemination of the notion that Africans are taking what is foreign and putting it in an African garb (Sesanti, 2016).

Diop (1974, p. xiv) pointed out that "the African historian who evades the problem of Egypt is neither modest nor objective . . . he is ignorant, cowardly and neurotic." Ignoring ancient Egypt is tantamount to—which is unimaginable—a Western historian writing European history without referring to Greco-Latin antiquity (Diop, 1974). Teaching ancient Egyptian history and philosophy would dispel Palmer's (2014, p. x) claim that "China is the oldest continuous culture in the world," on the basis that while Egyptian and Babylonian records might go back for four or five thousand years "nobody today actually still venerates the ancient figures of Pharaonic Egypt" (p. x). The study of ancient Egypt would bring to the African student's consciousness that the "Black world is the very initiator of the 'western' civilization flaunted before our eyes today" (Diop, 1974, p. xiv). Studying ancient Egypt would enable African students, to their "great surprise and satisfaction, . . . discover that most of the ideas used to domesticate, atrophy, dissolve, or steal [their souls] were conceived by [their] own ancestors" (Diop, 1974, p. xv).

The study of African history must begin in ancient Egypt because, as Williams (1987, p. 44) pointed out, "most of their indestructible monuments are there." For it is a matter of historical record that it was the ancient Egyptians who invented "the world's oldest known calendar" used to this day even by the Western world (Fletcher, 2016, pp. 13–14). The ancient Egyptians invented this calendar in 4241 BC (Breasted, 1908, pp. 15, 35). Historical records indicate that the "concept of a nation-state—a political territory whose population shares a common identity—was the invention of the ancient Egyptians" or more explicitly and specifically, the "unification of Egypt . . . created the world's first nation-state" (Wilkinson, 2011, p. 38). Underlining the significance of this revolutionary move, Wilkinson (2011) noted that while the nation-state may presently seem ordinary and normal, before the Egyptian invention of the nation-state, identity and loyalty were based on family, community, or region. While Breasted (1908, p. 16) placed the unification at 3400 BC, in a later work, he (Breasted, 1933, p. 26) pointed out that this was, in fact, the Second Union—the First Union having occurred in 4000 BC. At the height of her power, this African country, ancient Egypt, was known as "the throne of the world's only acknowledged superpower" (p. 12), a "dominant world power" (p. 28), and the "centre of the civilized world" (Tyldesley, 2005, p. 37).

While ancient Egyptians' victory in material issues is a cause of celebration, "the supreme achievement is the discovery of character" the ushering of "the dawn of the age of conscience" (Breasted, 1933, p. xvi). This ancient Egyptians' supreme achievement can be appreciated if one takes into cognisance Breasted's (1933, p. xxiii) observation that there was a time when human beings were completely unaware of their conduct, when all what they did was a matter of instinct. Having emerged victorious

in the struggle with nature, the ancient Egyptians began the "baffling *struggle of mankind with himself*—a struggle which has hardly passed beyond its beginnings at the present day" (Breasted, 1933, p. 11). Explicitly, Breasted (1933, p. 19) pointed out that "surviving sources would indicate that the moral mandate was felt earlier in Egypt than anywhere else" where "earliest known discussion of right and wrong in the history of man" took place.

The consequence of these ethical reflections resulted in the philosophy of ancient Egyptians, *Maat*, "the earliest conception of a moral order, designated by a significant word 'righteousness,' 'justice,' or 'truth,' which endured for a thousand years from the Thirty-fifth to the Twenty-fifth Century B.C. and made a profound impression on the human mind" (Breasted, 1933, p. 20). The point that Breasted (1933, p. x) made in 1933, nearly 100 years ago, rings with amazing accuracy and urgency to this day:

> *At a time when the younger generation is throwing inherited morals into the discard, it would seem to be worthwhile to re-appraise these ancient values which are being so light-heartedly abandoned.*

Celebrating the greatness and achievements of ancient Egyptians is not the same as claiming that ancient Egypt was a perfect society. In this article, we move from the premise, as Asante (2015, p. 24) pointed out, that "like many other nations Kemet [ancient Egypt] had its problems, periods of instability, squabbles over leadership, attempted coup d'états, and internal intrigue." It is from the same premise that we approach African history in general, being, as Davidson (1970, p. xviii) noted, that African history is "a story of success and failure, disaster and resurgence and fulfillment, which is no different in its essence from the story of any of the major families of man." This exercise is neither insensitive to, nor feigns ignorance of claims to the effect that "Egyptian and Greek civilizations for instance were dependent on slavery" (wa Thiong'o, 1997, p. 155). In response to this observation, in no uncertain terms, Obenga (1992, pp. 162–163) stated that "there was never slavery in Egyptian society at the time of the Pharaohs."

Commenting on the issue of slavery in ancient Egypt and Greece, Diop (1974, p. 210) argued that while in "Greco-Latin Antiquity, capitalist production depended on a slave market," unlike in the Greco-Roman and feudal societies, ancient Egypt "had no servile labour force." He did concede, though, that there were, in ancient Egypt, "conquered Indo-Europeans [who were] systematically enslaved and branded to prevent their escape" (p. 210). In contextualising the case of the Indo-Europeans, Diop emphasised that it was as "prisoner[s] of war" that they were captured, and later "transformed into . . . slave[s]" (1974, p. 213). More emphatically, he argued that "strictly speaking, Egypt never adopted an economy dependent on slaves; that always remained marginal" (Diop, 1974, p. 217). Unequivocally, Diop (1974) pointed out that the "white man contributed nothing to Egyptian civilization" (p. 213) and that:

> *from a comparison between Greco-Roman society on the one hand, and Egyptian society on the other, it is apparent that, despite its long history, Egypt did not practice slave, feudal (in the Western sense), or capitalist systems of production. These three economic systems existed there only marginally. (p. 222)*

The call for the centring of ancient Egypt in the curricula is an act of decolonisation and is Afrocentric. If the theoretical basis of this study is Afrocentricity as opposed to Eurocentrism, it is essential that both concepts be defined, and their relationship with, and approach to, education be clearly stated.

This Study's Approach

After defining both Afrocentricity and Eurocentrism, and given that our focus is the teaching of African history and philosophy with particular reference to ethics, a branch of philosophy, our second task is to examine some efforts in South Africa's higher education to place African ethics in the curriculum—the successes and limitations. We then move on to show how the separation of ancient Egypt from the rest of the African continent is neither innocuous nor an accident of history, but a deliberate act of colonial and Eurocentric scholarship. That is followed by an outlining of the history of the ancient Egyptians' origin of ethics. Subsequent sections discuss ethics' implications for leadership and communities. That is followed by a discussion of African cultural unity between ancient Egypt and other African communities, and concluding remarks.

Afrocentric Versus Eurocentric Education: A Response to South African Students' Call for a Decolonised and Afrocentric Education

In 2015, more than 21 years after South Africans placed in power the African National Congress (ANC), a liberation movement that has anti-colonial struggle credentials, students in South Africa, led by the Rhodes Must Fall Movement, demanded a decolonised and Afrocentric education (John & Sosibo, 2015, p. 8). The students' demand was an indication of a realisation that even though South Africans had elected a government with a black head of state, the content of education had remained colonial and Eurocentric. Eurocentrism here is understood as a culturalist phenomenon that not only places the Westerners' interests at the centre, but "claims that imitation of the Western model by all peoples is the only solution to the challenges of our time" (Amin, 1989, p. vii).

In order to understand how, after 21 years of democracy, education in South Africa remained colonial, it is important to understand the nature of two interrelated concepts, *colonialism* and *colonisation*. Colonisation refers to the physical occupation and domination of one people's territory by another, while colonialism refers to the displacement of one people's culture by another (Mudimbe, 1988, pp. 1–2). Culture in this case refers to people's ways of life, values, and education. The struggle by South African students for a decolonised education gives an indication of an appreciation by the students that while colonisation (physical occupation) was addressed in a limited way, colonialism (cultural domination) with particular reference to education, remained intact—colonial and Eurocentric. Hence, calls for a decolonised and Afrocentric education.

Recognition of the resilience of colonialism, with particular reference to education or scholarship has been recognised by scholars advancing *decoloniality*. Citing Mignolo, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 13) defined decoloniality as a theoretical framework that seeks to usher "into intervening existence an-other interpretation that brings forward, on the one hand, a silenced view of the event and, on the other, shows the limits of imperial ideology disguised as the true (total) interpretation of the events" in the making of the modern world. Decoloniality is about "decolonizing the sciences" as it is about "decolonizing society and the world" (Maldonado-Torres, 2017, p. 435). While this may be the case, decolonial scholars do not see what remains after independence as continued colonialism but coloniality. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 13) citing Madonado-Torres, "a leading philosopher in decolonial thought" observed that "coloniality is different from colonialism," arguing that colonialism "denotes a political and economic relation in which the sovereignty of a nation or people rests on the power of another nation." Coloniality, on the other hand, is defined as "long standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture. . . . Thus, coloniality survives colonialism" (Maldonado-Torres as cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 13).

For Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 13), decolonisation refers to the "withdrawal of direct colonialism from the colonies as well as the struggles ranged against those empires that were reluctant to do so." While

this study agrees with Ndlovu-Gatsheni's definition of decolonisation, it does not limit decolonisation to the physical withdrawal of direct colonialism but to the mental and cultural as well, which, to decolonial scholars, is the task of coloniality. While decolonial scholars distinguish between colonialism and coloniality, this study does not. Differences notwithstanding, this study appreciates decolonial scholarship's stance of holding "emancipatory and identity goals central to its project" and regarding as "an imperative of decoloniality, . . . 'decolonial knowledge-making' that reasserts and draws in concepts and meanings from Indigenous knowledge production" (Nakata, Nakata, Keech, & Bolt, 2012, p. 124). What this means is that decolonial scholarship "engages the question of knowledge and epistemology critical to understanding the presence of others' worldviews and the limits these impose on Western philosophy" (Nakata et al., 2012, p. 124). This approach is shared by Afrocentricity**.**

Afrocentricity is a "philosophical perspective associated with the discovery, location and actualizing of African agency within the context of history and culture" (Asante, 2003, p. 3). Having defined both Afrocentricity and Eurocentrism, we proceed to examine the aims and objectives of education both from African and European historical contexts with specific reference to Africa.

The Objective of Education: Afrocentric and Eurocentric Contexts

The ultimate objective of education in ancient Egypt was to fashion a human being to be "one with God" or to "become like God" (Hilliard, 2003, p. 272). Explicitly, the ancient Egyptians' educational project was to build a human being whose personality was just, compassionate, generous, against corruption and exploitation. Ancient Egyptians were one with the rest of the African continent in making education an instrument of inculcating in human beings the importance of social responsibility, the development of spiritual power, and the development of character (Hilliard, 2003, p. 275). What emerges clearly from these objectives is a clear ethical basis of African education. It is this type of African culture and history that underpins the Afrocentric thrust for education.

The Eurocentric project with reference to education in Africa was carried out by both the colonial governments and the missionary schools. While missionary schools sought to convert Africans into Christianity, and making them priests who would further missionary work, the colonial governments' schools sought to mould Africans into becoming administrators and clerks in the service of the latter (Molony, 2014, p. 49). Just as the colonial government schools specifically targeted and placed chiefs' sons in their elite schools so that they would be instrumental in implementing colonialists' policies, anticipating the inevitability of decolonisation and independence of African countries, the "future of British colonial Africa was to be placed in the hands of a tiny cadre of Africans who were to be educated as black facsimiles of (rather idealised) white colonial officials" (Molony, 2014, p. 96). This explains why after "over 50 years of post-colonialism in Africa . . . the cultural orientation and attitudes of the African elite towards educational systems and curricula on this continent . . . [have] hardly altered" (Prah, 2017, p. 34). It is in recognition of this reality that Prah argued that "in Africa today, Eurocentrism is propagated more by Africans than Westerners" (2017, p. 35).

The South African students' objection to and rejection of colonial and Eurocentric education in favour of a decolonised, Afrocentric education, should be seen in this context. The African students appreciated that "the curriculum lies at the core of all educational systems" and that it is "through the curriculum that the larger social objects and values of the social order are implemented and achieved" (Prah, 2017, p. 30). While the call by the South African students for a decolonised and Afrocentric education is a historical event, it would be false to assume that South African academics in institutions of higher learning made no effort to challenge the Western paradigm in order to advance an African paradigm prior 2015, when the Rhodes Must Fall made these demands. There were efforts, with specific reference to the teaching of ethics in institutions of higher learning, to place African ethics in the curricula.

Placing African Ethics in the Curriculum: Successes and Limitations

In 2004, the African Ethics Initiative, as part of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN) Unilever Ethics Centre, rallied a number of ethics scholars to consider if there is such a thing as a set of African ethics, what such constitutes if it exists, and whether African ethics are consistent with or different from Western ethics (Nicolson, 2008, p. 1). The scholars were also asked to examine whether or not African ethics have anything valuable to say, not only to an African context but also in the wider world. The initiative sought to investigate, clarify, and highlight the "contributions of ethics derived from sub-Saharan African culture and lived experience as part of the panorama of rich ethical guidance from which we may draw" (Nicolson, 2008, p. 1). Within a sub-Saharan African context, the initiative sought to investigate whether "some aspects of traditional African culture" such as "male hegemony" and "respect for elders and chiefs" were not "tantamount to sexism, gerontocracy, authoritarianism . . . and the like" (Nicolson, 2008, p. 1).

Following the initiative, ethics' scholar, Munyaradzi Felix Murove (2009, p. xiv), felt that the time had come for the nature and form of African ethics to be considered and defined by Africans themselves, free from the influence of people from other parts of the world. Murove (2009, p. xiv) had correctly observed that many anthologies on ethics "have been structured to give the impression that ethical traditions are found only in the western or eastern worlds, and in Christian and Islamic traditions." Identifying the source of this problem, Murove (2009, p. xiv) correctly pointed out that "such bias is attributed to Eurocentricism at institutions of higher learning in post-colonial Africa." That is the case because, as Murove (2009, p. xiv) further argued, education institutions in Africa "still tend to be highly westernised" because "they remain sophisticated bastions for the dissemination of western values." The studies of ethics in these institutions, Murove protested, "deal scantily with African ethics although most Africans south of the Sahara rely on traditional ethics to guide them as to what is right or wrong" (2009, p. xiv).

While both initiatives to highlight African ethics are appreciated, the major shortcoming is limiting African ethics to sub-Saharan Africa. The problem with the sub-Saharan approach is that, as Keto (1989, p. 23) noted, the "sectionalist focus on sub-Saharan or tropical Africa, ignores the elements of cultural unity in Africa before the severe desiccation of the Sahel in historical time and the advent of Islam in the seventh century of the Current Era." Focus on sub-Saharan Africa at the exclusion of ancient Egypt is detrimental to the writing and study of African history because, the "history of Black Africa will remain suspended in air and cannot be written correctly until African historians dare to connect it with the history of Egypt" (Diop, 1974, p. xiv). Furthermore, it would be impossible to build African humanities, a body of African human sciences, so long as the relationship between ancient Egypt and the rest of Africa does not appear legitimate (Diop, 1974, p. xiv). Having said that, it would be unfair to the UKZN's initiative not to state that one of the chapters, authored by Mkhize (2008, pp. 36, 40–41), made a conscious and commendable effort to link ubuntu, a philosophy associated with sub-Saharan Africa, to Maat, a philosophy associated with ancient Egypt. The cultural separation of ancient Egypt is neither an accident of history nor an innocuous omission, as discussed below.

Setting Ancient Egyptians—Culturally—Apart from Their Fellow Africans

In 1996, Mary Lefkowitz and Guy MacLean Rogers, brought out a volume of edited articles, *Black Athena Revisited*, contesting Diop's and Bernal's thesis. In this volume, Lefkowitz and Rogers (1996, p. xii) argued that on the "basis of the available evidence we believe that it can be shown that the ancient Egyptians regarded themselves as ethnically distinct from other African peoples, as well as the peoples of the Near East and of Europe." Lefkowitz and Rogers (1996, p. xii) go on to point out that "although they are 'people of color' by modern definition," the ancient Egyptians, "in their own minds and in the minds of ancient Greeks . . . were a different nation from the Ethiopians." In line with Lefkowitz and Rogers' arguments, Bard (1996, p. 104) charged that "Egyptians were Egyptians, the people of *Kmt.*"

In a direct challenge to Diop who pointed out that the name Kmt or Kemet means the "Land of Blacks," Bard (1996, p. 104) argued that "*Kmt* means 'Black Land' . . . not . . . 'Land of Blacks.'" In direct opposition to Diop who scientifically demonstrated the link between Mdw Ntr, the ancient Egyptians' language, and Wolof the Senegalese language, Bard (1996, p. 104) argued that "looking at the linguistic evidence, there is nothing that links Egypt to other areas in Africa except generally." For Bard (1996, p. 104) it was "disturbing . . . that archaeological evidence—the artifacts, art and architecture of ancient Egypt—has been identified with race and racial issues."

In a determined act to separate the ancient Egyptians from the rest of other Africans, Bard (1996, p. 104) pointed out firmly that "ancient Egyptians were Mediterranean peoples, neither Sub-Saharan blacks nor Caucasian whites but peoples whose skin was adapted to life in a subtropical environment." In case Bard was not clear enough, she emphasised that the "ancient Egyptians were North African peoples, distinct from Sub-Saharan blacks" (1996, p. 111). But confronted with the reality that ancient Egypt is geographically African, Bard conceded that

> *because it was located on the African continent, ancient Egypt was an African civilization, though perhaps its African identity has been subtly minimised within the discipline of Near Eastern studies, which has its roots in European Orientalism of the nineteenth century. (1996, p. 103)*

In a desperate and blind attempt to distinguish ancient Egyptians from the rest of Africans, Bard contradicted herself. While on one hand Bard (1996, p. 111) argued that "culturally and linguistically the ancient Egyptians were different from other peoples living outside the Nile Valley, as well as those farther south and east," on the other hand, she pointed out that "ancient Egypt was definitely the earliest African civilization and as such certainly had an influence not only on the other cultures that arose in the Near East, but also on the states that arose farther south in Africa."

In her preoccupation with emphasising differences among Africans, Bard (1996, p. 111) argued that the "Kushite peoples were considered non-Egyptians by Egyptians—in other words, ethnically different." She failed to contextualise a fact about which she was fully aware: that considering that at some stage in history ancient Egypt was ruled by the Kushites, the ancient Egyptians' resentment towards others they considered outsiders should not be a surprise (Bard, 1996, p. 110; Snowden, 1996, p. 122). Ably, Diop (1974, p. 62) addressed this issue by pointing out that if it could be insinuated that ancient Egypt's Pharaohs fought the black populations of southern Ethiopia, because they did not belong to the same race, this is tantamount to saying that because Caesar undertook expeditions in Gaul, the Gauls and Romans did not belong to the same white race or that, if the Romans were white, the Gauls must have been yellow or black.

Having observed that, firstly, the "Egyptians and their southern neighbors were perceived as distinctly different types," and that, secondly, "it was the inhabitants of Nubia, not the Egyptians, whose physical type most closely resembled that of Africans and peoples of African descent referred to in the modern world as blacks or Negroes," Snowden (1996, pp. 115, 121) went on to argue that one of the great ironies of the Afrocentrists' position is their emphasis on ancient Egypt, "a rather distorted and myopic view of history," which has led to neglect the significance of Nubia, "which was really a black African culture of enormous influence and power." Snowden's claim is simply false. In 1974, 22 years before Snowden made this point, Cheikh Anta Diop acknowledged the cultural greatness of the Nubians (Ethiopians). Actually, he pointed out not only to their greatness, but also the contribution they made to ancient Egypt's celebrated civilisation. Citing the earliest scholars who studied Nubia, Diop (1974, p. 150) noted that their studies indicated that ancient Egyptian civilisation descended from that of Nubia

and that, in fact, ancient Egyptians themselves recognised that their ancestors came from Nubia, the heart of Africa.

Significantly, Diop further pointed out that excavations in the area of ancient Ethiopia "reveal documents worthy of the name only in Nubia proper, not in modern Ethiopia," and that:

> *In reality, it is in Nubia that we find pyramids similar to those in Egypt, underground temples, and Meroitic writing, not yet deciphered, but closely related to Egyptian writing. Strangely enough, though this point is not emphasized, Nubian writing is more evolved than Egyptian. While Egyptian writing, even in its hieratic and demotic phases, has never completely eliminated its hieroglyphic essence, Nubian writing is alphabetical. (1974, p. 150)*

Next, we discuss ancient Egyptians' origin of ethics.

Ancient Egypt: The African Origin of Ethics

Breasted (1933, p. 19) pointed out that the "earliest known discussion of right and wrong in the history of man is embedded in a Memphite drama." It is a text written on a millstone that contains a "philosophical discussion" (Breasted, 1933, p. 32). This discussion on ethics, in the form of the Memphite drama, is traced to the middle of the Fourth Millenium BC, regarding which, Breasted observed that "it is very surprising to find that such ideas as these had already arisen by the middle of the Fourth Millenium BC" (1933, p. 34).

Significantly, the Memphite drama had the inscription of an "Ethiopian Pharaoh Shabaka, who ruled Egypt in the Eighth Century BC" who, when he saw the writing, referred to it as "a work of the ancestors" (Breasted, 1933, p. 29). This is significant considering the emphasis by writers cited above on the differences between ancient Egyptians and the Nubians. Why did the Ethiopian pharaoh, who ruled ancient Egypt, claim ancient Egyptians' heritage as a work of his ancestors? One answer is that this was due to the Nubian origin of some ancient Egyptians. Another answer linked to the foregoing observation is that the content of the Memphite drama resonated with the philosophical orientation of the ancestors of Pharaoh Shabaka, as will be demonstrated later.

While Breasted (1933, p. 346) spoke in glowing terms of Phoenician civilisation, at the same time he noted that of "Phoenician moral development, however, we know practically nothing." With reference to Babylonia, Breasted (1933, p. 343) noted that the "sense of social justice, which lies at the very foundation of moral development, was very imperfect or lacking altogether among the Babylonians." This absence of social justice among the Babylonians is "very strikingly demonstrated by the famous law code of Hammurapi, in which the penalties and verdicts are graded according to the social station receiving substantially more favourable consideration than the man of low birth" (Breasted, 1933, p. 342). Western development in ethics is very recent compared to that of African Egypt, considering that the "study of ethics in the Western world began nearly 2,500 years ago when Socrates, according to his faithful student, Plato, roamed Greece probing and challenging his brethren's ideas about such abstract concepts as justice and goodness" (Day, 2006, p. 3). The association of ethics with Europe has a lot to do with the power of definition. For instance, Day (2006, p. 3) in defining ethics, noted that the term is derived from the Greek *ethos*. That this term came to English through Greek gives the false impression that ethics has a Greek genesis, while the fact of the matter is that it came *through* not *from* Greek.

It is not only the genesis of ethics that is falsely attributed to the Greeks, but also the "idea of the philosopher-king" which is credited to Plato in whose book, *The Republic*, the idea is said to have been canvassed for the first time (Adebajo, 2016, p. 13). The notion of the philosopher-king existed in ancient Egypt of which Plato was great admirer. Extant ancient Egyptian literature indicates that leaders in general, and kings in particular, were expected to be guided in their leadership and rule by, Maat, the ancient Egyptian philosophy, defined as "truth, justice, righteousness, balance, order" (Hilliard, Williams, & Damali, 1987, p. 49).

The Philosophy of Maat and Implications for Ethical Leadership

The ancient Egyptians reasoned that it was possible to have an environment where truth, justice, righteousness, balance, and order dominated "provided there exists a pharaoh willing and able to apply Maat in every sphere, from the most abstract to the most concrete" (Jacq, 2004, p. xv). Echoing this point, Tyldesley (2005, p. 71) pointed out that "the king's most important duty . . . was the maintenance of *maat* throughout his land." The emergence of a just king was not left to chance. Conscious measures were taken to mould such. There were certain instructions that were given to those who were to ascend to the throne about how to apply rule characterised by justice. One such document is the *Instruction to Merikare*, "the legacy of a departing king which embodies a treatise on kingship" (Lichtheim, 1975, p. 97). In this treatise, Merikare's father urges his son to "not neglect my speech, which lays down all the laws of kingship, which instructs you, that you may rule the land, and may you reach me with none to accuse you!" (Lichtheim, 1975, p. 107). The father told the son that as a king he was expected to do justice, to calm the weeper, not to oppress the widow, not to expel a man from his father's property, not to punish wrongfully and not to kill (Lichtheim, 1975, p. 100).

Meirkare's father cautioned his son against being biased in favour of the "wellborn" against the "commoner" and to give a person work on the basis of "skills" (Lichtheim, 1975, p. 101). In a world where powerful people prefer to surround themselves with weak, self-ingratiating and sycophantic people, Merikare's father advised his son against surrounding himself with the obsequious but, rather, critical and independent minds who would be able to show him his wrongs when occasion necessitated:

> *Great is the Great man whose men are great,*
>
> *Strong is the king who has councilors, . . .*
>
> *A king who has courtiers is not ignorant. (Lichtheim, 1975, pp. 100, 105)*

It is remarkable that the articulation of ideas advancing meritocracy and democracy in the *Instruction to Merikare*, took place during the years 1650 to 1080 BC (Lichtheim, 1975, p. xiii). But historical records reveal that in an earlier period, the Old Kingdom, between 2650 BC and 2135 BC, there existed texts entitled *The Teachings of PtahHotep* (Hilliard et al., 1987), *The Wisdom of Ptah-Hotep* (Jacq, 2004), and "The Instruction of Ptahhotep" (in Lichtheim, 1975), giving an indication that the ancient Egyptians were sensitive to how easily a leader could be swayed to the side of injustice.

Notwithstanding the fact that Ptah-Hotep's book is so old, Jacq (2004, p. x) observed that Ptah-Hotep's teachings "give sound, practical advice for life today." That is so because even though the book is "a testimony of another era," and "although the setting is different, many moral and spiritual dilemmas remain exactly as they were in 2040 BC" (Jacq (2004, p. x). What this reveals is that humankind has, in ethical terms, advanced very little since the "dawn of conscience" and the "Age of Character" in ancient Egypt (Breasted, 1933, p. xxiv). Jacq's sentiments are an echo of Breasted's (1933, p. x) who noted that "at a time when the younger generation is throwing inherited morals into the discard, it would seem

worthwhile to re-appraise these ancient values which are being so light-heartedly abandoned." The ethical teachings of the ancient Egyptians are not only relevant in general but speak directly to the call of a decolonised and Afrocentric education, in that this call is not about merely replacing European with African education, but is about the values that these systems would impart. The emphasis of a decolonised and Afrocentric education is about the moulding of an ethical human being in general, and a leader in particular.

Ptah-Hotep observed:

> *If you are a man who leads, a man whose authority reaches widely, then you should do perfect things, those which posterity will remember. Don't listen to the words of flatterers or to words that puff you up with pride and vanity. (Hilliard et al., 1987 p. 24)*

Ptah-Hotep taught that those in position of "guidance and leadership" had an obligation to listen calmly to petitioners, not to turn them away until they had said everything that they wanted to say (Jacq, 2004, p. 21). The logic in listening patiently, Ptah-Hotep explained, was that anyone oppressed by injustice has a fervent desire to unburden one's heart. Whether the petitioner's complaint is resolved immediately or not—Ptah-Hotep reasoned—is neither here nor there. The important issue is that the person has felt that she or he has been given the attention deserved by all human beings, and had a platform to vent. Ptah-Hotep warned that leaders who did not listen to grievances would always be treated with suspicion by people. The lesson in Ptah-Hotep's teachings on leadership is that listening to the powerless is an ethical act.

Ptah-Hotep issued a strong warning against greed, arguing that it was a "grievous sickness without cure," an evil that "embroils fathers, mothers," that which "parts wife from husband . . . a compound of all evils, a bundle of all hateful things" (Lichtheim, 1975, pp. 68–69). While it was expected that everyone should guard against the evil of greed, there was a greater expectation from the leaders of society. In strong terms, Ptah-Hotep pointed out:

> *He whose heart obeys his belly*
>
> *Puts contempt of himself in place of love . . .*
>
> *He who obeys his belly belongs to the enemy. (Lichtheim, 1975, p. 67)*

In the *Instruction to Merikare* we find a strong echo of caution to the soon-to-be king against greed:

> *A wretch is who desires that land [of his neighbor]*
>
> *A fool is who covets what others possess. (Lichtheim, 1975, p. 100)*

This concern about kings who coveted others' possessions was not merely the ancient Egyptians'. When Cambyses, the king of the Persians, sent gifts to the king of Ethiopia, the main aim being to spy, the Ethiopian king responded thus:

> *You are nothing but liars, come here to spy on my realm! As for these gifts that you have been sent by the Persian King to bring me, they suggest no great desire on his part to establish links of friendship with me, but rather that he has no sense of what is right [emphasis added]. How otherwise to explain this longing of his for lands that are not his*

> *own [emphasis added], and his hauling into slavery peoples that never did him any wrong? (Herodotus, 2015, p. 17)*

What emerges from the passage above is the common appreciation of ethics between the Ethiopians and the ancient Egyptians, the shared rejection of greed for other people's land between the *Instruction to Merikare* and the Ethiopian King. Contrary to Eurocentric scholars' quests to highlight differences between the ancient Egyptians' cultural values and those of the Nubians, the shared ethical concerns make sense why the Ethiopian King Shabaka claimed the ancient Egyptian Memphite drama as the work of his own ancestors (Breasted, 1933, p. 29).

Ptah-Hotep recognised very clearly that ethical leadership and the importance of listening to the powerless could not be left to kings alone. Conscious of the fact that the courts of law wielded great power in effecting justice, he did not leave the judiciary out of his teachings. He observed that if magistrates were to be perceived as having integrity, they had a responsibility to "hew a straight line," not to lean on one side when they spoke, because if they failed to do so, they would be accused of distortion, and their judgements would turn against them (Lichtheim, 1975, p. 71).

Even though there is an appreciation that the philosophical reflections of ancient Egyptians are placed around the years 2 600 BC, and that locating them in that period may be informed by sincerity and good intentions, to limit their reflections to this period would be to underrate the ancient Egyptians' achievements. Ptah-Hotep did not take credit for his teachings but attributed them to "the instructions of the ancestors" (Jacq, 2004, p. 3), the "ways of the ancestors" (Lichtheim, 1975, p. 63; Hilliard et al., 1987, p. 16).

Reverence for the Wisdom of the Ancestors: A Pan-African Culture

Ptah-Hotep's reverence for the wisdom of the ancestors was not unique. His compatriot, Merikare, emphasised the same to his son about kingship:

> *Justice comes to him distilled,*
>
> *Shaped in the sayings of the ancestors,*
>
> *Copy your fathers, your ancestors—*
>
> *See, their words endure in books,*
>
> *Open, read them, copy their knowledge. (Lichtheim, 1975, p. 99)*

This act of invoking and acknowledging the wisdom of the ancestors in preparing a person to be a just king was not a uniquely ancient Egyptian culture, but a Pan-African one. In the 1800s, Mohlomi, a chief and seer in Lesotho, in counselling the future king of BaSotho, Moshoeshoe, gave advice that has a striking resemblance to the *Instruction to Merikare*. We give a long direct quotation here because paraphrasing would rob the reader of appreciating the cultural ties that bind ancient Egyptians to the BaSotho and the rest of the African family:

> *One day you will truly be a chief and rule over men. You should then perform your duties in all their affairs 'SETHO' (as Sacred Beings do, i.e. with human purity of thought and unmitigated thruthfulness). Learn to understand men and know their ways. Learn to bear with their human weaknesses and shortcomings. Always determine to direct them along the paths of truth and purity. In their disputes, adjudicate with justice, perfect justice and*

> *sympathy. You must not allow preferences based on wealth, status or prestige influence and tarnish any of your decisions in your judgment. Always keep in mind that all people are equal before the law. . . . The words that I have just spoken to you, are the words of my Balimo [ancestral souls]—the words that I received in a vision at Mophato and have guided me throughout my life. . . . I am to-day passing to you these same words, in order that that which I inherited from my Balimo, you may through me, also inherit. (Mokhehle, 1990, pp. 31–32).*

In these words of Mohlomi, the seer from Lesotho, one finds the echoes of ancient Egypt's Maat, the *Instruction to Merikare*, the *Teachings of Ptah-Hotep* and ancestor reverence—all in one.

The centrality of ancestor guidance and ancestor reverence in traditional African governance is found in many African traditional polities. Writing about the Zanj people of the period 925 AD, Abu al-Hassan-al-Masudi (cited in Davidson 1994, p. 36) noted that the Zanj people gave their ruler the title *Waqlimi*, meaning "supreme lord" because he had been chosen to rule them with equity. But "once he becomes tyrannical and departs from the rules of justice, they cause him to die and exclude his posterity to the throne" (Davidson 1994, p. 36). The killing and barring their descendants from ruling was informed by the Zanj's belief that "in behaving thus he ceases to be the son of the Master, that is to say, of the king of heaven and earth" (1994, p. 36). In his commentary, Davidson correctly observed that "other Africans will quickly recognize the echoes of their own attitudes to good rulers as well as to bad rulers who depart from the ways of God and the wisdom of the ancestors" (1994, p. 36). This is but one example testifying to African cultural unity.

The preceding observations should not be seen as painting a picture of a perfect society in ancient Egypt. Such a society does not exist and has never existed. Ancient Egypt had her moments of injustice. But the beauty of the history of ancient Egypt is that there was active resistance and opposition to oppression. As early as 2000 BC there were philosophers, to whom Breasted (1933, p. 361) referred as "social prophets." These social prophets, driven by ethical consciousness, "denounced the corruption and oppression under which the poor and the humble suffered at the hands of the rich and powerful" (Breasted, 1933, p. 361). Very significantly, "repeatedly their denunciations were delivered in the presence of the king himself" (1933, p. 361), a clear indication that these social prophets had the courage of their convictions to speak out against the rich in favour of the poor, against the powerful, in favour of the weak. These social prophets "raised the cry for social justice and looked for an ideal age of human happiness under the beneficent rule of a righteous king" (Breasted, 1933, p. 361).

While the role played by the social prophets was appreciated, the poor themselves did not give up agency to fight for their rights. The story of Khun-Anup, the Eloquent Peasant, is a case in point. When a rich and powerful man robbed him of his possession, Khun-Anup, invoking Maat, appealed to the high authorities of the land, seeking justice. Khun-Anup argued that instead of judges dispensing justice, it was them who snatched stolen goods; arbitrators became robbers, and punishers of evil committed crimes (Lichtheim, 1975, pp. 173–174). These evil acts, Khun-Anup publicly stated, were motivated by greed. Courageously, he reminded the authorities of the land that "Not great is the one who is great in greed" (Lichtheim, 1975, p. 176). When the king heard of Khun-Anup's eloquence in articulating Maat and condemning injustice, he gave instructions that his family be provided for secretly by the state, and that his case be prolonged so that he could have space to speak more. Ultimately, the rich and powerful man who had wronged him was found guilty and all Khun-Anup's belongings were returned.

Reflecting on Khun-Anup's story, Armah (2006, p. 206) noted that not only was Khun-Anup given his possessions back, but that the pharaoh sacked the powerful man from his position and appointed

Khun-Anup. While Armah appreciated the moral lesson of the story being that the anti-corruption campaign really worked, he was critical that throughout Khun-Anup's protest, he was subjected to continuous whipping for what he perceived as "the entertainment of state officials and the king" (Armah, 2006, p. 206). The dominant narrative, though, is that the exercise was not for entertainment but the creation of a platform for Khun-Anup, unbeknown to him, to teach Maat to the ignorant rich. Khun-Anup's victory at that time is important for us in our times when the rich are found not guilty because they can pay expensive lawyers, and the innocent found guilty because they have no resources.

Concluding Remarks

The act of de-linking and displacing ancient Egypt culturally from Africa in the face of the impossibility of dislocating it geographically, is an act of colonialism and Eurocentric scholarship. The act of re-linking and re-placing ancient Egypt culturally, is an act of decolonisation and Afrocentric scholarship. This article set out to argue for the centring of ancient Egyptian philosophy, with particular reference to ethics and history in the curricula of African institutions of higher education as a fulfilment of African students' quest for a decolonised and Afrocentric education. We briefly defined Eurocentrism, which informed the approach of colonial education, and Afrocentricity, which informed the approach of African education before colonialism. If colonialism and colonial education were unethical and dehumanising, a decolonised and Afrocentric education must advance ethical values that must contribute towards the act of re-humanisation.

Informed by a view that all educational systems are not value free but value laden, we invoked ancient Egyptian philosophy and history because they present us with the opportunity to examine African values that informed education before colonialism. However, in doing this, the quest is not simply about replacing European values with African values. Rather, the objective is to specifically invoke those values in education that will contribute towards building human beings who will see other human beings as deserving justice and to be given a space to flourish—but not at the expense of other human beings. Just as the ancient Egyptians, in particular, and Africans, in general, did not believe that a conscientious human being automatically came about, but had to be consciously moulded, we move from a premise that for a just society to come about there must be a conscious exercise to mould leadership that will usher a just society. Ancient Egyptians, as demonstrated in this exercise, recognised and emphasised the centrality of leadership in building an ideal society. It is as Azikiwe (1937, p. 135) observed, that "leadership is the soul of any community."

Invoking ancient Egyptian philosophy and history is neither sentimental nor an act of nostalgia. This exercise is premised on the view that the study of history should not merely be for intellectual gratification, but an opportunity for all people to realise their strengths and weakness and, more importantly, the study of history should be the foundation and guiding light for united efforts in serious planning about what needs to be done now for the future (Williams, 1987, p. 43). Studying ancient Egyptian ethics and history serves this purpose in that, as scholarship (cited above) has demonstrated, in as much as ancient Egyptian ethics were relevant in the time of the ancient Egyptians, they continue to be relevant in the 21st century and beyond. While it is hoped that the teaching of ancient Egyptian ethics and history will have the desired effect of inculcating a sense of pride once African students appreciate that their ancestors were the first to usher a nation-state, and were the leaders in mathematics and science, the main objective of this article is to bring consciousness to African students that their ancestors were the first to engage in a battle with the self by striving to develop ethics. It is hoped that a decolonised education will elevate the importance of recognising that the greatest measure of success and victory is not to conquer and vanquish fellow human beings, but to conquer vanity, conceit, greed, selfishness, and corruption in the self. Confronting the wrong done by others is easy, but confronting the wrong done by the self is a mountainous task. It is this that ancient Egyptian

and African education in general sought to inculcate in human beings. It is this task that a decolonised and Afrocentric education must accomplish.

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Ideology Critique as Decolonising Pedagogy: Urban Forced Removals as a Case Study

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Abstract

After emerging from its troubled past, postapartheid South Africa adopted a democratic constitution and cosmopolitanism as path to a peaceful future. Cosmopolitanism, once a vibrant tradition at the turn of the 19th century, disappeared from the apartheid historical canon and memory due to the colonial practice of forced removals. The apartheid fallacy that forced removals were necessary because of urban slum conditions and public health reasons obscured its ideological and economic reasons. Apartheid narratives and traumatic memories of forced removals continue in the postapartheid era and mitigate against the establishment of a nonracial, cosmopolitan society. Notwithstanding the dominance of negative memories, a productive, decolonised version of forced removals can make a positive contribution to social cohesion. This paper offers a multiple historical case study of three pre-apartheid cosmopolitan spaces that were destroyed by the Group Areas Act as framework to suggest how ideology critique can be employed as a decolonising pedagogy. A critical notion of cosmopolitanism is appropriated, using the notion of *production of space* to explain the role of political and social engineering in the making of place during the colonial-apartheid period. Recommendations suggest how to integrate cosmopolitanism, segregation, and forced removals with ideology critique as decolonising pedagogy in teacher education curriculum spaces.

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism, forced removals, Group Areas Act, ideology critique, segregation

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Introduction

After 23 years of democracy, optimism to establish a nonracial, cosmopolitan society seems to be on the wane. South Africans have emerged from apartheid as new political subjects of diverse cultural backgrounds. There is a moral expectation to live together according to a civil code. South Africans

enthusiastically adopted a democratic constitution and cosmopolitanism to pave the way towards building a peaceful, postapartheid future. Regrettably, experiences and memories of cosmopolitan living have been overshadowed by the apartheid government's preoccupation with segregation politics and the trauma caused by forced removals. Cosmopolitanism, once a vibrant tradition at the turn of the 19th century in South African cities such as Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, and Johannesburg, disappeared from the official historical canon and memory as a valuable experience of a significant number of South Africans. The apartheid fallacy that forced removal was necessary due to urban slum conditions and public health reasons, obscured its ideological and economic reasons. This historical misrepresentation is an apartheid-colonial construction in need of reinterpretation and decolonisation. Paradoxically, while the postapartheid Constitution (1996) built on cosmopolitanism as a model for peaceful coexistence, it was forced removals that destroyed its memory. Due to the threat that these integrated, racially mixed communities posed to the doctrine of segregation and apartheid, they were physically erased. Historically, the doctrine of segregation, which culminated in the ideology of apartheid, was used as legitimation for white supremacy and to create favourable conditions for racial capitalism to flourish (Dubow, 1989).

While cosmopolitanism is lauded to promote reconciliation and tolerance, apartheid memories of racism and forced removals remain dominant in the public domain, posing obstacles for the development of a sense of common citizenship and social cohesion. The current educational system has been criticised for avoiding the particular history of race relations and of extreme inequality (Staeheli & Hammett, 2013). Additionally, the public media report regularly on incidents of racism and xenophobia, which undermine the cosmopolitan project. Xenophobia is a daily occurrence and has become a long-standing feature in postapartheid South Africa (Misago, 2017). The Citizen newspaper reported, for instance, that the University of Pretoria was urged to take a stand against a new residential building that opened for Christian, Afrikaans students only ("UP urged to condemn," 2017). Similarly, the Daily Mail carried a report that a black man had been forced into a coffin by two white men as retribution for a crime committed, and was told he would be fed to snakes and the coffin be set alight with petrol (Flanagan, 2016). The same article noted that in January 2016, the South African Human Rights Commission had received 160 racism-related complaints—the highest monthly figure in its 20-year history—and that nearly 3,000 violent attacks on farms and more than 1,600 farm murders had been committed since 1990. If South Africans, black and white, were to know that South Africans once lived together in city spaces despite their racial and cultural differences, they might be willing to give a cosmopolitan vision of coexistence a chance to animate public life.

Notwithstanding the dominance of negative historical perceptions of forced removals, a productive decolonised version can make a positive contribution to social cohesion. This article argues for the employment of ideology critique in teacher education as a decolonising pedagogy to reimagine a nonracial postapartheid society. To this end, historical material about forced removals was excavated to resuscitate the suppressed memories of cosmopolitan living.

The South African educational system has a definite role to play in promoting cosmopolitanism and good citizenship. Both cosmopolitanism and good citizenship are regarded as essential components of a democratic dispensation. Cosmopolitanism, nonracism, and good citizenship are values enshrined in the constitution of South Africa. The white minority were generally the beneficiaries of colonial-apartheid rule and enjoyed racial privileges, while black people were second class, disenfranchised citizens. Therefore, in a postapartheid educational sector, the introduction of new constitutional values requires an appropriate pedagogical approach to address historical injustices. Needless to say, when engaging sensitive historical issues such as discrimination, social justice, and racism, they should be handled truthfully and thoughtfully. Given that the apartheid educational system produced a heightened racial consciousness and assisted in racially dividing the country's population, an inclusive

and emancipatory pedagogical approach is needed to move towards the establishment of a nonracial, cosmopolitan, and equal society.

Underplaying the seriousness of continued racism and intolerance will not assist the promotion of cosmopolitanism. In contrast to the negative reporting in the media, the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) published their survey findings reporting that there are reasons for hope to counter the pessimism of proliferating racism. The report concluded that the views of the overwhelming majority are very different from the vitriol so often evident in the race debate (SAIRR, 2016). The report further asserted that the survey results were fundamentally at odds with the social media view that South Africa is ridden with racism. While the SAIRR study gives hope for a better future, it could be said to be typical of a liberal approach that views the social world as empirically given (Scully, 2011, p. 299).

This paper attempts to offer a plausible, though challenging way to contribute towards peaceful coexistence. A critical pedagogical approach, using ideology critique as method and urban forced-removal cosmopolitan spaces as historical material, is proposed to emancipate students from the effects of institutionalised segregation and apartheid engineering. Ideology critique is a decolonising pedagogy due to its potential to emancipate students from biased colonial teachings. A critical pedagogical approach relates the school/university context to the social context in which it is embedded. It stresses empowering students to think and act critically with the aim of transforming their life conditions (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011, p. 77; Freire, 1970). A major goal of critical pedagogy is to emancipate and educate learners regardless of gender, class, and race. An uncritical pedagogy would serve as a vehicle for continuing the political oppression and working against liberation or emancipation (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011, p. 78). Critical pedagogy appropriates the social context of students through the integration of their personal and social realities.

It is regrettable that memories of cosmopolitanism lie buried in the early urban landscape of South Africa, where once vibrant multicultural communities coexisted peacefully. However, a (re)focusing on the current reconstruction and revision of the higher education curriculum towards becoming decolonised and more inclusive of the historically marginalised, will bring new futuristic epistemological perspectives to students. Historical research can develop a counter-narrative to generate empirical evidence to prove that it is possible for culturally diverse people to live together. Bickford-Smith (2001), for instance, asserted that in the 1840s, most of Cape Town's lower-class areas were racially mixed: whites, coloureds, and Africans lived together as neighbours (p. 16). This kind of critical education will elucidate the possibilities of developing alternative forms of living, and potentially disrupt existing colonial ideological positions.

Ordinarily, cosmopolitanism is most recognisable as a term of political governance but recently became associated with social processes (Delanty, 2006). With its origin in ancient Greek philosophy, according to which everyone would be a citizen of the world (Ribeiro, 2001, p. 19), some sceptics of cosmopolitanism argue that its meaning diminishes when used ahistorically. Hence, when the protagonists of cosmopolitanism are promoting it merely for the purpose of reconciliation and human rights, uncritical of a history of oppression, it will lose its effectiveness (Gilroy, 2006). Appiah, a leading cosmopolitan theorist, argued that if people truly try, despite or even because of cultural difference, they will be able to share and communicate in important ways (as cited in Scully, 2011, p. 301). Appiah celebrated heterogeneity and difference as enabling concepts of cosmopolitanism. He argued that negative assertions of culture and difference should not impede consensus reaching (Appiah, 1997, p. 621). The late Nelson Mandela best explained the complex nature of learning and unlearning negative traits when he said, “No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, . . . People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love” (n.d., No. 4). Critical

cosmopolitanism embraces hybridity and anti-racism. It includes Appiah's focus on difference and consensus reaching to enact a vision of building a new world from the ground up (Gilroy, 2006).

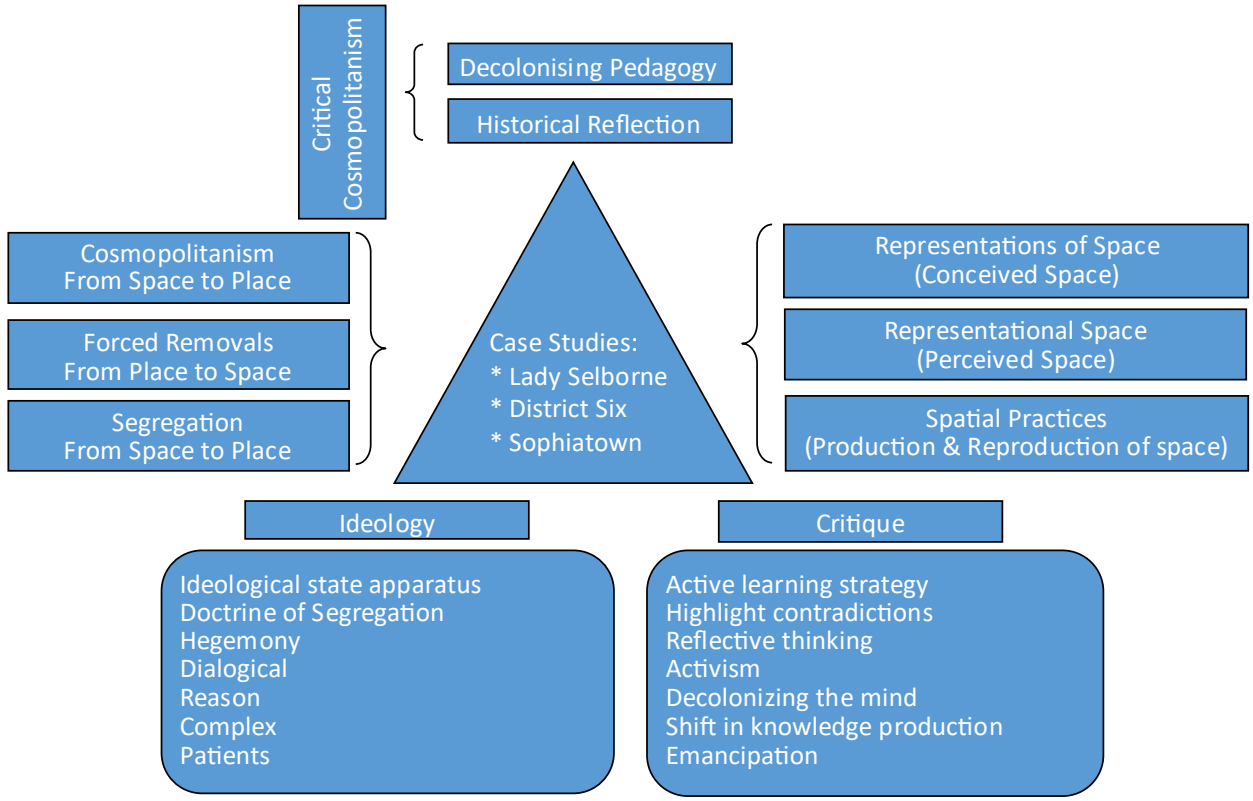
This paper adopts a notion of cosmopolitanism that moves beyond the SAIRR view outlined above. The paper suggests a critical notion of cosmopolitanism that stresses grassroots activism and an ongoing openness to societal transformation and self-creation (Scully, 2011, p. 299). Critical cosmopolitanism recognises the complexity of how technologies of self emerge as new political subjects of diverse ontological and cultural backgrounds, and create a new vision for the future (Ribeiro, 2001, p. 24). Furthermore, this paper engages suppressed historical themes such as segregation, forced removals, and cosmopolitanism and employs the technique of ideology critique as a reflective, dialogical classroom pedagogy to develop democratic subjects. The outcomes of this approach would potentially be the questioning of existing beliefs and ideology, openness towards perspectives of others, and a reimagination of cosmopolitanism in a postapartheid society.

After these introductory comments, the paper unfolds with a note on some methodological issues and theory, followed by a spatial analysis of three urban forced-removal historical case studies and then an explanation of ideology critique as pedagogy. In the conclusion and recommendations section, the research questions are reviewed and reference is made to possible curriculum spaces to integrate critical cosmopolitanism and ideology critique as a decolonising pedagogy.

Methodological Note and Theoretical Approach

To assist the reader to understand the main conceptual and methodological components of the study, Diagram 1 provides a reference point. The diagram consists of the purpose of the study (top), the dialectic between the historical case studies, spatial theory and cosmopolitanism, forced removals, and segregation (middle), and ideology critique as pedagogy (bottom).

Figure 1: Ideaology-Critique Pedagogy applied in Cosmopolitan Historical Case Study



Methodology

The research questions set to frame this study are: “What are the historical manifestations of cosmopolitanism in pre-1948 South Africa?” and “How can ideology critique be employed as a decolonising pedagogy in a historical case study?”

The study design takes the form of a multiple historical case study (Amenta, 1991). A multiple case study uses historical texts and sources relevant to the case, which in this study is cosmopolitanism and forced removals. According to Mabry, a case study method requires deep understanding of the case and a researcher's interest (2009, p. 214). A historical case study approach is consistent with constructivist learning and uses “site-generated or related documents” (Mabry, 2009, p. 218). Secondary data for this study were selected from academic books, journal articles, and theses. To answer the first research question, textual sources were finecombed with specific reference to cosmopolitanism.

Ideology critique is suggested as pedagogy to engage the historical genesis of segregation as doctrine in the context of urban forced removals to demonstrate how political manipulation shaped place and space. Given that cosmopolitanism occurred unevenly across the South African landscape, the sample selection for this study is limited but rich in research material. The cases selected are all representative of major South African cities in the early period of industrialisation and urbanisation. While Lady Selborne, District Six, and Sophiatown were selected, forced-removal cases such as Pageview (Johannesburg), South End (Port Elizabeth), or Cato Manor (Durban) would have been equally appropriate.

Theoretical Framework

Social analysis of South African society is contested around a structural focus on race and class and, more recently, a poststructural perspective of space (Lefebvre, 1991) and power/knowledge (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). Spatial theory explains how human agency plays a role in shaping space, for example, how empty spaces transformed into mixed living, residential communities, then segregated, and eventually open (nonracial) areas.

Structuralism emphasises the interaction between history, society, and the political economy of which Marxism's economic determinism is one variant (Hart, 1990, p. 14). The historical predominance of race and racism renders economic determinist theory limited in the South African context. An analysis of the motivation behind segregation and forced removals encompasses not only economic but also social, ideological, and political reasons. The multiplicity of reasons calls for a theoretical lens that explains not only the causal relations, but also the contradictory, dynamic and fluidity observable in local contexts. The specificity of space in the case of geographic apartheid and its concomitant processes of segregation, legislation, and forced removals require a theory capable of explaining the changes involved in making space and place over a period of time.

An appropriate lens to explain the complex relations between historical time and space and how space becomes place, is Lefebvre's (1991) notion of *the production of space* (Merrifield, 1993, p. 522). For Lefebvre, space is produced to become place. Space is generative because it produces processes and products (things). To explain the complex interplay between the aspects of process, Lefebvre (1991) used a *conceptual triad*, which incorporates three moments of spacialisation: *representations of space*, *representational space*, and *spatial practices*. Each of these *moments* will be described with reference to their local historical manifestations. Below is a brief description of each moment of Lefebvre’s conceptual triad, which is followed by three case study applications.

Representations of space refer to the discursively conceived space constructed by various interest groups. It is dominant and has a specific influence on the production of space. Representational space is the lived space, the space of everyday life. It is experienced, subjective, qualitative, fluid, and dynamic. It is elusive space, which the representation (conceived) space seeks to appropriate. Spatial practices are the production and reproduction of everyday life flowing from perceived space (Lefebvre, 1991). I will illustrate below how, for instance, a space like Lady Selborne was conceived as representation of space, how it became representational space, and how everyday life was produced and reproduced as spatial practices of its inhabitants. Life is place dependent and, hence, the Lefebvrian struggle to change life has to launch itself from a place platform (Merrifield, 1993, p. 525). Place is more than just the lived experiences of everyday life. It is the moment when the conceived, the perceived, and the lived (practices) attain a certain structured coherence (Merrifield, 1993, p. 525).

Lefebvre's people–place dialectic and the political, rather than the economic, provide an inclusive framework to explain the role of ideology and race in the South African context (Hart, 1990, p. 14). The policy of racial segregation resulted in the estrangement and racial socialisation of people based on "skin colour." By emphasising how race was politically manipulated for ideological reasons, students will, hopefully, through the method of ideology critique, be able to see that racist attitudes emanated from political practices that influenced perceptions towards each other negatively. Lefebvre's spatial theory explicates how humans conceive, perceive, and reproduce practices (Lefebvre, 1991).

Using Lefebvre's spatial production theory, what follows next is an explication of the literature themes dealing with segregation, forced removals, and cosmopolitanism as revealed in the various texts on Lady Selborne, District Six, and Sophiatown. Diagram 1 places the historical case studies in relation to the theoretical framework and its intersection with cosmopolitanism, forced removals, and segregation. The purpose of ideology critique is to develop critical thinking instead of ideologically and dogmatically minded students (Burbules, 1992).

Spaces Becoming Places: Early Lady Selborne, District Six and Sophiatown

Lady Selborne

Lady Selborne was initially a portion of a farm that was purchased by a group of coloured people in 1906 (Carruthers, 2000). C. M. de Vries took ownership of the farm and 440 plots were allocated for public purchase. Plots were sold to people of different races and the area became racially mixed when Africans and whites also settled there. The area was situated against the southern slope of the Magaliesberg mountains, about 16 kilometres from the Pretoria city centre (Carruthers, 2000, p. 26). The area was surrounded by Daspoort, Hercules, and lnnesdale, which were all white settlements. This happened before the promulgation of the Union of South Africa Act in 1910, and the Natives Land Act of 1913. Like all previously declared "white areas," Lady Selborne has gone full cycle—from mixed to white, and then to nonracial.

District Six

District Six's origins may be traced back to the turn of the 19th century when a few homes were constructed to provide accommodation for officers of the Castle of Good Hope (Hart, 1990, p. 209). Initially part of Zonnebloem and Bloemhof (farms belonging to the first Anglican Bishop of Cape Town), District Six provided space for a growing urban population. In 1840, District Six comprised a clustering of homes concentrated along Hanover Street and Sir Lowry Road. By the late 19th century, it had a racially mixed population of about 29,000 (Hart, 1990, p. 212). The Zonnebloem College was established in February 1858 at a house in Claremont, Cape Town but in 1860 moved to the Zonnebloem estate, which incorporated District Six (Cleophas, 2012, p. 66). Interestingly, between 1858 and 1913 the college had a nonracial student population comprising, among others, white,

coloured, Bechuana, Fingo, and Marolong students (Cleophas, 2012, p. 66). Unlike Lady Selborne, District Six never developed into a white area during apartheid due to strong resistance from anti-apartheid organisations.

Sophiatown

Sophiatown was conceived in 1897 by an investor named Herman Tobiansky who purchased 237 acres of land, which was part of a farm, Waterval. Sophiatown was named after the owner's wife and was only 7.2 km west of Johannesburg. Tobiansky leased the land to the Zuid Afrikaanse Republiek for the purpose of a coloured township, which did not materialise. He then planned a private leasehold township on the site. After 1905, large portions of Sophiatown had restrictive clauses against African and coloured occupancy but when those were removed in 1911 and 1912, owners began selling their stands indiscriminately to whites, Africans and coloureds (van Tonder, 1990, p. 20). Sophiatown became a racially diverse space surrounded by Martindale (1905) and Newclare (1912), which also became racially mixed areas.

With time, some residents sold to others and moved elsewhere. When the Johannesburg City Council (JCC) developed a sewage plant near Sophiatown, it discouraged some people from settling there (van Tonder, 1990). This point proves that representational space is also contested space because the JCC's attempt at establishing a coloured area had failed, revealing some hidden town planning segregation tendencies well before apartheid.

All three areas as representations of space (Lefebvre, 1991) were initially conceptualised for residential purposes, and not particularly designated for any specific racial group. All three had been open farmland that was subsequently developed into residential areas. While the landowners were interested in getting their return on investment, citizens were concerned about providing shelter and living a normal life. Evidence abounds that these areas were cosmopolitan and mixed, where people of different backgrounds were eager to settle.

While South African cities developed under the normal impulses of capitalism, the concern of colonial governance was always to uphold white supremacy. Segregation, as previously noted, was used as ideological legitimation for white domination (Dubow, 1989), leaving the prevention of racial integration during early industrialisation as a major concern to colonial governance.

Significantly, the establishment of cosmopolitanism flourished before the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. The establishment of the Union, to the exclusion of black people, signified the amalgamation and supremacy of white English and Afrikaner interest. Forthwith, the Union would use its legal power to enforce racial spatial patterning and obviate the growth of cosmopolitanism. The struggle to establish permanent white control over land intensified after 1910, with the enforcement of further legislation such as the 1936 Land Act, the Natives Resettlement Act (1954) and the 1950 Group Areas Act (Hart, 1990). Needless to say, whites were allocated prime property while Africans, Indians and coloured people were given racially exclusive townships on the urban periphery (Hart, 1990, p. 3).

According to Lefebvre (1991), representational space and spatial practices are descriptive of lived space in the everyday life experiences of citizens (Merrifield, 1993, p. 523). Representational space exemplifies spatial practices that ensure societal cohesion, continuity, and, in the context of this study, cosmopolitanism and forced removals. Below, I explain some of the everyday life activities that were produced and reproduced as cosmopolitan practices. These spaces became places of integration that

manifested cosmopolitan living as an integrated, nonracial form of urban living (Merrifield, 1993, p. 525).

The establishment of Lady Selborne, District Six, and Sophiatown became cosmopolitan places at their earliest conception. I now describe some everyday-life representational spaces and practices that shaped social cohesion amongst inhabitants.

Representational and Spatial Practices: Social Cohesion and Racial Integration

Everyday-life experiences in the three case studies showed the diversity and rich culture that emerged in these communities. Some of the best talent and social capital were to be found there. While being aware of the possible romanticising effects of memory and nostalgia in historical reconstructions of forced removal communities, it should be noted that strife occurs in all communities and those discussed in this article were no exception. However, given the focus on the production of cosmopolitanism in this article, its historical manifestations have been highlighted. A glimpse of each community's social fabric is conveyed in the section that follows.

Lady Selborne

Kgari-Masondo talked about business owners who were prepared to assist people in need, irrespective of their race or creed (Kgari-Masondo, 2013, p. 101). Cosmopolitanism in Lady Selborne was best expressed in the daily interaction of inhabitants. There were no inhibitions about different backgrounds, skin colour, culture, or upbringing. Lady Selborne was also a multilingual space. Mojapelo (2008), for instance, referred to his mother who was Sepedi while her best friend was Shangaan-speaking. Some Indians, coloureds and Chinese spoke fluent Sesotho, which was the dominant language. Some Africans could communicate with Chinese and Indians too.

Mojapelo (2008) reflected upon his upbringing where he socialised with coloured people who lived on his mother's property. The living space was multicultural, where different cultural traditions and practices found expression. The same premises were shared by Shangaans, Batswana, Bapedi, Xhosa, Vhavenda, and Basotho people. Mojapelo (2008) spoke of shared cultural practices such as the Chinese fah-fee (informal gambling game) and the Indians selling atchar and Indian delights such as samosas and curry balls.

Alongside African cultural groups were Europeans as part of the same community. A Jewish bachelor lived in his shop while an Afrikaner stayed a few houses away. A block further, lived some English, Italian, and Swiss. German nuns and Irish priests lived in Lady Selborne for 50 or more years. A black businessperson employed an Italian mechanic and a white woman as bookkeeper. Several white property owners lived in Lady Selborne with their families. An Italian fresh vegetable farmer lived for years on the southern outskirts of the town. There was an Afrikaner woman, married to an Indian shopkeeper, who lived in Lady Selborne for more than 23 years. She lies buried in the Indian section of the cemetery. Africans from the British Protectorates blended with the community and eventually intermarried. Africans from Nyasaland (Tanzania) also settled there. Coloured people were mostly children of English, Scottish, and Irish soldiers who fought in the Anglo Boer War (1899–1902), but some were direct descendants of Cape Malays. English soldiers married African women—from where some black peoples' surnames such as Forbes, Gould, Cartwright, Mount, and Kaufmann are derived (Mojapelo, 2008, p. 7).

District Six

District Six's site ontology has a similar cosmopolitan story to share. Hart (1990) narrated that District Six officially received its name in 1867 when the municipality of Cape Town was divided into six, instead of its previous 12 districts. As representational space (Lefebvre, 1991), the place was in the making long before that. Already in 1840, District Six had a distinct cultural mix (Bickford-Smith, 2001). The "spirit" of the place was often tangibly expressed in, and lived through the social fibre reflected in its unofficial name, Kanaladorp. This name is derived from a Malay (Muslim) word, "kanala," meaning "please." The place meaning of the word conveys a never-say-no or *help mekaar* [help each other] ethic, typically descriptive of a closely knitted community, conveying interdependence and social cohesion amongst its inhabitants (Davids, 2015).

District Six developed into a vibrant, cosmopolitan community and became a melting pot of class, race, and culture. Jewish migrants from Czarist Russia, Germany, and Poland amounted to more than 6,500 (Hart, 1990, p. 212). Schoeman (1994) described the space as a place where various races and cultures lived together in one neighbourhood (Schoeman's cover blurb, 1994). Respect and religious tolerance prevailed amongst its Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu inhabitants. In their research among ex-residents of District Six, Swanson and Harries (2001, p. 77) quoted a resident who attended Moravian Primary School and regularly attended church despite being a Muslim: "When it was Easter we painted the church, cleaned it and even sang in the choir sometimes. When it came to bazaar time, the churches and mosques supported each other. That is the spirit they can never bring back." Insightfully, another resident remarked that:

> *District Six had to be destroyed because of the quality of the thinking in the area. The whole cultural mix was something they couldn't handle, this cosmopolitan mix. This kind of East End mix, Jew, Arab and Christian lived in one street. That was their philosophy and that had to be destroyed. (Swanson & Harries, 2001, p. 77)*

The cosmopolitanism that grew in District Six, like in many early urban South African spaces, were either located near the central business district or with views of the sea and the mountains. While these areas had the potential to become permanent cosmopolitan spaces, the colonial-apartheid rule not only razed them to the ground, but also destroyed their memory by forcing residents to live in segregated apartheid townships where they had to start building new communities.

Sophiatown

Sophiatown developed into an entirely mixed population, which according to van Tonder (1990, p. 20), led to its reputation for "racial diversity." Hart noted that a distinguishing element of Sophiatown was its socially heterogeneous population that produced the best musicians, scholars, educationists, singers, artists, doctors, lawyers, and clergyman (1990, p. 108). Sophiatown was acclaimed as the "most cosmopolitan of . . . black social igloos and perhaps the most perfect experiment in nonracial community living" (Modisane, 1963). It may be relevant to quote Father Trevor Huddleston as cited in Hart (1990) describing Sophiatown's shopkeepers as a nonracial collective, which was the epitome of integration:

> *An American barbershop stands next to an African herbalist's store, with its dried roots and dust laden animal hides hanging in the window. You can go into a store to buy a packet of cigarettes and be served by a Chinaman, Indian or a Pakistani. (p. 109)*

Huddleston's celebration of life in Sophiatown is similar to that of other culturally rich and racially diverse spaces. In his autobiography (cited by Hart, 1990, p. 104) Huddlestone noted: "When Sophiatown is finally obliterated and her people finally scattered . . . South Africa will have lost not

only a place, but an ideal." Sophiatown produced a rich musical heritage that is internationally known. Traditional jazz, kwela, phata-phata—all forms of music and dance, emerged out of an amalgam of diverse cultural genres described as the fruit of a cosmopolitan environment (South African History Online, n.d.).

The destruction of Sophiatown was not only limited to the loss of property ownership or nearness to the work place, but also represented the tangible loss of an urban culture expressed in many forms. To demonstrate the tragedy of Sophiatown's destruction, Hart (1990, p. 112) quotes an author who had lived there:

> *We took the ugliness of life in a slum and wove a kind of beauty; we established bonds of human relationships which set a pattern of communal living, far richer and more satisfying—materially and spiritually—than any model housing could substitute.*

From Place to Space: Cosmopolitanism to Segregation

Obsessed with the ideology of racial segregation, the colonial-apartheid rulers used the power of the law to destroy all signs of cosmopolitanism. They left a legacy of destruction of homes, historical buildings, and functional, vibrant communities. Lady Selborne's black residents were moved to Vlakfontein (Mamelodi), Ga-Rankuwa, Mabopane, and Atteridgeville. In contrast to Lady Selborne with its mountain, fertile soil, and beautiful scenery, Ga-Rankuwa was infertile and dry. Coloured people were sent to Eersterust and Indians to Laudium (Mojapelo, 2008, p. 5). The place became a whites-only area called Suiderberg.

District Six remained a barren piece of land when all its 60,000 residents were relocated on the Cape Flats. They settled in townships such as Lavender Hill, Bridgetown, Mannenberg, Hanover Park, and Mitchells Plain. The Cape Peninsula University of Technology as the successor of the whites-only Cape Technicon inherited a significant portion of the vacant land. Foreign immigrants and white civil servants occupied many of the renovated cottages that were previously owned by black people.

Van Tonder (1990) argued that the removal of Sophiatown, Martindale, and Newclare were first mooted as a major scheme in the 1940s and formed an integral part of the JCC's postwar reconstruction plans. After Verwoerd assumed the position of Head of Native Affairs Department (NAD), the JCC plan was implemented. Sophiatown's inhabitants were moved to Meadowlands and later to Diepkloof and other parts of Soweto (South African History Online, n.d.). Sophiatown became a whites-only area ironically renamed Triomf (Triumph) (Hart, 1990, p. 154).

Forced removals brought an end to these vibrant cosmopolitan communities. The ensuing years of apartheid's social and political engineering gradually buried the memories of these communities—memories that are now being excavated. Ironically, the ideal, so prophetically pronounced by Father Trevor Huddleston, has become the missing page in the country's history.

To address this epistemological vacuum in the historiographical archive, this study hopes to generate renewed interest in cosmopolitanism by adopting a critical pedagogical approach: ideology critique. Diagram 1 also indicates the interconnection among the three historical case studies, cosmopolitanism, and the dynamism of space and place. The middle left component in the diagram shows space and how it becomes place and vice versa.

In the next section, ideology critique is explained conceptually and pedagogically as a decolonising classroom practice.

Ideology Critique as Decolonising Pedagogy

By adopting a critical approach to cosmopolitanism, it is not enough to engage with history as a knowledge production project. There needs to be a commitment to social transformation and self-creation (Delanty, 2006, p. 39; Scully, 2011, p. 299). Addressing cosmopolitanism, pedagogically, requires a shift from the lecturing, transmission mode of delivery to learner-centredness. Critical cosmopolitanism requires a dialogical methodology that would potentially offer opportunities to students for questioning and self-introspection (Freire, 1970). Students are viewed as active participants in the learning process and their understanding of subject matter relates to their personal experiences and self-expression. Ideology critique is offered as an active learning strategy to engage the far-reaching implications of apartheid forced removals and suggest how to go about changing them.

Schools and higher education institutions form an integral part of the political machinery that reproduces the dominant state ideology (Althusser, 1971). The ideology of racial superiority was engineered by the ruling class. The state's discriminatory policies on educational expenditure resulted in an unequal provision of resources, for example, by spending more money per capita on a white child than a black child. Consequently, the black population was deprived of equal educational opportunities. Another example of how ideology produces inequality was through legislation such as the Group Areas Act (1950). According to this Act, black people were forcibly removed from their original homes and communities, which were mostly located in prime areas near to the coast (South End), mountain (District Six) or central business district (Pageview, Fietas, Sophiatown). Using examples of how social inequalities were politically motivated, ideology critique has the potential to emancipate students' understanding of forced removals as a colonial-apartheid corollary, rather than a slum clearance exercise in the interest of public health and safety, as purported by the authorities.

During the Rhodes Must Fall movement, students demanded a decolonised, quality education. These forms of resistance cannot be ignored and most universities are now thinking how to align their current curricula with the demand for decolonised education. Decolonisation represents opposition to the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 261). Coloniality refers to the continuation of apartheid and colonial practices in the postcolonial period. Decolonisation refers to a shift in knowledge production and questions the effects of colonisation on modern subjectivities and modern forms of life as well as contributions of racialised and colonised subjectivities to the production of knowledge (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 262). As abundantly argued in this paper, segregation and apartheid functioned as ideologies to the benefit of the white minority (Dubow, 1989). As an ideology, apartheid left its marks on the psyche and thinking of present generations. Consequently, the educational system requires a critical approach to ideology in order to emancipate students from its negative effects.

Ideology refers to those ideas, values, and beliefs produced within a given mode of production such as the media industry, or education and cultural systems (Macris, 2011). Strinati (1995) added that it is a material force in societies that interpolates individuals as subjects within particular ideologies. For education to serve an emancipatory role, it needs to subject the individual to processes of reflective thinking to see how dominant norms and values of legitimation are reinforced and reproduced as false consciousness.

Ideology critique questions the dominant ideology with the intention to destabilise it. In the context of this study, the historical role of ideology was to conceal cosmopolitanism as an aspect of social and political life through the use of "ideological state apparatus" (Burbules, 1992, p. 8). Social and municipal services in South African urban spaces such as Lady Selborne, District Six, and Sophiatown were neglected and subjected to political and legal pressures until they were physically destroyed. The

Group Areas Act (1950) was implemented to forcibly remove these communities and to resettle their inhabitants in segregated residential areas. Inhabitants had to find their feet before building new (apartheid) communities. Apartheid became a material expression of their existence, which entrenched the ideology of segregation and racial inequality as official doctrine. Consequently, South Africans had to fight against a dehumanising ideology to preserve their dignity.

Ideology Critique as Classroom Pedagogy

The method of ideology critique involves at least five steps. Firstly, the approach is based on dialogue and reasoned discussion, which differs from an authoritative and assertive approach (Freire, 1970). The aim is to provide reasons to induce people to change and abandon certain beliefs and values or modify them to accommodate alternatives (Burbules, 1992, p. 15). In the context of this study, students can be presented with forced-removal historical data structured along Lefebvre's (1991) spatial model to focus on the processes involved (refer to the middle components of Diagram 1).

Secondly, there must be an understanding that belief systems are complex and that some will be more susceptible to change than others. More reasonable students will be willing to change their position, especially if they are being treated with respect and when there are disagreements. The historical evidence can be used to show that cosmopolitanism was a reality and that its destruction was a political act in favour of one group against the others.

Thirdly, the use of educational research, which in this study is the investigation into forced removals, will provide evidence in the form of textual materials to engage in dialogue about the injustices perpetrated against black communities. Students can be engaged to think about alternative methods of addressing the perceived problems that forced removals intended to address. This approach will make it easier to reveal what was concealed and a reformulation of previously held positions may potentially emerge.

Fourthly, the highlighting of contradictions in formulations and an emerging constructivist way of building new understandings are both essential to the method of ideology critique. Leading a person to realise their internal disjunctions is a necessary step in the process of transforming them (Burbules, 1992, p. 10).

In the fifth place, to be ideological is to be resistant to criticism and to defend a position as unchangeable. Contrary to being ideological is to be critical: to accept that one's subjectivity is open for critique and even to critique, depending on the disposition of the student. An ideology critique pedagogy may offer one approach but is itself not immune from criticism. It offers a reasonable and practical way towards a dialogical option for problem solving.

Diagram 1 above also provides a flow chart to show how historical evidence about forced removals can be employed as content in ideology critique methodology to facilitate an openness to cosmopolitanism.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper responded to the research questions by citing, in detail, three historical case studies presented as pedagogical material on cosmopolitanism and forced removals (Hart, 1990; Mojapelo, 2008; van Tonder, 1990). Ideology critique has been presented as a viable decolonising pedagogy, based on the understanding that the doctrine of segregation and apartheid operated as an ideology to preserve white supremacy (Dubow, 1989). This paper demonstrated that cosmopolitanism developed

in those urban spaces that were later destroyed by forced removals to entrench the doctrine of segregation.

The current education system needs to confront the challenge of letting younger South Africans reimagine cosmopolitanism in a postapartheid society. The pedagogical objective of using ideology critique (Macris, 2011) is to reflect upon the hegemonic effect of their socialisation and apartheid on their self-formation. Exposure to authentic historical sources showed that cosmopolitanism was once a vibrant tradition that could be reimagined by students to establish a postapartheid nonracial society.

The educational sector is an important space where cosmopolitan education can be introduced as part of a decolonised curriculum. Critical cosmopolitanism, as opposed to its liberal version, recognises the need to confront issues of social justice and inequality as an outcome of the ideology of segregation and apartheid (Delanty, 2006). In response to students' demand for a quality and relevant curriculum, this paper proposes the use of ideology critique in the (re)construction of an alternative, more inclusive historical narrative.

At the level of initial teacher education topics such as human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice have been prioritised (Department of Basic Education, 2011). During the training of student teachers, carefully prepared lessons can be used to teach cosmopolitanism using the ideology critique pedagogy in modules such as languages, life orientation, history and geography (social science), arts and culture, and inclusive education. There is a wealth of material available on forced removals relevant to these subjects. The intention should be that students be provided with sufficient opportunities for dialogue about their own beliefs and ideologies. With careful intervention, conditions could be created for critical introspection and questioning (Burbules, 1992).

Students at teacher education institutions today will be teaching citizens of the future. Teacher education institutions are therefore vital spaces where an alternative society can be visualised. As South Africa's social transformation was slow over the past 20 years, a more realistic but constructive view of educational social change should be adopted—lest the next 20 years become as wasted as the previous.

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Decolonising (Through) Inclusive Education?

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Abstract

Inclusive education seeks to reduce exclusion from and within schools, and to secure participation and learning success for all. Its origins are in countries of the Global North, and countries of the Global South, like South Africa, have been relatively late to introduce inclusive education. Inclusive education has been critiqued as constituting a neocolonial project and an unwelcome imposition on countries of the Global South. It can be seen as a form of coloniality because the knowledge from Euro-American countries dominates the field. Furthermore, countries are expected to fund a model of inclusion developed in the resource-rich North, and current schooling perpetuates colonial hierarchies. Responding to this critique, this article presents an Afrocentric model of inclusive education, citing scholars who claim that inclusive education is congruent with traditional African culture and community and resonates with ubuntu. It is then shown that this argument is not unassailable. An alternative is that inclusive education might be harnessed to further the decolonial project, and that aspects of inclusive education can resist the coloniality of knowledge, of power, and of being. This position may also be problematic because it could represent what has been termed *settler innocence*. Finally, implications for research and teaching are suggested.

Keywords: inclusive education, decolonisation, ubuntu, coloniality, Africanisation, settler innocence

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Introduction

Conversations among South African university lecturers in response to the call for decolonising education have become increasingly urgent, not least among teacher educators. One of the fields of teacher education is inclusive education, a field which has been given prominence by legislation that requires that teachers are knowledgeable about inclusive education and are able to teach in classes with diverse learners. It is a nascent field in South Africa, and one that has relied heavily on scholarship emanating from countries where inclusive education is more established. As inclusive education is

being sedimented into university courses, policy prescriptions, and research projects, so is it simultaneously being questioned in scholarly conversations, particularly as it relates to decolonisation. In considering these conversations, the problem emerges that there is little systematic conceptual engagement with inclusive education and decoloniality in the scholarly literature. This article aims to address this problem by asking the question, "What are the implications of the decolonial turn (Grosfoguel, 2007) for inclusive education as a field, and for teacher education for inclusive teaching?"

In exploring possible answers to this question, I attempt to bring decolonisation and inclusive education into conversation with one another, first by outlining ways in which inclusive education can be critiqued from a decolonial perspective. After considering the possibility of an Afrocentric inclusive education as part of the decolonisation project, I then argue (with some caveats) that inclusive education, if cast as a critical education project, may be harnessed in the pursuit of decolonising education. The article ends with some thoughts about the implications of the issues discussed for research and teaching of inclusive education in South African higher education. The article is deliberately devoid of a conclusion, which signals an ongoing epistemic journey rather than a destination, and it is hoped that this work will spark further conversations on this important topic.

Setting the Scene: Inclusive Education in International and South African Contexts

Inclusive education traces its origins to parental activism in the Nordic countries in the 1960s and 1970s (Dyson & Forlin, 1999). Parents of children with disabilities were dissatisfied with the segregated education that their children received in special education settings. Drawing on human rights discourses that developed in the wake of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), parents and other activists demanded the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream settings so that these children could enjoy equal educational opportunities. The idea(l) of inclusive education was taken up in other countries of the Global North through various policy mandates. Canada was the first country to use the term *inclusive education* (Thomas & Vaughn, 2004), and this appellation is generally preferred to terms like *integration* and *mainstreaming*. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994, p. viii) endorsed inclusive education, saying that "those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs."

In many countries of the Global North, inclusive education has developed from a foundation of well-established special education systems. In addition, these countries have implemented inclusive education in contexts where quality basic education was widely available, and out-of-school populations were relatively small. The advance of inclusive education has been enabled by financial and technical resources, legislative frameworks, skilled teachers and allied professionals, and traditions of parent advocacy. The growth of inclusive education has also been accompanied by the rapid expansion of scholarship in the field, which has focused on its conceptualisation and implementation. Scholars working in countries in the Global North have seen their work privileged, and become seminal work in the field. So, for example, Booth and Ainscow's 1998 edited volume, *From Them to Us: An International Study of Inclusion in Education*, only looks at European countries, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand. The current members of the editorial advisory board of the *International Journal of Inclusive Education* are exclusively from countries in the Global North. Emanating predominantly from the Global North, books, articles, websites, and workshops, which could be said to reflect the practice language (Collins, 2011) of inclusive education, present a view of how it might be realised in the classroom. Included in this practice language are strategies like curriculum and instructional differentiation and cooperative learning, teaching arrangements like co-teaching, working with teacher aides and other specialist personnel, and ways of ensuring access for individuals who have difficulties through assistive devices and the design of individual education plans

(IEPs). Other requirements for the successful implementation of inclusive education in this literature are teacher education, time, willingness and ability to collaborate, and smaller class size.

Following the publication of the Salamanca Statement, a "second generation" (Kozleski, Artiles, & Waitoller, 2011, p. 4) of countries has begun to adopt inclusive education. These countries are mostly in the "developing" world, and they are grappling with the implications of implementing inclusive education in contexts of underdevelopment, and with colonial legacies. South Africa is one such country. Following the democratic elections of 1994, the Constitution (1996) of the country laid the groundwork of an inclusive education system through establishing the right of all citizens to basic education (section 29.1), affirming equality and human dignity (section 1a), and outlawing discrimination (section 9.4). The South African Schools Act (1996) legislated the possibility of inclusive schooling by asserting that where it is "reasonably practicable," learners with "special education needs" should be served in the mainstream and relevant support should be provided for these learners (section 12.4). In 1996, The National Committee for Education Support Services and National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCESS/NCSNET) were appointed by the minister of education and the Department of Education (DoE) to investigate and make recommendations about special needs and support in education in South Africa. The NCESS/NCSNET report recommended that the separate special and ordinary education systems be integrated (DoE, 1997). Some of the ways that the committee envisioned this being realised, like building modifications, curriculum development, staff training and intersectoral collaboration, would be included in the *Education White Paper Six: Special Needs Education*, which was published in 2001 (DoE).

Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) acknowledged a large number of children and young people out of school, most of whom are disabled, and addressed extrinsic and intrinsic barriers to learning, with a focus on ways in which the education system may itself be a barrier to learning. It detailed a framework for establishing an inclusive education and training system through building capacity and expanding provision and access in all education sectors. Following *White Paper 6*, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has issued various guideline documents that provide details of how an inclusive education system should be realised in South African schools.

Tracking the genesis and historical trajectory of inclusive education is easier than settling on its definition and establishing what it is. Meanings have been contested as the discursive community shifts between emphases and nuances (Walton, 2016). Inclusive education can be described as a rights-based approach to education that seeks social justice by resisting exclusion within and from school communities and promoting the access, participation, and achievement of all learners. One contestation about its meaning involves whether inclusive education should be restricted to a concern with including children with special needs or disabilities (a narrow view) or in a broad view, whether it should be about all children vulnerable to marginalisation based on any characteristic or identity (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2006). Another debate concerns placement, and whether separate education settings for some children can be justified within an inclusive education system. Contextual differences also lead to locally developed understandings of inclusive education (Kozleski et al., 2011). Over the years, there have been many fields and disciplines that have contributed to inclusive education (Slee, 2011), and it has taken on different forms. As a result, inclusive education may be understood to be a goal or vision, an ideology, a practice, a policy, a field of knowledge production, and a pedagogic discourse. There have been various criticisms levelled against inclusive education, including that it is theoretically flimsy (Armstrong, Armstrong, & Spandagou, 2011), that it lacks empirical evidence for its efficacy (Kavale & Forness, 2000), and that it compromises the specialist support to which disabled children are entitled (Corbett, 2001). This article engages specifically with those who critique inclusive education from a decolonial perspective.

Inclusive Education Critiqued as a Neocolonial Project

As inclusive education has gained traction, concerns have been raised about the extent to which it may represent a neocolonial project, imposed on the developing world by countries of the Global North and by multinationals like the United Nations. Armstrong et al. (2011, p. 33) likened its expanding influence to the spreading of an "evangelical belief" in the inclusion of diversity by aid agencies and donors from the Global North who exhort "countries to adopt inclusive education as a policy prescription to address system failure and individual disadvantage." The pressure to adopt inclusive education comes with scant recognition of ways in which the history of colonialism and underdevelopment in countries of the Global South compound the problems of educational exclusion. In countries struggling to guarantee access to quality basic education in the face of system failure rooted in historic, global, and structural disadvantage, inclusive education may be seen as idealistic (Armstrong et al., 2011). These arguments can be heard in South Africa, particularly as calls for the decolonisation of education have gained momentum in the wake of the #Feesmustfall movement in higher education. There are at least three critiques of inclusive education that could be made from a decolonial perspective, and these can be linked with the notions of the coloniality of knowledge, of power, and of being.

Decoloniality begins with the recognition of "existential realities of suffering, oppression, repression, domination and exclusion" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 15). From this recognition, the work of decoloniality is to dismantle the

> *relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geo-political hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world. (Maldonado-Torres, 2011, p. 1)*

Decoloniality addresses the *coloniality of knowledge*, *the coloniality of power*, and the *coloniality of being* (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). These colonialities are imbricated, are mutually reinforcing, and together produce the experience of coloniality, which should be distinguished from colonialism. The latter refers to the situation where the sovereignty of one nation or people rests with another nation or people. Coloniality outlasts colonialism and perpetuates patterns of power in social, economic, cultural, and educational relations that were established as a result of colonialism (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). The *coloniality of knowledge* is represented by the hegemony of Eurocentric and Western philosophies. This has carried assumptions of universality and objectivity, and presents Western knowledge as "the only one capable of achieving a universal consciousness, and [dismisses] non-Western knowledge as particularistic and, thus, unable to achieve universality" (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 214). The task of decoloniality is to shift the geography of reason from the West to ex-colonised epistemic sites (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013) and advance the legitimacy of what Grosfoguel (2007, p. 213) called "subaltern epistemic perspectives."

The *coloniality of power* is what Mignolo (2007, p. 159) called the "darker side of modernity and the global reach of imperial capitalism." With its origins in the impetus to invade, conquer, and colonise, the *coloniality of power* concerns the exertion of hegemonic power and oppression. This has resulted in the current asymmetrical global power structure (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013) that centres the countries of the Global North. Their domination of the postcolonial world, particularly through control of finance and markets, ensures ongoing exploitation. Colonial power relations, according to Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 242), have not only marked "the areas of authority, sexuality, knowledge and the economy," but also "the general understanding of being." The *coloniality of being* refers to "the effects of coloniality in lived experience" (Maldonado-Torres 2007, p. 242). The colonial invader assumed the inhumanity of colonised people through denying their rationality. As Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 253)

expressed it, “Misanthropic scepticism and racism work together with ontological exclusion.” Maldonado-Torres (2007) explained that the *coloniality of being* creates ontological colonial difference, which renders colonised people as dispensable.

This brief account of decoloniality is acknowledged to be superficial, and is intended to give the reader just enough background to follow the decolonial critiques of inclusive education presented below.

Inclusive Education as a Form of the *Coloniality of Knowledge*

As inclusive education has been taken up as a policy prescription for the education system in South Africa, concern has been expressed about it being a Western ideology, dominated by Western scholars, and uncritically taken up in South Africa. Support for this claim can be found in the Department of Basic Education’s *Guidelines for Responding to Learner Diversity in the Classroom* (Department of Basic Education, 2011), which relied almost exclusively on Western scholarship, including the now discredited ideas of multiple intelligences and learning styles. Similarly, the “Resources and Further Reading” provided in the *Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning* (Department of Basic Education, 2010) provided mainly Western texts. Whole-school approaches to inclusive education from the West, like the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth & Ainscow, 2002) and positive behaviour support have been trialled in South African schools (see Engelbrecht, Oswald, & Forlin, 2006; Moodley, 2016). Scholarship in inclusive education has drawn extensively on theory emanating from the West, particularly that of Bronfenbrenner (as cited in, for example, Geldenhuys & Weavers, 2013).

Many higher education institutions in South Africa now offer courses in inclusive education in initial teacher education and at postgraduate levels. This has been accompanied by the production of textbooks for use by students and in-service teachers. Here the preeminence of theories and literature from the Global North is again evident. This includes the uncritical acceptance of Western diagnostic categories for learners, particularly with respect to emotional, behavioural, and mental health labels (see, for example, Moletsane, 2013, on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). While it could readily be claimed that this reliance on and deference to the knowledge of the West was an inevitable result of being a second-generation inclusive education country, it can equally be seen as an instance of the *coloniality of knowledge*. In policy and scholarship, local, indigenous, and culturally relevant knowledge has been minimised, if not ignored. In its place, the knowledge of inclusive education forged amidst the wealth and privilege of education systems in the Global North has been given primacy. Knowledge and power are not unrelated in coloniality, and the dominance of inclusive education knowledge from the Global North has financial implications when imposed on countries of the Global South.

Inclusive Education as a Form of the *Coloniality of Power*

The failure of inclusive education has been said to be a result of “a combination of limited resources and the external manipulation of educational policy by external funding agencies pursuing agendas arising in the developed world” (Armstrong et al., 2011, p. 32). The *coloniality of power* can be observed in the prescription of education policies, like inclusive education, which emanate from the Global North by international agencies (like UNESCO), their consultants, and funding agencies. Not only are these policies potentially incompatible with the contextual realities of certain countries, they also pose a financial burden on them. Writing from the context of Cambodia, Kalyanpur lamented:

> *The international standards for inclusive education policy and practice, such as the Salamanca Framework or the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, emerge from a predominantly western-centric, resource-rich model of service provision that is often incompatible with the lived realities of people with disabilities in non-western contexts. (2016, p. 16)*

The argument presented here is that the financial and human resource demands of inclusive education are seen to be unsupportable in countries already buckling under financial constraints (which are linked to the legacy of colonialism and apartheid). Perversely, it is the very conditions of coloniality that have resulted in the financial precariousness of many countries in the Global South. And the history of colonialism and underdevelopment in these countries compound the problems of educational exclusion. The *Salamanca Statement* (UNESCO, 1994) does say that inclusive education is a cost-effective way of addressing the need to bring the millions of out-of-school children and youth into schools. Instead of building additional special schools to meet the needs of those out of school because of disabilities, the statement maintains that equipping current schools to meet these needs is preferable. Despite this, inclusive education as envisaged by the *Salamanca Statement* and Western notions of what inclusive education entails is not cost free. *White Paper 6* (DoE, 2001) noted the human and financial resource implications of building an inclusive education system, and said that a funding strategy would be developed. Six years after the publication of *White Paper 6*, Wildeman and Nomdo (2007) reported that funding for inclusive education had not yet been prioritised by the provincial departments of education in South Africa. By 2015, a Human Rights Watch report showed that nearly half a million disabled children with disabilities remained out of school, and stated that "segregation and lack of inclusion permeates all levels of South Africa's education system" (Human Rights Watch, 2015, p. 3). Inadequate funding for inclusive education was found to be one of the reasons for this exclusion.

Inclusive Education as a Form of the *Coloniality of Being*

The third argument questions the good of inclusive education if it is premised on the inclusion of children and young people in schools characterised by colonialism and coloniality. In South Africa, it is easy to see the legacy of colonialism in many schools. Symbols like school uniforms, buildings, and ceremonies bear (not so faint) traces of colonial and apartheid education. Western epistemologies dominate curricula, and indigenous knowledge is rarely promoted. Perhaps more insidious is the way in which schools and the wider education system reinforce coloniality, particularly by creating and entrenching the distinctions or *abyssal lines* (de Sousa Santos, 2007) between those who are visible, valued and valorised and those who are not. This is echoed in Slee's (2011, p. 42) comment that some learners are "smiled upon" by the system, from the point of enrolment to ultimate graduation in a display of the maxim that "Privilege begets privilege." These smiled-upon learners see their image in the schools they attend, and hear familiar voices that hail them (Bernstein, 2000). Competitive school cultures in neoliberal, marketised, school systems present success as scarce. Discourses of meritocracy in school achievement obscure the impact of historical, social, and economic advantage and disadvantage. As a result, some ways of being, along with some identities, are cast as inferior and undesirable in school communities, and some children and young people routinely experience oppression, symbolic violence, marginalisation, and exclusion.

"Inclusion into what?" was Allan's (2007, p. 48) question to the inclusive education community, and it forces recognition of the practices and cultures of schools that result in marginalisation and exclusion. In the South African context, the bimodal schooling system (Fleisch, 2007) ensures that a learner's life chances are determined by the end of Grade 3 (van der Berg, 2015, p. 41). So while children and young people might be "included" in schools and the schooling system, many remain what Slee (2011) called tenants on the margins of unchanging institutions. Their presence is tolerated, their stay is precarious, and their outcomes are uncertain. This argument challenges renditions of inclusive education that are merely concerned with access to existing schooling structures without addressing the "architecture of inequality and exclusion" on which education is built (Slee, 2011, p. 84).

There are, thus, three aspects of decoloniality that encompass concerns about inclusive education—the *coloniality of knowledge*, the *coloniality of power*, and the *coloniality of being*. The decolonial

critique of inclusive education exposes some of its problematic conceptualisations and instantiations. But simply cataloguing critique does not take the field forward. In this second part of the article, I will take two turns in suggesting a way forward. The first is to engage with the important work that inclusive education scholars in Africa are doing to develop an African orientation to inclusive education through linking it with traditional African values, including that of *ubuntu*. The second is to discuss whether inclusive education could be harnessed to decolonise education.

Where to Now for Inclusive Education?

As far back as 1998, Kisanji (1998) suggested that indigenous practices and attitudes of people in, what he called, the non-Western world are highly congruent with inclusive education. The work of Phasha (2016), Mahlo (2017), Phasha, Mahlo, and Dei (2017), and others, will be presented here as examples of resistance to the coloniality of inclusive education knowledge described above. Some concerns with this approach will then be noted. The second turn is to suggest that inclusive education has a conceptual reservoir that could be used in the service of decolonising education. I will propose that instead of finding grounds to decolonise inclusive education, perhaps a more fruitful avenue for scholarship and practice would be to harness the ideas of inclusive education to resist coloniality.

Afrocentric Inclusive Education

Scholars working to develop an African orientation to inclusive education believe a return to the central tenets of African values, community, and education would secure more inclusive education. The essence of this argument is that there is much in the indigenous knowledge and culture of African communities that is congruent with inclusive education, and that this knowledge should be foregrounded in promoting inclusive education in African contexts. Phasha et al. (2017, p. 5) asserted that "traditional African communities are about inclusion," and that "inclusion is taken as meaning we all belong and a responsibility of every citizen is to ensure that mutual interdependence is respected as an ideal and a virtue." Mahlo (2017, p. 107) maintained that "inclusive schooling cannot be detached from the African way of living."

Inclusive education in the African context.

Calls for contextually appropriate understandings of inclusive education have been made for many years. One of the maxims of inclusive education has been that it needs to be contextually determined (Booth & Ainscow, 1998). This has been taken up by inclusive education scholars in Africa who make a case for inclusivity being central to traditional African ways of being. Phasha et al. (2017, p. 5) suggested that rethinking African schooling requires going "back to our roots" and examining "our histories and cultural traditions." In so doing, scholars pointed to instances of the inclusion, participation, and valuing of people with disabilities (Kisanji, 1998; Mpofu, Kasayira, Mhaka, Chireshe, & Maunganidze, 2007). Mpofu et al. (2007, p. 71), for example, said that in Zimbabwe, "from an indigenous-traditionalist perspective, participation in inclusive settings is assumed for all." These authors also pointed to "inclusive community practices" being highly regarded in the Ndebele language, and "inclusiveness at the core of humanness" in Shona culture (2007, p. 71). In this literature, inclusive education is seen to have resonance with the African philosophy of ubuntu.

Inclusive education and ubuntu.

Ubuntu, said Phasha, "is founded on collectivism which is consistent with the agenda of inclusive education" (2016, p. 15). Various definitions of the isiZulu term ubuntu can be found, and it is a word that has equivalences in other African languages, such as *batho* in Setswana. Metz (2007, p. 323) gave its meaning as:

> *humanness, and it often figures into the maxim that "a person is a person through other persons." This maxim has descriptive senses to the effect that one's identity as a human being causally and even metaphysically depends on a community. It also has prescriptive senses to the effect that one ought to be a mensch, in other words, morally should support the community in certain ways.*

Three values of ubuntu are highlighted by Phasha (2016, pp. 16–18) as particularly resonant with inclusive education. These are humanness, interdependence, and communalism. *Humanness* relates to the inherent dignity of each human being, who should be respected and afforded care and compassion. Exclusion on any grounds is inherently disrespectful of individual humanness, and thus humanness is important for building strong communities. Phasha argued that humanness means acknowledging diversity, securing equal treatment, and catering for differences in schools and communities. *Interdependence* is the recognition of the need of people to be mutually supportive in relationships of connectedness. Phasha noted this as being relevant to the provision of "needs-responsive support services" (p. 17) for all learners in an inclusive education system. The principle of mutual responsibility is taught to African children who learn of their right to protection, care, and equal treatment. This, argued Phasha, is congruent with inclusive education's emphasis on the right to education without discrimination on the grounds of difference. *Communalism* emphasises the community, and the collective and intersubjective nature of humanness. Phasha linked this to the need in inclusive education for collaboration among all stakeholders, and the importance of recognising the role of the community in education. In this regard, Phasha et al. (2017, p. 5) said, "We have to return to the days when the separation of school and community was non-existent."

Concerns and caveats.

There are limits to the extent to which inclusive education can be said to be embedded in African culture and philosophy. These limits, in turn, constrain the potential that Africanising inclusive education might have to decolonise inclusive education. First, while there may be evidence for positive attitudes towards disabled children and people in some traditional African cultures, there is also evidence that disability is not always well accepted in these communities. Musengi (2014) has examined proverbs relating to disability in Shona culture and found negative connotations of disability. Among traditional Zimbabweans, disability may be believed to be the result of witchcraft, the displeasure of ancestors, or the promiscuity of a pregnant woman. There is shame associated with having a disabled child, and disability is often believed to be contagious (Chataika, 2012; Mpofu et al., 2007). Negative views of disability in African culture were acknowledged by Phasha (2016) as being incompatible with the humanness dimension of ubuntu, and Chataika (2012) said this negative aspect of traditional culture should be discarded.

One of the challenges facing inclusive education is to resolve the dilemma of responding simultaneously to "differences and commonalities between learners" (Dyson & Howes, 2009, p. 156). This requires attention to individual learning needs, while not stigmatising or marginalising anyone. It is in this task that the application of ubuntu to inclusive education may be found wanting. Phasha (2016) acknowledged that ubuntu tends towards conformity, whereas in inclusive education, children's individuality is respected. This links to the debates about the position of the individual within ubuntu, which are beyond the scope of this article. For my purposes, it is sufficient to note Enslin and Horsthemke's (2016) concerns about an overemphasis on communitarianism in an African philosophy of education based on ubuntu. As much as communities may value interdependence, deliberation, and inclusion, Enslin and Horsthemke remind their readers that communities may equally be oppressive, exploitative, and indeed exclusionary. Communitarianism may not fully serve as a moral foundation for inclusive education if the good of the community is prioritised above the good of the individual. This potentially leads to exclusionary practices. For example, anecdotal evidence from a site selection process for a research project revealed a South African rural school excluding learners with albinism

because of prevalent negative parental cultural beliefs. In this case, individual learners were excluded to serve the wishes of the collective. Some parents have also expressed concern that the inclusion of disabled learners in their children's classes dilutes the pedagogical attention available, and have argued against inclusion (Walton, 2016). In other words, a communitarian ethic may be used to justify the exclusion of a few for the perceived benefit of the many.

Finally, in responding to the efforts of scholars to make a case for the alignment of inclusive education with ubuntu, notice must be taken of the critique of ubuntu presented by Matolino and Kwindingwi (2013). These authors argued that since the advent of democracy, there has been an effort by an African elite to revive and promote the notion of ubuntu to further an Africanist agenda. These authors also claimed (p. 198) that ubuntu has been promoted as a "narrative of return" whereby Africans' dignity and identities are restored by the return of perceived traditional values. They argued that notions of ubuntu work well in situations where there are small communities in which the individuals are not very different, but questioned its value in a modern and highly differentiated society such as South Africa. They suggested that the average individual does not take the notion of ubuntu seriously as a guide for correct moral actions in modern South Africa. Metz (2014) contested this position, and Matolino (2015) responded, critiquing Metz's brand of ubuntu as promoting utopian social and economic arrangements and seeking to minimise difference in the pursuit of a collective identity. These concerns are relevant to inclusive education, where the values of ubuntu among teachers and communities may be more imagined than actual, and where an overreach of certain notions of ubuntu may diminish the right to an individually relevant, inclusive education.

To decolonise inclusive education, I have shown compelling grounds for an Afrocentric conceptualisation of inclusive education based in traditional African ways of being, and in the African philosophy of ubuntu, which emphasises humanness, interdependence, and communalism. There are concerns with such an approach that must be acknowledged, including some traditional negative beliefs about disability, and the conceptual limitations of aspects of ubuntu. Given these concerns, I now consider a different approach to thinking about decoloniality and inclusive education.

Harnessing Inclusive Education to Decolonise Education

Inclusive education has been identified by Slee (2011, p. 64) as an example of Edward Said's travelling theories. Said (2000, cited in Slee, 2011, p. 64) observed the "degradation of political theories" as they move across time and place, losing "some of their original power and rebelliousness." Inclusive education can be said to have been tamed (Walton, 2017) when it is presented merely as a set of classroom prescriptions for "accommodating" learners who might need additional support in unreconstructed ordinary classrooms. In other words, inclusive education can be said to have lost some of its original insurrectionary impetus because it has been diluted to enable its assimilation into existing and dominant educational discourses. Cast as a critical education project, though, inclusive education may be seen to have the conceptual potential to engage critically with the conditions of coloniality in education. Decoloniality is, after all, a type of critical theory (Mignolo, 2007).

Inclusive education, when framed as a tactic for reducing exclusion through recognising structural disadvantage and injustice, and redistributing resources (Slee, 2011), may be recruited as an ally in the decolonial project. While aspects of inclusive education may be critiqued when viewed through a decolonial lens, a case can also be made for the discourses of inclusive education being harnessed to further social justice, or providing "opportunities for advancing a progressive educational agenda" (Armstrong et al., 2011, p. 33). This, I would suggest, could include decolonisation. In the section that follows, I offer ways in which inclusive education might resist the *coloniality of knowledge*, *of power*, and *of being*. In so doing, I am not rebutting the specific critiques discussed earlier in the article, but posing some conceptual possibilities.

To resist the *coloniality of knowledge*, inclusive education offers two valuable emphases. The first emphasis, as noted previously, is its tradition of acknowledging the contextual variation in its expression. If inclusive education is made to begin with identifying and addressing exclusionary practices and pressures in schools and education systems (Booth & Ainscow, 1998), then it will find exclusion operating along different fault lines in different contexts. Local knowledge of the histories and geographies of educational exclusion must necessarily shape the focus and expression of inclusion efforts. So, for example, in South Africa, the apartheid legacy of racial segregation and white privilege has resulted in context specific challenges for the implementation of inclusive education and, hence, the need for local knowledge and expertise. These challenges include the fact that special schools are mostly located in previous "white areas" in the bigger cities, and access to special schools is hampered by distance and transport costs (Human Rights Watch, 2015). The apartheid policies also affected teacher education and teaching learners with disabilities or other support needs was not offered in the "black" universities (Skuy & Partington, 1990). Inclusive education also forces a confrontation and disruption of the knowledge of the universal child (usually urban, Western, middle class, able, and male) as it considers the intersectionality of identities of children and young people, and how this impacts learning.

The second emphasis is that inclusive education is increasingly concerned with heeding the voices of those who the system neglects or silences. These are the voices of children and young people (and their parents) who are excluded from access and participation in schools (Walton, 2016) and who may be "devalued and rendered marginal" (Slee, 2011, p. 107) in education. The lived experiences of young schooling mothers (Kimani, 2014), international students (Naidoo, 2017) and learners (Sookrajh, Gopal, & Maharaj, 2005), learners with Tourette Syndrome (Dolowitz, 2014), and learners from poor households who attend affluent schools (Geyer & Walton, 2015) have all been given attention by South African researchers. By privileging these voices, inclusive education challenges the hegemony of powerful professional and other knowledge, which claim expertise about others' lives and experiences (Slee, 2011).

Inclusive education, said Slee (2011, p. 39), "commences with the recognition of the unequal social relations that produce exclusion" and, thus, may be taken up in the quest to dismantle the *coloniality of power*. Educational exclusion is perpetuated in the service of power and the maintenance of the status quo, and inclusive education aims to expose the ways in which power works to exclude. Inclusive education challenges the vested interests of the powerful in the preservation of their privilege in schools and education systems. These vested interests use exclusion to preserve a monopoly over resources and, as such, exclusion "arises from the interplay of class, status and political power and serves the interests of the included" (Silver, 1994, p. 543). One does not need to look far to see this operating in schools in South Africa, as they set fees (which exclude poor, mostly black learners), language policies (which exclude black learners or force them to learn in the language of the coloniser), expectations to assimilate into dominant cultural forms (usually white and western), and academic standards (often ableist, privileging those with Western cultural capital). The practice and rationalisation of educational exclusion is evident at all levels of education systems, from individual classrooms and schools, to national education systems, and to the international educational arena. Space does not permit an examination of powerful forces like privatisation, marketisation, and globalisation on education, but all result in forms of educational exclusion and are implicated in the *coloniality of power*.

Inclusive education is often associated with the education of disabled children and young people, arguably the most marginalised group in schools and societies (Miles & Singal, 2009). The educational marginalisation of children and young people with other identity markers disprivileged in various contexts has also caught the attention of inclusive education. The field has not only concerned itself with pedagogical responses to difference, but has sought to resist the grounds on which "normal" and

"deviant" are constructed. Part of this work has been to challenge the diagnostic and other categories that are assigned to some children and young people. Often, these categories are used to explain why some do not experience learning success, and to rationalise segregation and exclusion. Inclusive education, in research and practice, should be exposing the colonial power/knowledge matrices that cast these learners into the educational periphery. The *coloniality of being* does not stop at the school gates, but is likely to be entrenched by educational practices, which are often premised on coloniality. Inclusive education could be harnessed to identify, resist, and ultimately dismantle these practices.

The argument presented thus far is that there are aspects and emphases found in the discourses of inclusive education that could be seen directly to confront the *coloniality of knowledge*, *of power*, and *of being*. As such, inclusive education could be seen to have conceptual resources that could be harnessed in the decolonisation endeavour. But there are concerns and caveats to this position that cannot be avoided.

Concerns and caveats

The extent to which inclusive education might be co-opted in the decolonisation endeavour will be determined by the ways in which inclusive education is conceptualised. If it is a counter hegemonic, "organic ideology" (Gramsci, 1971/1999, p. 707), then there may be a potential for an alliance. This means that inclusive education must concern itself with resisting coloniality in education and promoting emancipatory and socially just ways of being. BUT (capitals intended), this position is not unassailable. In their article "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," Tuck and Yang (2012) made a strong case for the incommensurability of decolonisation with other social justice projects. They noted that "the language of decolonization has been superficially adopted into education and other social sciences, supplanting prior ways of talking about social justice" (p. 2). These authors were adamant that decolonisation is not a "swappable" term and that parts of the decolonisation project are not "easily absorbed by human rights . . . based approaches to educational equity" (p. 3). Inclusive education could be viewed as one such human rights-based approach to educational equity. Land was the central concern of decolonisation for Tuck and Yang (2012), who wrote in the context of the United States. The only goal of decolonisation for these authors was the elimination of settler property rights (p. 26), and any appropriation of the discourse of decolonisation for other ends was seen by them as a move to "settler innocence." Their challenge to me, as a white settler scholar in South Africa is expressed as follows:

> *The absorption of decolonization by settler social justice frameworks is one way the settler, disturbed by her own settler status, tries to escape or contain the unbearable searchlight of complicity, of having harmed others just by being one's self. The desire to reconcile is just as relentless as the desire to disappear the Native; it is a desire to not have to deal with this (Indian) problem anymore. (p. 9)*

This challenge forces me to consider whether, by appropriating the conceptual tools of decolonisation to further an educational enterprise, I am making a settler move to innocence through what Tuck and Yang (2012, p. 17) called "colonial equivocation." This involves "the homogenizing of various expressions of oppression as colonization," creating "a convenient ambiguity between decolonization and social justice work" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 10). In other words, not only may I not use decolonisation in the context of inclusive education, but in doing so, I am attempting to relieve my settler guilt without relinquishing my land, power and privilege.

The question mark in the title of this article reflects my hesitation in the face of the challenge posed above. Perhaps, if decoloniality is cast as a critical theory rather than a project, it has the potential to allow for Foucault's (1991, p. 76) "eventualization." This requires the complication of our

understanding of events (Biesta, Allan, & Edwards, 2014) and involves a "polymorphism," first of elements brought into relation, then of the relations described, and then of the domains of reference (Foucault, 1991, p. 76). As elements of inclusive education (disability, schooling, marginalisation, exclusion) are brought into relation, these relations can be described in terms of technical models (like general and special education), tactics (pedagogical strategies, marketisation of education), and theoretical schemas (disability studies, theories of learning, critical theories). Could decoloniality be a polymorphic domain of reference that enables an analysis of the *coloniality of power*, *knowledge*, and *being* at work in schooling? The affordance of decolonial theory then provides "different and alternative descriptions of educational processes and practices" (Biesta et al., 2014, p. 5), and makes the familiar strange. In this process, though, it seems important that a hierarchy is clear—inclusive education should serve the broader decolonial project, it should not subsume the tenets of decoloniality to its own ends.

Implications for Research and Teaching

Resisting the *coloniality of knowledge*, *of power*, and *of being* would need to be the focus of inclusive education research if it is to contribute to the decolonial project. This means not only valuing but centring local culture and knowledge in educational research. It also means privileging the voices and experiences of those who are consigned to the periphery (Slee, 2011). Research in inclusive education also must prioritise identifying and understanding "the destructive workings of power, privilege, disadvantage and exclusion in education" (Slee, 2011, p. 158), not averting a gaze from ways in which coloniality engenders, enables, and sustains these workings of power. Inclusive education research also has a responsibility to the communities it researches by partnering with them in formulating research projects, involving them in the processes and dissemination of research, and ensuring that research findings have transformative intent (Mertens, 2009).

I have heard students call for 90% African content in their course readings to decolonise and Africanise the curriculum. In the case of inclusive education, there is certainly a place for curricula, policy guidelines, and textbooks to absorb and promote the wealth of local scholarship. My caution, though, is expressed through Grosfoguel's (2007, p. 213) concern with the locus of enunciation. In this, he distinguished the *epistemic location* from the *social location*. A scholar who is socially located on the side of the oppressed may be epistemically located on the side of the powerful, rather than espousing a subaltern epistemic perspective. Subaltern epistemic perspectives are "knowledge coming from below that produces a critical perspective of hegemonic knowledge in the power relations involved" (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 213). So teacher educators, as recontextualising agents (Bernstein, 2000), might need to consider not only the social but the epistemic location of the scholarship they select in producing a pedagogic discourse of inclusive education. They also could consider inculcating a critical perspective of hegemonic knowledge in the field of inclusive education, and promoting engagement with a range of relevant subaltern and indigenous scholars whose ideas might be recruited in the pursuit of dismantling educational exclusion.

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Recognition as Reparation: A Participatory Approach to (Mis)recognition and Decolonisation in South African Higher Education

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Abstract

In this paper, I present narratives drawn from a participatory research project in which students contributed to the everyday work of decolonising higher education. As part of the scholarly and activist impetus for decolonising South African universities, the narratives draw attention to patterns of misrecognition in undergraduate student experiences. The first part of the paper outlines an intersectional approach to student experiences, to illustrate how binaries underpin epistemologies, pedagogy, and relationships at the university. In the final section, I outline principles drawn from student narratives that can be used reframe student recognition as part of the broader process of decolonising South Africa higher education.

Keywords: decolonising, higher education, recognition, participatory research, South Africa

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Introduction: #Feesmustfall and the Decolonial Moment

The decolonial turn in South African higher education is reenergising debates about untransformed structures, cultures, and relationships in higher education. New vocabularies are emerging around questions of knowledge, race, redistribution, and mutuality in a postapartheid context (Booysen, 2017; Heleta, 2016; Keet, Sattarzadeh, & Munene, 2017; Kamanzi, 2017; Luckett & Naicker 2016; Mama, 2016; Nkopo, 2015; Nwadeyi, 2017). Student and academics' call for decolonising higher education brings into focus the intersectional nature of structural injustice (Vally & Motala, 2014). Decolonising the South African university presents an opportunity to take up the unfinished work of transformation

and to drill deeply into the binaries created by the colonial, apartheid, and neoliberal influences on the public university. #Feesmustfall has also refocused attention on colonial and apartheid-era ideologies and practices that are complicated by universities under pressure to respond to market demands and become globally competitive (Boni & Walker, 2013; Naidoo, 2010). In response to the disruption of relational and epistemologic foundations of higher education, university communities have an opportunity to "think through these broader societal challenges and to provide students with access to alternative ways of envisioning the world and interpreting their experiences" (Hendricks & Leibowitz, 2016, last para.). Yet, despite the fertility of this moment, investment and support across university structures have been uneven, with arguably disproportionate attention to incidents of violence and disruption. For instance, evidence that most students were not involved in the #Feesmustfall protests has been used to dismiss student protests as a radical movement without substantial claims. This downplays the possibility that students who voted to continue their studies may not be unaffected by the issues raised during #Feesmustfall, but that the risks and trade-offs diminish their freedom for participation in social movements.

The aim of this article is to contribute a microanalysis of how intersectional oppression impacts on student participation in higher education. I make the argument that an important part of decolonising South African public universities is redistributing not only material resources but also challenging the ontological binaries at the heart of structural oppression. Student narratives analysed in this paper suggest that structural patterns of status and value embedded in higher education continue to frame black, working-class students "as disadvantaged, as pathological, as unworthy of respect" (Fraser as quoted in Bozalek, 2012, p. 146; see also Fraser, 2013; Sayer, 2005). Despite such deficit framing, I argue that in addition to protest movements, students have been resisting institutional cultures and challenging these patterns of value in acts of resistance. Individual narratives show how students claimed space, time, and energy to challenge pathologising histories and to reframe their agency despite structural inequalities.

Participatory Research[1]

The student narratives analysed in this article are part of a broader qualitative research project that explored how opportunities for participation are distributed across the student body. The rationale for the research was to create a shared platform that students could use to relate to the challenges of being a black, first-generation student at a historically white, Afrikaans university, while gaining insight into the resources and agency that students used to negotiate and resist such challenges[2]. The qualitative data was collected during 2013 and 2014 using a combination of individual interviews and focus groups. I worked with eight undergraduate students across the social sciences to create individual digital narratives, or short multimedia films, about their experiences at university. The process of constructing student narratives was intentionally relational, and the formality of interviews was mitigated by the regular interaction during focus groups, social gatherings, or WhatsApp messages. Students shaped and constructed their narratives during an iterative process of individual interviews and digital narrative production sessions, focus groups, text messages, conversations, research workshops, informal interactions on campus, and social events. The research process for each

[1] Although students viewed the project as an opportunity to understand their own agency and that of their peers, there are important limitations to research conducted by a white researcher about the lived experiences of black students. I acknowledge that there will be many omissions, blind spots, and points of complicity, despite trying to engage as relationally as possible with student narratives.

[2] The position of black students at a historically white university is an important part of the research context, and is not intended to work as a simplistic binary. Research shows that working-class students across different racial groups may also have trouble cultivating belonging in higher education (Leathwood & O'Connell, 2003).

student was unique, with some engaging in multiple individual sessions, producing and discussing their digital narratives, while others chose to work independently.

The reason for using participatory methodology was to begin deconstructing the hierarchy of researcher–researched (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2013). For example, themes in student interviews were analysed by me and the research participants as part of the research project. Four months into the project, the scope was extended because of the students' request to expand the original four months data collection period. This extension enabled me and the research participants as a team to engage with individual narratives, themes, and findings, and to deepen our understanding of how university structures, cultures, and relationships limit equal access to academic opportunities, while downplaying student experiences of violence, discrimination, and othering. I also included student voices in response to accusations that calls for decolonisation are vague and under theorised, and fail to articulate explicit parameters of change (Pithouse, 2015). Instead, narratives show that students have been articulating what a decolonised university would look like, both during #Feesmustfall and in the years leading up to the protests, and that vagueness or misunderstanding might be attributed to undervaluing student voices (see Nwadeyi, 2017). Finally, it was important to use student narratives as evidence that while protesting students used their agency to resist institutional constraints, other students behind the scenes are engaging in the everyday work of resisting the deficit gaze or assimilation into dominant cultures.

A Conceptual Framework for (Mis)recognition

The analysis of participant experiences draws on Nancy Fraser's status-based notion of recognition that is situated alongside claims for economic redistribution (Fraser, 2000). Fraser defined recognition as "the status of individual group members as full partners in social interaction" (2000, p. 113). This duality of status and redistribution makes her approach particularly responsive to an absence of material resources exacerbated by the misrecognition of working-class students' social, cultural, and emotional resources (Luckett & Naicker 2016; Reay & Ball, 2005; Walker, 2012). My analysis of misrecognition is complemented by Sayer's (2005) analysis of how socioeconomic class brings together the importance of material resources and recognition for socially excluded groups. Unequal patterns of material distribution diminish recognition for working-class students. Therefore, it is important to consider distribution and recognition as interrelated, given that "the everyday micro-politics of class are very much about recognition and misrecognition" (Sayer, 2005, p. 53). Working-class students in particular are vulnerable to the *distributional inequalities*, which limits their access to the resources needed to participate in higher education.

My analysis of student experiences is also framed by the work of activists and scholars who engage with decolonisation at the nexus of knowledge, research, and identity. The aim of this critical engagement between decolonial theory is to offer an analysis of (mis)recognition in South Africa higher education. Primary texts include Achille Mbembe's *Critique of Black Reason* (2017), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Decolonising the Mind* (1994), and a public address on decolonising higher education by scholar-activist Lovelyn Nwadeyi (2017). I used these texts to analyse the knowledge structures, pedagogies, cultures, and relationships identified by the research participants in their experiences at university. The choice of texts and scholars reflects a diversity of thinkers who work within the decolonisation debate, and introduces new voices, while including both written and oral texts. While my approach to decolonisation is intersectional in the consideration of race and class, I position race as the primary binary that needs to be deconstructed. For this reason, I selected texts that position race as a foundational aspect of persistent inequality in postcolonial South Africa (see Alexander-Floyd, 2012, on the danger of losing race in intersectional analyses).

My conceptual framework starts with the assumption that the project of transformation has failed to recognise the humanity, presence, and agency of many black, working-class, and rural students (Fataar, 2017, April, Personal transcript of keynote presented at South African Education Research Association forum, North West University, South Africa). Misrecognition is often an embodied experience, and its existence is difficult to quantify, although there is evidence of structural racism at South African universities (Department of Education, 2008). While visible incidents are important evidence of racist violence, misrecognition can be found in the accumulation of everyday micro-aggressions, silences, differential treatment, avoidance, and selection that is difficult to quantify (Hendricks & Leibowitz, 2016). For these reasons, it is necessary to dissect the structural roots of misrecognition, as a core function of the decolonising project, to avoid misrecognition being misappropriated as an empty signifier of student demands. To illustrate the complex intersection of race and class, I found Lelo Macheke's (2015) blog account of her experiences useful in framing the research. Macheke is a black middle-class student who published her experiences of the 2015 student protests at Rhodes University, and narrated this structural exclusion. As Macheke (2015) witnessed the public testimony of a black working-class student, Macheke at first assumed that she and her fellow student shared the othering, discrimination, and pathologising as black women at a predominately white institution:

> *"I am black. I am a woman. I was raised by my grandmother. I come from a working-class background." (para. 5)*
>
> *"The culture here tells us that we need to qualify ourselves each and every day to maintain the fact that we deserve to be here," she affirms. She manages to quantify one of the most elusive and violent experiences endured by the black skin, in a single sentence. (para. 7)*
>
> *"They hurl insults at us. They call us stupid. They call us angry for no reason. They call us illogical. Yet, they don't understand the lived experience of what it means to have the colour of THIS skin on this very campus. There is no cushion that burdens the blow of being black in this institution!" (para. 9)*

Macheke then identified a rupture in the student's narrative, and realised that even though she and the speaker were both black women negotiating the oppressive racist cultures of the university, that her experiences as a middle-class student were profoundly different. While the working-class student was excluded by the white, middle-class, and elite culture of the university, Macheke risked being assimilated into its culture, as she explained (2015):

> *I am socially, economically, politically and even epistemologically of value to whiteness. White hegemony has recognised my capability to understand its culture; it has praised me for participating in it, but more so, it rewarded me generously for assimilating into it. (para. 12)*
>
> *My inclusion into white hegemony translates into me being an exclusive member of an exclusive, yet dominant society . . . I have had to master the skill of negotiating my identity in ways which are emotionally violent and intellectually complex. (para. 14)*

As Nwadeyi (2016) noted, consensus has not been reached on the structural, human, material, and psychological consequences of colonialism and the apartheid system that constrain commitment to, and resource investment in, decolonising projects. Therefore, the rationale for exhuming, examining, and dismantling structures and relationships of the postapartheid university is to enable a "complex understanding of the nature of what we are actually facing," instead of "the same old techno-bureaucratic fixes that have led us, in the first place, to the current cul-de-sac" (Mbembe, n.d., "The

Philosophical Challenge," para. 2). I premise my analysis on the assumption that the misrecognition of black, working-class, and rural students who do not speak English as a mother tongue is an important reason why many aspects of curricula, pedagogy, institutional cultures, and relationships in South African higher education remained untransformed (see Calitz, 2017).

Student Narratives of Misrecognition and Resistance

In this section, I analyse student narratives in order to explore binaries that define knowledge structures, pedagogies, spaces, and relationships at the postapartheid university. It is important to understand how these binaries function in higher education if we hope to deconstruct their inherent power relations and emerge with new possibilities. One side of a binary is afforded a higher economic, cultural, and symbolic value. These binaries reflect political, social, and economic power imbalances, and filter down into knowledge systems, social structures, and human relationships. It is also important to understand how these binaries are not rigid, but shift over time, and contain within their parameters nuances that cannot be captured by a dualist interpretation of experiences. In higher education, important theoretical traditions that explicitly challenge these binaries include cultural studies, feminist theory, intersectionality, queer studies, critical race theory, and postcolonial theory (Hendricks & Leibowitz, 2016). Structural inequalities that result from these binaries have been downplayed at a time when public universities face conflicting pressures to become competitive and market responsive, complicating their responsiveness to the public good. There is an increasing risk that the performativity discourse disguises inequalities in an identity-neutral language of individual success and failure, which makes it difficult to claim that a black student is treated unequally, that a working-class student does not have equal access, or that a rural student is marginalised. For these reasons, I argue that exhuming the evidence of binaries, and various forms of resistance to them, is an important aspect of the decolonising project.

Negotiating Misrecognition and Race[3]

In the past few decades, scholars and communities have begun to calculate the material and psychological costs of communities being positioned for centuries as less than fully human within the global community, and that the damage done to the individual and the community spans many generations (Keet et al., 2017; Mama, 2016; Mbembe, 2017). According to Mbembe, racialised oppression is

> *the daily work that consisted in inventing, telling, repeating, and creating variations on the formulas, texts, and rituals whose goal was to produce the Black Man as a racial subject and site of savage exteriority (2016, p. 28; see also Smith, 2012).*

The marginalisation of black students' lives, bodies, values, and communities persists in South African higher education because the racial binaries have not been deconstructed. This emerges in #Feesmustfall and experiences of staff and students and in the new forms of racial violence emerging, intensified by the contradictions of global economic tensions, which means that racism has a present and possible future (Mbembe, 2017). Based on an analysis of student narratives, in particular of the arrangements within pedagogy and between staff and students, the language of neoliberal meritocracy, achievement, and measurement reinforced existing racialised categories of dehumanisation, violence, and discrimination. These are used to communicate and repeat racialised

[3] I use *black* as a category that includes all South Africans who were been classified under apartheid as *non-white* or *non-European*. Although I use the term in alignment with activism and scholarship that resists the pathologising of blackness, I realise that this approach has important limitations. In this article, black identity and culture is not meant to depict a homogenous identity or experience, but to capture the othering of diverse black African, coloured and Indian cultures, languages, religions, identities, and bodies that have not been classified as *white* during colonialism and apartheid.

expressions of black, working-class, and rural identity without actual references to identity categories. In the quotation below, Kea, a black, working-class student describes her experience of a lecturer who misrecognised her academic potential:

> *The lecturer would write . . . "Whose words are these?! Are those your words?!" It's like we're not capable of writing such [an essay]. If ever something sounds intelligent, or it sounds like it makes sense, it's not yours. Because if ever she reads your essay, and she looks at you, and how you speak in class, she's like, "That person can't write this essay." Because we wrote our essay at home instead of writing it in class, so that's why she didn't believe us. I almost got crushed emotionally.*

In this experience, Kea's race intersected with her class and rural identity to create a complex intersection of vulnerability in the classroom and in her interaction with the lecturer. Decolonising a university would have to examine how these iterations of misrecognition work silently within classrooms, and begin to challenge a deficit approach for students who, unlike Kea, may internalise assumptions of deficit based on identity categories. For working-class students, recognition from lecturers and peers is part of the system of "hidden transcripts" (Sayer, 2005, p. 64) that complicate lecturer and student relationships. In response, wa Thiong'o's vision of decolonising is the "search for a liberating perspective within which to see ourselves clearly in relationship to ourselves and to other selves in the universe" (1994, p. 87; see also Mbembe, 2016).

Condorrera, a black, working-class student, describes her experience of misrecognition below:

> *Our lecturer said, "Well, you're going to write this test and I don't feel that one of you is going to pass. I don't see even one of you getting five percent for this test." So when we left this class, another [black] student said, "I didn't like the comment he made. It means he doesn't have confidence in us." So the lecturer should have actually told us what to do to nail the test. But in fact, he didn't. . . . And the test that he was referring to, none of us failed. . . . It's just that the passing rate was not what he expected. But had he told us what he wanted, and how he prefers us to answer his questions, maybe we could have done better.*

Decolonising pedagogical relationships could examine how the performativity narrative in higher education has provided new forms of classification with which to transmit beliefs about black students' academic potential, while silencing overt discrimination based on race and class, and rural and language identity. Unlike Kea and Condorrera, Clarice was tentative in including references to race in her experiences of discrimination in higher education:

> *I don't want to put a race card on it, but just the sense for us, like I explained in my journal, the matchbox living, for us as Coloured people. Just to kind of make my story that there is more to life, than pay cheque to pay cheque.*

Clarice grapples with the discourse of post-racialism, which often emerges in accusations of using the past to explain current inequalities, as a way to silence conversations about apartheid. It is troubling that students whose lives and communities are directly affected by race apologise for references to inequality, especially in the context of a university where racial tension, violence, and discrimination have been and continue to be a reality. In the analysis, having to apologise for references to poverty and racial oppression reflects the dangers of rushing to a post-racial discourse, which negates the freedom that students have to speak freely about racial injustices and inequalities without the need to justify their stance or to fear being branded as radical, political, or resistant. Such hesitance to acknowledge race also points to the silencing of black students, in my experience often by white

students, who used apartheid or race "fatigue" as reasons not to engage constructively with black students about race.

Challenging Whiteness as a Construct

Undoing racial binaries to open new possibilities for representation, identity, and mutuality requires that "the demythologizing of certain versions of history must go hand in hand with *the demythologizing of whiteness"* (Mbembe, n.d., "Demythologizing Whiteness," para. 9). According to Mbembe, whiteness acts as a form of entrapment, which I argue isolates itself in iterations of denial, silence, and material privilege. Instead of elevating the myth of whiteness, a decolonising university can resist this myth and construct alternatives. Nwadeyi reminds us that this myth has left people across races dehumanised, and that "we must dismantle this inhumanity that we are all products of by reclaiming our collective humanity" (Nwadeyi, 2017; see also Zinn, Proteus, & Keet, 2009).

Although the urgency of demythologising whiteness is yet to reach consensus and commitment across South African universities, students in the research project showed how they have been doing the work of demythologising whiteness as participation of their trajectories of academic becoming. Kea's narrative engages at length with coming to terms with being black at a historically white, Afrikaans university, and how she navigates relationships and pedagogy:

> *I come from a black school; I never interacted with white people. . . . [My perception of white people was that] white people just wanna hang out with white people. White people are bad people. They have a lot of money, and they're just ignorant. . . . They always perfect, they rich, they always have everything they need.*

Kea recognises the limits of whiteness as a construction, and resists this by using her mother tongue and being confident about her accent. Kea makes herself vulnerable by challenging her preconceptions based on race, and describes instances where white peers show openness to constructing spaces of mutuality. Yet, while Kea appreciates her white colleagues' interaction, she also identifies the importance of reciprocity:

> *I told myself I don't want a white roommate. The problem was, unless that person is willing to learn my language, and I learn Afrikaans, if she's Afrikaans, if she wants to learn my language, I can teach her my language.*

The silent or passive response to the decolonising project from some white students and staff members suggests that undoing the myth of white superiority is an important aspect of the task that lies ahead. As much as material resources need to be reallocated, the emotional labour of resisting, reconstructing, and reconciliation, which too often has been the sole burden of historically oppressed communities, must be shared more equally by white staff members and students.

Intersections of Race and Class

#Feesmustfall is an intersectional movement that focuses attention on the experiences of working-class students, for whom resource distribution is crucial for access. Chetty and Knaus (2016) suggested that racism and class discrimination have been diminished in the protest movement because some students have been able to access the system with financial aid, while excluding a majority of working-class students from participation. Alongside resource distribution, another dimension of the class struggle is to identify and deconstruct elite and middle-class practices, values, cultures, and vocabularies in higher education, especially in the way that these misrecognise race and rural identity. Because whiteness has not been demythologised and deconstructed in knowledge systems, cultures,

and institutions, universities have become fertile spaces where students are given the opportunity to adopt the values and practices of an uncritical and unquestioning white, middle-class, and individualistic ethic, which widens inequality and creates a new underclass of black, rural, and working-class students. While some students with valued educational, financial, and cultural resources and capital have the freedom to adapt to the dominant culture, which at an institutional level acts as evidence of integration, many students remain excluded (Macheke, 2015; Nkopo, 2015; Nwadeyi, 2016). In the research project, student narratives confirmed that there is a daily negotiation of Eurocentric, English and Afrikaans, white, and middle-class cultures. Narratives show both assimilation and resistance, depending on access to resources, students' school background, and an individual's trajectory.

Techniques, a black working-class male student, who attended a public school in a rural area, resisted assimilation into a white, English, middle-class identity. His digital narrative included images and quotations that resist the ideas of mainstream assessment as indicators of intelligence, and expresses a deep suspicion of the inequality of the education system. Although he was relegated to the margins of the university community, Techniques was not passive and creates a community of fellow students who try to find ways to start small businesses while studying, and approach local government for funding opportunities. His video shows the university as an exclusive space that denies students academic access because of insufficient funding. While excluded from the mainstream business of the university, academic life, culture, and residence life, he and his peers created an alternative space for learning, surviving, making money, and creating community on the fringes of the institution.

In the second digital narrative, Jared, a black male student from a middle-class family, designed his video as an advertisement for the university, with images of Jared participating in a male-model pageant on campus, involved in social events and residence activities, and with groups of racially diverse peers on campus. Unlike Techniques, who does not include any visuals of the university space, Jared's video is a narrative of belonging, inclusion, integration, and equal participation. His experience of the university had been positive, welcoming, and enriching. In his interview, he explained how the aspiration for middle-class integration started with the aspiration to attend a private school. Throughout his primary and high school experiences, he struggled to gain access to private schools:

> *I went to a private school . . . it's not a white private school; it's a black private school, shockingly.*
>
> *Interviewer: Why shockingly?*
>
> *Because . . . when you say from a private school, people would immediately think that was a very diverse school. But, it was black, all black. It was not really what I wanted. I wanted to go to St. Andrew's or Grey College in Bloemfontein and I applied there, and they said no.*

The value associated with private education is closely associated with race, with the "all black" school a second choice to the historically white schools. Jared tried again to gain access to a well-resourced school, which he incorrectly assumed was a private school, but was denied access because he had not begun in the first year of high school:

> *[The school] said that that if it's an international student, they have to take you from Grade Eight. Sort of groom you to be a Saint's guy. So, if they were going to take me from Grade Ten, I wouldn't necessarily be the Saint's guy.*

The intersectional of differential value in race and class identity is evident in his aspiration for a school that can "groom" him and transfer the values needed for acceptance into the dominant culture at the best universities:

> *I have a lot of friends that went to St Andrew's, these nice private schools, St Andrew's, Grey College, and Knysna Boys High. And they sort of have like a thing. They have that aura . . . and it lasts for a very long time because they teach them manners and a lot of things that people don't really notice . . . the way they articulate themselves, the way they speak when they speak to their parents, when they speak to their peers. And, that is exactly what I wanted. I wanted to be groomed in such a good way. And the other things, that when you apply to certain 'varsities like Rhodes or UCT [University of Cape Town], they actually take the Saint's guy or the Grey guy more into consideration because they align with that vision.*

The aim of this comparison is to show how race and class binaries are reinforced within academic institutions and in relational exchanges that reinforce ideas about racial, class, and language superiority. The point of this analysis is not to devalue Jared and other middle-class students' freedom to adopt, if they so choose, a middle-class identity as a way to access important networks, opportunities, academic engagement, career development, and friendships in higher education. I am also careful not to understate the opportunities for interracial friendships, interactions, and collaboration that middle-class students have contributed to on university campuses. Instead, my critique, as mirrored by Macheke's (2015) experience of assimilation, is of unquestioned middle-class, white values that open up advantaged positions and opportunities for students who have access to them due to economic resources, family capital, schooling, and, in some cases, pure luck.

Jared's narrative reflects important inaccuracies that give us information about how perceptions about elite access work to exclude young people. Although exclusion from an elite institution such as UCT is not written into policy, research into working-class school leavers suggests that aspirations for entry into higher education, especially elite institutions, is shaped by socioeconomic factors and perceptions about who "belongs" in higher education (Reay & Ball, 2005; see also Berg, 2016; Mullen, 2011; Stich, 2012). Yet despite these institutional constraints, Jared is not assimilated into the dominant culture, but contributes unique capital, resources, and aspirations that shape his opportunities. The broader question for decolonising higher education is understanding, deconstructing, and then resisting how unquestioned assumptions about Eurocentric cultures, attitudes, values, and identity in higher education hold differential value that continues to reinforce binaries of race, class, language, and geography. In the narratives above, and in examples from other students, the students who struggle for recognition, participation, and belonging have been those from public, township, and rural schools who speak African languages and have associated accents, from working-class backgrounds, without the mobility to move into the dominant class, who are framed as intellectually or culturally inferior.

Towards a Decolonising Approach to Recognition[4]

The final section of the article suggests actions to move towards a decolonising approach to recognition. The theory and narratives in this paper suggest that the decolonial moment is in essence an opportunity to "restore the humanity stolen from those who have historically been subjected to processes of abstraction and objectification" (Mbembe, 2017, p. 182), and to question how these processes are reproduced through education. The space of the public university holds powerful

[4] Mbembe, 2017.

resources that could contribute to unfinished work of transformation. Student experiences are a reminder that decolonising actions demands deep engagement, as Nwadeyi (2017) suggested:

> *I don't think the decolonial project is going to be successful if we come out of it with the same categories and the same boxes. The other side of the tension, of course, is that you can't just plaster over something, so before we get to the point where we've undone those hierarchies, we have to first elevate blackness to mean something; we first have to elevate womanhood to mean something, to be considered human.*

The call for decoloniality is not an identity project, but rather as Mbembe suggested, "a project of reassembling amputated parts, repairing broken links, relaunching forms of reciprocity without which there can be no progress for humanity" (2017, p. 182).

A decolonising recognition requires knowledge systems in which indigenous knowledge from the African continent and the global South are central. Recentring knowledge means undoing the value hierarchies that have pushed African and indigenous epistemologies to the margins of the university. Rewriting histories of the African continent demands "a critique of the dominant Eurocentric academic model" and '"epistemic coloniality,' that is, the endless production of theories that are based on European traditions" (Mbembe, n.d., "Decolonizing in the Future Tense," para. 2; see also Korteweg & Russell, 2012). As I have argued in this paper, bringing students into the research process is one way to begin expanding academic knowledge beyond the epistemic coloniality based on unchallenged hierarchies about who is able to produce knowledge, whose knowledge counts, and whose knowledge is included in curricula and pedagogy. Mbembe summarised this project as one that aims to

> *redistribute as equally as possible . . . the capacity to make disciplined inquiries into those things we need to know, but do not know yet; the capacity to make systematic forays beyond our current knowledge horizons. (2016, p. 30)*

An important aspect of such enquiry is ensuring that people to whom stories and histories belong have the resources and institutional space to negotiate and construct their own histories (see also McNair, 2017).

A decolonising recognition requires deconstructed binaries that could turn human and research conversations back to the history of oppression, within the context of neoliberal realities. Instead of dismissive responses that deny the opportunity for interracial dialogue, mutuality could create opportunities for the collective actions needed to forge new identities, vocabularies, and shared spaces (Keet et al., 2017; Zinn et al., 2009). The aim of mutuality is to create a version of access "that will allow black staff and students to say of the university: 'This is my home. I am not an outsider here. I do not have to beg or to apologize to be here. I belong here'" (Mbembe, n.d., "Architecture, Public Spaces and the Common," para. 9). In the higher education landscape, racialised discrimination against black students and staff suggests that the work of reparation, reconciliation, and redistribution must be recentred as an institutional priority. Nwadeyi reflected on everyday racism as an invisible violence that cannot be experienced by people who are not persistently discriminated against because of their race, as "a daily psychological violence that manifests in every part of our lives" (Nwadeyi, 2017). While there is evidence of widening access and success for a more representative cohort of higher education students, the decolonial moment demands a closer examination of implicit pedagogies, cultures, and structures that reinforce these long-standing beliefs about racialised prejudice inferiority, and how these intersect with class, ethnicity, and language. We also need to ask how to create the university as a space of the commons, where black students are brought out of margins off campus and on campus. A decolonised university is where undergraduate black students are no longer positioned as signifiers

of failure, poverty, pathology, violence, exclusion, and pity. To this end, all students must have the same freedom to belong, to become, and to create, away from a deficit gaze of Eurocentric knowledge systems, institutional structures, and cultural communities.

Mutuality at the decolonising university will be about rearranging space so that it is not middle-class whiteness that accommodates black, working-class rural, identity, knowledge, and relationship. Instead, it will decolonise the structures of human relationships to open up new epistemologies and vocabularies. Mbembe suggested that this deep belonging requires black students and staff to develop a pedagogy of presence:

> *Black students and staff have to invent a set of creative practices that ultimately make it impossible for official structures to ignore them and not recognize them, to pretend that they are not there; to pretend that they do not see them; or to pretend that their voice does not count. (n.d., "Architecture, Public Spaces and the Common," para. 17)*

Mbembe (n.d.) reminded us that decolonisation is always relational, a "bundle of innate rights, capabilities and claims made against others, taken back from others and to be protected against others" ("Difference and Repetition," para. 3). Decolonisation is impossible in silence; we need to begin by exhuming the deep binaries that continue to dehumanise, silence, and distort the position of the students in higher education.

Conclusion

This article has engaged with the expanding debate on decolonising the public university in South Africa. Student calls for decolonisation during #Feesmustfall have created a conceptual and tangible space in higher education that begins to uncover layers of institutional oppression that intensify the alienation of black students and staff at many South Africa universities. Instead of rushing towards a marketised university, there are new possibilities for researching alternatives that emerge from the global South, and in particular from the African continent (Chetty & Knaus, 2016; Mbembe, n.d.). Decolonising requires a collective investment to create institutions where every member belongs equally, with the freedom to create, contribute, and resist. Mbembe summarised this shared intention as follows:

> *how to belong fully in this world that is common to all of us, how to pass from the status of the excluded to status of the right-holder, how to participate in the construction and the distribution of the world (Mbembe, 2017, p. 176).*

While the postapartheid university has enabled a minority of black students to access higher education, scholars like Macheke and Nwadeyi and students like Kea and Techniques are calling for opportunities for higher education to interrogate and open up alternatives to dominant narratives. If university communities hope to avoid the failures of the transformation project, this moment demands a human and resource investment in sustainable research projects, pedagogies, and relationships that, instead of "tinkering with the margins" as we have done in the past, will equip staff and students with the capabilities that they need to reshape the contours of the university. Given the freedom to reimagine, both staff and students will invent new vocabularies and identity expressions as old and dehumanising binaries are unearthed, deconstructed, and rebuilt (Mbembe, 2016). This will be, in Mbembe's words, "the beginnings of a reparation through recognition, the first hint of a constitution of a beyond" (2017, p. xv).

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Decolonising Preservice Teachers' Colonialist Thoughts in Higher Education Through Defamiliarisation as a Pedagogy

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Abstract

The social, political, and economic inequalities embedded and reflected in all social life in South Africa continue to shape the higher education landscape of the country. Calls for the higher education curricula in South Africa to be transformed under the guide of decolonisation requires primarily a reform of the colonising spaces in which teaching in higher education takes place. Using a case study at a university of technology that explicates teaching and learning through the use of creative illustrations as a form and means of defamiliarisation, the authors show how spaces can be created to facilitate deliberative engagement and contestation regarding instances of colonisation in higher education and society. The authors conclude that defamiliarisation should be considered a possible pedagogical technique in higher education as a way of deepening students' social, economic, political, and cultural awareness in relation to identity, language, and hierarchies of power amongst students and higher education educators.

Keywords: decolonisation, defamiliarisation, higher education, pedagogy, teacher education

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Introduction

The social, political, and economic inequalities embedded and reflected in social life in South Africa continue to shape the higher education landscape of the country. Racial classification, labour displacement, slavery, and industrialised exploitation have all formed and, in various forms, arguably continue to form the cornerstone of a Eurocentric agenda in which systems of repression and exploitation have exacerbated inequity and inequality in South Africa. This has, in turn, been further exacerbated for centuries, as Nkomo (2000, p. 49) posited, by a diverse array of curricula, educational philosophies, and practices whose context corresponds in essence with that of the respective colonial powers, and in line with European and British philosophers and educationalists. It was the intensifying conflicts taking place within, and reflecting, a deeply fragmented society—a product of systemic exclusion and marginalisation of the majorities under colonialist policies—that culminated and resulted in South Africa's democratically elected government of 1994. One of the primary aims of the newly elected government was to transform both its inherited social and economic structure and its inherited apartheid education system, including its higher education system (Badat, 2010, p. 4).

In a study conducted on indigenous education in Queensland, Australia, Phillips and Whatman (2007, p. 3) argued that the process of decolonising any higher education curriculum requires, in the first instance, attending primarily to the reform of those colonising spaces in which such teaching takes place before any specific transformation of the curriculum itself is carried out. What Phillips and Whatman's (2007) study signifies is that new understandings can only emerge out of educators' resistance to existing canonised colonial education practices and curricula. Through "'uneasy' critique and self-critique" within cultural interfaces, the foundation of curricula reform and renewal is established in wider educational and indigenous community contexts (Phillips & Whatman, 2007, p. 13). By implication, for educators in South Africa to address the increasing claims of indigenous African knowledge systems (IKS) as a means of assessing and resisting or transforming a colonised curriculum may be underscored by their willingness to engage in both the curricula and their pedagogies critically, self-reflexively, and imaginatively.

We argue that decolonisation, in educational terms, can be considered to include not only the study of the local, but seeing the local alongside ideas, perspectives, and texts from other continents, and would include introducing, or further exploring, participatory pedagogy and developing students' senses of agency. In this process outdated, leftover colonisation-related institutional barriers to learning are addressed, and possible futures co-envisioned. This would involve a paradigm shift at the educational preservice stage and, in order to do this, we argue in favour of defamiliarisation as a means of transforming and renewing curricula in higher education.

In light of the aforementioned, we first explore how defamiliarisation as a teaching method could be used in a process of beginning to decolonise higher education curricula in South Africa and, second, the possible ways in which defamiliarisation may expand preservice educators' critical perspectives. By way of a disclaimer, this article does not address the colonised aspects of the higher education policy in South Africa and institutional space but, instead, explores the interactive space, that is, what Gutierrez (2008, p. 152) referred to as a "third space," a space which can, to some degree, be shaped by the participants in the curriculum defamiliarisation process.

Decolonisation in South African Higher Education

The South African government's aim in redressing the social injustices inherited from the previous regime's segregationist Christian national education system and ideology is manifested in its agenda of promulgation of numerous economic policies such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme of 1994, Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy of 1996, Accelerated Shared

Growth Initiative of South Africa of 2006, New Growth Path of 2010, and the recent National Development Plan of 2011, together with such education policies as the White Paper of 1996 (Department of Education), the South African Schools Act of 1996, and the Higher Education Act of 1997. Of specific interest to the current article is the White Paper of 1997 (Department of Education), which directed the state and its institutions towards reaching its social imperatives and goals in and through higher education (Badat, 2010, p. 4). This was premised on the assumption that the state and its social institutions' (universities, schools, and colleges) progressive substantive realisation would contribute immeasurably to the transformation and development of all education, including higher education, and thus to society (Badat, 2010, p. 5).

In its preamble, the Constitution of South Africa committed the state and its institutions to asserting the values of human dignity, equality, the advancement of human rights, freedom, nonsexism, and nonracialism (1996, p. 9). If it is a given that education institutions are the cornerstone of a democratic society for all citizens of a country, the Constitution of 1996 explicitly enshrined this by stating that all individuals are legally entitled to quality education irrespective of their race, religion, ethnicity, and culture. However, in spite of the enshrinement of these rights, the majority of the population remain systemically marginalised more than 20 years after the advent of democracy—in a system that, despite guaranteeing all citizens the right to equal and quality education, fails to deliver on these constitutional promises (Waghid & Oliver, 2017).

In light of the above, the Higher Education Act of 1997 declared the government's intentionality within higher education: first, redressing past discrimination, and ensuring representivity and equal access; second, providing optimal opportunities for learning and for the cultivation of knowledge; third, respect for, and the encouragement of, democracy, academic liberty, freedom of speech and expression, creativity, scholarship, and research; fourth, the pursuit of excellence, and the promotion of the full realisation of the potential of every student and employee, as well as a tolerance of ideas and an appreciation of diversity; fifth, responding to the needs of the population and of the communities served by the institutions; sixth, contributing to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship, in keeping with international best practices of academic quality; last, for higher education institutions to enjoy freedom and autonomy in their relationship with the state within the context of public accountability and the national need for advanced skills and scientific knowledge (pp. 1–2).

Despite the state's aspirations in transforming higher education, Le Grange (2016, p. 1) posited that impoverished university students are burdened in multiple ways: they are academically underprepared, financially hampered, and for some the culture of the university is significantly foreign. In fact, Le Grange (2016) argued, South African universities may be considered, and experienced by many students as, foreign institutions within an African context, largely, it may be argued, due to the attachment of these universities to neocolonialism. For instance, university research systems, according to Jacobs and Hellström (in Le Grange, 2014, pp. 1283–1284), have undergone three major developments over the last three decades: the capitalisation of knowledge, the shift from science systems to global networks, and the integration of academic labour into the knowledge economy. The need to Africanise and decolonise higher education, as Pillay (2015) postulated, is certainly warranted in addressing epistemic violence of colonial thought and colonial knowledge, meaning that African texts and perspectives are conspicuously absent in higher education curricula.

Defamiliarisation as a Pedagogy

In the context of, and in response to, the call for the decolonisation of knowledge, and of curriculum and pedagogy, we shift our attention to defamiliarisation as pedagogy. Defamiliarisation, as suggested in the early 20th century by Russian formalist Victor Shklovskij (1917/1965), would currently be taken

to mean engaging students in a particular heightened, critical and inclusive or participatory way in the study of, for instance, an African text (with a key social issue, one that is possibly relevant to students' own lives and experiences, addressed), in tandem with a text from another country's context which deals with similar issues and experiences—an idea taken up later by Phillips and Whatman (2007). Shklovskij (1965, p. 13) claimed that over time our perceptions of familiar, everyday situations become "stale, blunted, and automatised." Shklovskij (1965, p. 13) explained thus: "After we see an object several times, we begin to recognise it. The object is in front of us and we know about it, but we do not see it—hence we cannot say anything significant about it."

In light of this "automisation," Shklovskij (1965, p. 2) postulated that "art removes objects from the automatism of perception in several ways." Shklovskij (1965), drawing on the seminal thoughts of Tolstoy (1897), submitted that using artistic techniques (in education) may assist one in making the familiar seem "strange." What Tolstoy (1897, as cited in Shklovskij, 1965, p. 3) inferred, is that for one to make the familiar seem strange is not to name the familiar object, "but instead describe an object as if [one] were seeing it for the first time." Using this lens, we argue that, in the main, the need to employ defamiliarising techniques in higher education may assist higher education educators in looking at familiar objects or texts with an exceptionally high level of awareness (Kaomea, 2014, p. 15). Having one's habitual response to the familiar in some way refreshed, or even subverted, may further assist one in finding more profound, complex, and nuanced meanings behind and within familiar texts, thus rendering such texts more consciously perceptible, not only to students, but also to higher education educators (Shklovskij, 1965).

According to this concept, for higher educational reform, defamiliarisation as a pedagogy would mean teaching, or guiding, students to look beyond dominant versions of history and entrenched or invested canons and move the focus towards an awareness of what is, or has been, omitted, not represented, and not accounted for, and relating to previously marginalised cultures and experiences. More specifically, one would broadly define this as the artistic technique of presenting to audiences common things in an unfamiliar or strange way. By implication, this would or could enhance one's perceptions of the familiar; more specifically, it could enable students to recognise cultural phenomena such as literary texts, or languages per se for that matter, as bricolage, which, in this instance, refers to translanguaging. What translanguaging denotes is the process of making do with the linguistic resources at hand, and tinkering the bits together, in the form of code mixing, code meshing and code switching all rolled into one.

Block and Corona (2014, p. 39) explained how "taking on board inter-categorical and intra-categorical complexity, for instance, allows us to see beyond the cardboard cut-out identities ascribed," to more nuanced conceptions of identity—instances of defamiliarisation. More specifically, defamiliarisation as a pedagogy through nexus (derived from nectere in Latin, which means to bind or connect), refers to a means of connection between members of a group or things in a series, a link, or a bond (Benvanot, 2015, p. 19). We aver that the term nexus, as an instance of defamiliarisation, is useful in relation to literacy and learning in general in that it indicates how literacy activities can act as a social nexus to develop a web of social relations via language. Literacy thrives when a state of connectedness—or nexus—of social relations among individuals, households, communities, and social institutions is forged, nurtured, and sustained (Benvanot, 2015, p. 12). Benvanot (2015) explained how a literacy nexus enables students to become part of a developing community and to integrate the public, private, and individual spheres of life with each other. In South Africa, with its history of oppression and superimposed past division and fracture along ethnic lines, these aims are particularly pertinent because it is well known that racial and social divides continue to govern our national and provincial school systems, and society as a whole.

Block and Corona regarded social class as a key construct and key mediator of our life experience (2014, p. 35):

> *Class always intersects with a long list of identity dimensions, such as gender, ethnicity, race, nationality, language and so forth. Indeed, it is one of the challenges of class-based research today, to work out exactly how these different identity inscriptions interact with class.*

In light of Block and Corona's (2014) intersectional view, we submit that the principle of defamiliarisation as a pedagogy is thus not, in simplistic terms, African versus other, but could instead be described as an acute awareness of intersectionality (conversations about class, culture, gender, and race, across the globe and across these identity categories). Therefore, we maintain that defamiliarisation as a pedagogy shares congruences with the notion of the African concept ubuntu or humanness. Ubuntu, as Sindane (1994, pp. 8–9) suggested, "inspires us to expose ourselves to others, to encounter the difference of their humanness so as to inform and enrich our own." In this regard, ubuntu, like defamiliarisation, expounds the communal embeddedness and connectedness of a person to other persons (Higgs, 2003, p. 13). We suggest that this aspect of defamiliarisation is, or can be, dealt with in practice by opening up a variety of hitherto well-structured discursive spaces in which meaning is negotiated—in order to encourage equitable participation and inclusivity in higher education.

Defamiliarisation as an Interpretive Methodology

Shklovskij (1965, p. 9) claimed that

> *an image is not a permanent referent for those mutable complexities of life which are revealed through it, its purpose is not to make us perceive meaning, but to create a special perception of the object—it creates a vision of the object instead of serving as a means for knowing it.*

Defamiliarisation as an interpretive methodology therefore functions as a means of provoking one's thoughts by making the familiar strange and ambiguous in order to critically examine and uncover the hidden (social) meanings of students' social and cultural experiences of a colonised curriculum (Scholl, Janssen, Wimmer, Moe, & Flak, 2012, p. 69).

Defamiliarisation stems from both critical theory and literary theory of language that aims to disrupt the social practices that language underscores. There is an affinity between defamiliarisation and critical theory on the basis that literacy and conscientisation, or consciousness raising for transformative change, are two of the prominent aspects of critical theory (Kincheloe, 2007, p. 252). Freire (2005, p. 35) argued that literacy education could be used either for liberation or for domestication, which means that domesticating literacies teach literacy from the point of view or position of superior power, inviting false communication that preserves the status quo. We infer that defamiliarisation as an interpretive methodology, drawing on critical theory, uses consciousness raising through problem posing to oppose dominant power and transform oppressive situations, in other words, instances of colonisation (Freire, 1995, p. 8). Power, as Waghid (2014) postulated, furthermore needs to be decentralised to afford people the opportunity to make their own decisions in the pursuit of social justice. Defamiliarisation, with its roots in critical theory, may therefore serve to foster a critical capacity in students and in higher education educators as a way of enabling them, together, to resist oppressive or colonised power.

In light of the above mentioned, what we infer is that defamiliarisation may be a way of transforming the unequal power relations that influence people's social practices into more equitable relations amongst them (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 64). And as an interpretive methodology, it may be used in a process of critically interpreting and explaining social problems in order to challenge these unequal relations of power and dominance in a colonised society. This is because defamiliarisation functions in such a way as to enable students and educators to look beyond familiar, dominant narratives and, in so doing, cultivating in themselves and others critical reflection and deconstruction of taken-for-granted perceptions whilst creating spaces for students to have their voices heard within the higher education decolonised spectrum.

In this article, through a process and pedagogy of defamiliarisation, preservice educators' illustrations as Africans being taught in the English language as the medium of communication within a South African context, are critically examined as a means of looking beyond the initial impressions of the familiar text. In this regard, defamiliarisation as an interpretive research methodology is used to analyse critically the taken-for-granted perspectives on the preservice teacher education curriculum and, in the process, seeing the familiar rendered as strange. The article describes the ways in which the defamiliarisation activity has been presented to the students with the purpose of enhancing their critical awareness of the practices of defamiliarisation to elicit a critical response and, hopefully, to awaken their potential for teaching and learning in a critical, deliberative, and self-reflexive way—that is, learning together. It is hoped that learning about, and through a process of, defamiliarisation will encourage them to think and act positively towards the achievement of societal change and the process of transforming their colonised thoughts.

The specifics of the defamiliarisation activity that was designed by us entailed a creative illustration in which each individual student was required to illustrate her or his experiences of being taught in the English language as the medium of instruction at the university. Students were asked to submit to us their individual illustrations of how they experienced defamiliarisation in terms of content, mode of presentation, and classroom interaction, through a process of focusing on the experience of personal gain, or lack of benefit from the experience. This was followed by face-to-face focus group discussions of the creative illustrations with the two of us. The purpose of the discussion was to elicit higher cognitive responses to ascertain the students' lived experiences as African students within the decolonised spectrum. We thought that using focus group interviews with these preservice educators could further serve as a means of developing a critical awareness of their social and cultural experiences of being taught in the English language as the medium of communication at the university. The students' illustrations were analysed using inductive content analysis through the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), Atlas.ti.

The sample population of this study was formed by the cohort of third-year Bachelor of Education, further education and training (FET) students. Through purposive sampling, the sample selection was made on the basis of recruiting participants who indicated their preference for, or interest in, contributing to the development of defamiliarisation activities in the broader South African education community. The sample population who indicated their willingness to participate in the project were (n = 25) students which constituted a total number of (n = 5) focus groups. Data were captured by audio recordings of students' focus group interviews with the two of us. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim for analysis. Care was taken to ensure that data were collected exclusively from participants who had signed and submitted informed consent forms. The participants were informed in class that their participation was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. Also, ethical clearance was acquired from the faculty's ethics research committee, adhering to the ethical considerations of the study.

The following discussion questions were used to guide the students' responses in the face-to-face focus group interviews: What were your experiences of the defamiliarisation activity? How did you find the experience of illustrating as part of the defamiliarisation activity? Did you find ways in which defamiliarisation is different to other teaching methods implemented by the lecturer in class, and in what specific ways? These questions provided open-endedness in terms of responses. The collected responses were designed to ascertain the students' experiences of the defamiliarisation activity and to confirm our interpretation of the illustrations. An interpretation of the findings is explained and summarised in the next section.

Defamiliarising Students' Creative Illustrations

In this section, we present the key findings from our analyses of a sample of students' creative illustrations, together with the insightful comments from the focus group interviews with these selected students. This section also includes images of the illustrations from the sample of students selected.

Image 1: Student A

Image 1 is an illustration done by Student A whose home language is English. Student A identifies herself as a young female depicted with two contrasting sides of herself within society as confirmed by her comments in the focus group interview:

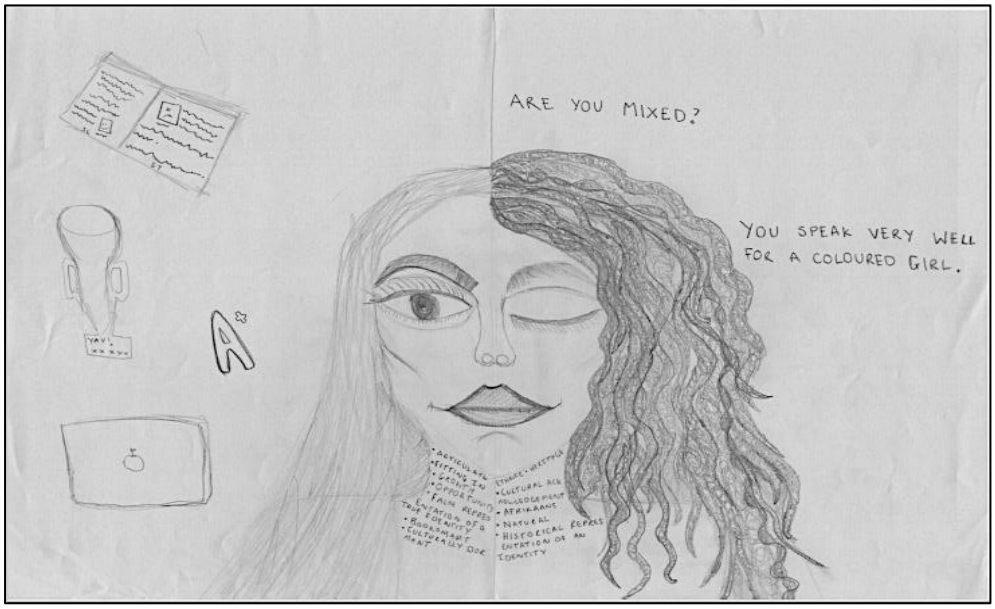


Image 1: Drawing by Student A

It's [that is, the image] showing the two different sides to who I am as a person and I think and it represents a lot of other people.

Image 1 is portrayed as a representation of Student A's understanding of reality and a communication of her emotion within the two distinct contexts that she happens to find herself. In the one context, and on the left side of the young woman's face, is a representation of her identity within a particular social context in which the aesthetic nature of beauty, accompanied with makeup and light straight hair are illustrated. Student A's illustration of English as her home language is associated with words and phrases such as "articulate," "growth," "fitting in," and "book smart," which, in the illustration, are also accompanied with images of an award, an academic distinction, and a key which we infer to

be Student A's symbolic representation of the English language. This is further substantiated in a focus group interview with Student A:

> *So on the academic side where you kind of fit in with everybody, you know, you've got—okay I don't get As often, but anyway [laughter] . . . but you know, easier to use technology now because the schooling that I got, I was very advanced in terms of using technology, and using the Internet, I had lots of resources, trophies also, winning awards—I didn't do too much, and reading, so every day, and obviously your knowledge comes from books and because of that people kind of have this perception that you're very intelligent because of the way you speak, and the background that you have, you've got a knowledge of books.*

What is interesting to note in the illustration are the phrases, "false representation of a true identity" and "culturally dormant." The student may have used these words to signify how she sees herself falsely portrayed, either within her past academic secondary schooling, or within certain schools where she has served as a student teacher. The latter is confirmed by the student's comments in the focus group interview:

> *[So] on the one side you can see it's, you know, pretty make up and straight hair, and on the other side it's ethnic hair, totally natural.*

In light of the aforementioned, we affirm that Student A's false representation of her identity, in combination with the aesthetic beauty, dialect, and academic merit, triggered a cognitive and social awareness of how she is portrayed in social contexts outside of the educational context. We infer that the right side of the young woman's face is represented as "natural beauty." This is corroborated with words such as "natural," "cultural acknowledgement," and "ethnic heritage." Two underlying questions are included on the right of the woman's face, namely, "are you mixed?" and "you speak very well for a coloured girl." Student A may have used these questions to create an awareness of how she is perceived and confronted in her social context outside of the school due to the distinct identifying dialect that she may have developed as a result of her academic schooling career, which may be considered as "non-coloured" or associated with "whiteness." This is vindicated by Student A's comments in the focus group interview:

> *As a coloured woman in South Africa, and especially in education, people assume that as soon as you are technical or you have some sort of mastery over the English language, that you couldn't possibly be from the same heritage as somebody else who is coloured but doesn't speak the same as you.*

What emerges from this interpretation of the student's illustration is that the defamiliarising Image 1 created the space necessary for Student A to manifest her voice and emotion substantively, which is predominantly considered as a social construction (Abu-Lughod & Lutz, 1990; Dewey, 1922; Lasky, 2005; White, 1993). This is confirmed by Students A, G, K, and Q on their experiences of the defamiliarisation activity in their respective focus group interview**s**:

> *It challenged me to express myself in a way that I was not used to doing. I felt that doing this activity basically created a platform. (Student A)*

> *My experience was that it required me to almost, to almost think about my thoughts—I think about what, how I see things, and what feelings do I have, and how I want the questions answered, or if I want the questions answered. It was like going through my*

> *psyche and thinking, okay I have so much questions to ask, but who would I ask, it would be like some reflection—do I ask society, do I ask somebody, do I ask people. (Student G)*
>
> *To me it was quite exciting. I know what to do, I know exactly what to do, but when at times I started to question because there I thought okay, drawing pictures without anything in words and phrases in your drawing, and trying to draw the picture so I can look at the picture and then understand. So it was a challenge but something that gave me lots of insight. (Student K)*
>
> *I think it was also a good reflection for myself like to actually reevaluate what it is that I think of myself or see myself in this profession also, so I think that's why I drew, like a pathway, to explain that that was basically my journey of where I came from. Like we see—especially in English, it's very stagnant, we do everything according to the status quo, so as teachers you also need to evolve with the times that are changing. So you can think you're good by remembering that but you have to evolve also. (Student Q)*

Student A's experience of various emotions through her illustration is inextricably interconnected, or intersects, with belief, context, culture, and power (Lasky, 2000). Defamiliarising Image 1 assisted Student A in further sharing in the focus group discussions a nuanced understanding of her identity within her social and cultural contexts. We infer from Image 1 that having afforded Student A the means of expressing and exploring her identity through illustrations, represented a means through which others (university students) could be made aware of Student A's sociocultural context and, more importantly, the complexities and nuances of her identity. This is vindicated by Student I and C's comments in the focus group interviews, respectively, regarding their experiences of illustrating as part of the defamiliarisation activity:

> *I felt that this er . . . helps your educators to come closer to understanding the students, the way we express ourselves reflects our psychology or psyche. So, if you have a drummed-up picture, if you have a simple picture, it reflects—sometimes reflects certain psychological flaws or benefits. (Student I)*
>
> *I get to express myself and show you what I actually think. And oh, not only that, you get to in a way see my background and how I view the world. So I think it's different in that you get to see the other person's perceptive in drawing how they see things. (Student C)*

What may come across as familiar to others (university students)—that is, one's identity in society—is a mere surface representation of what others perceive at face value without taking into consideration the social contexts that lead to the development of one's dialect, for instance. This is due to the fact that, according to Wertsch, Tulviste, and Hagstrom (1993), societies' ideologies and beliefs are always shaped by the cultural, historical, and social structures that are reflected in mediational tools such as art, language, literature, media, and technology. Hence, defamiliarising Student A's illustrations may have afforded her the means to disrupt her own thoughts regarding the often negative perceptions of herself and others within her social and cultural context, outside of her education context, regarding her distinctive dialect—as confirmed in her comments in the focus group interview:

> *[It takes you] out of your comfort zone, you [are] then able to come empathise with people who are out of their comfort zones and their pasts. (Student A)*

This form of disruption is further corroborated by other students in the focus group interviews:

> *I would think that, uhm, with these exercises it would force us to think. Where, uhm, like for example if you do an essay you just start writing. Because you're not actually thinking*

about the, what you're doing. But being—having to draw something, you needed to think about . . . it. (Student E)

I had to do something which I've never really done before and something that I'm not used to expecting, and then I think what it is, it was the emotional aspect of certain things. (Student I)

Uhm, it's interesting to be finding out different things about yourself as you're drawing, things that you never knew you'd be comfortable in saying so that's what I discovered about myself and I learned things about myself that I never knew before I did this so. (Student L)

First of all, like we were caught off guard, so like we didn't have time to brainstorm, which is something good because we're so used to our comfort zones. So now they suddenly give us a blank canvas and say do whatever you want to, and so I say why, what do I have to do, what's what the criteria, do I have to do this, is this a test? So I think we all live in a box. As well, our standard, what things should be like. (Student R)

Moreover, we aver that the illustration assisted Student A in critically reflecting on the need to disrupt her thoughts regarding the assimilation of her identity into the dominant western ideals of her school context.

Image 2: Student B

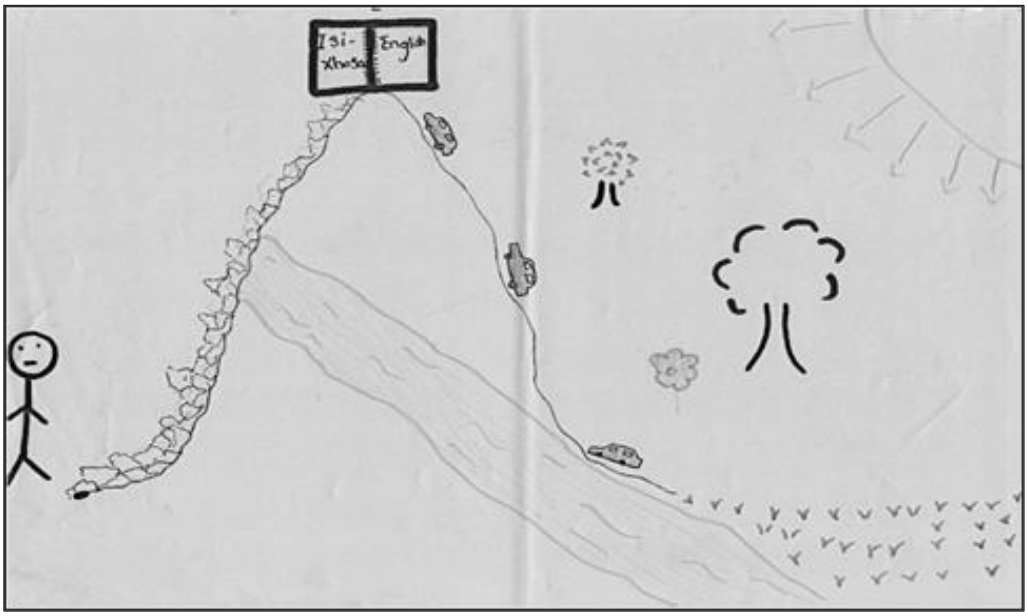
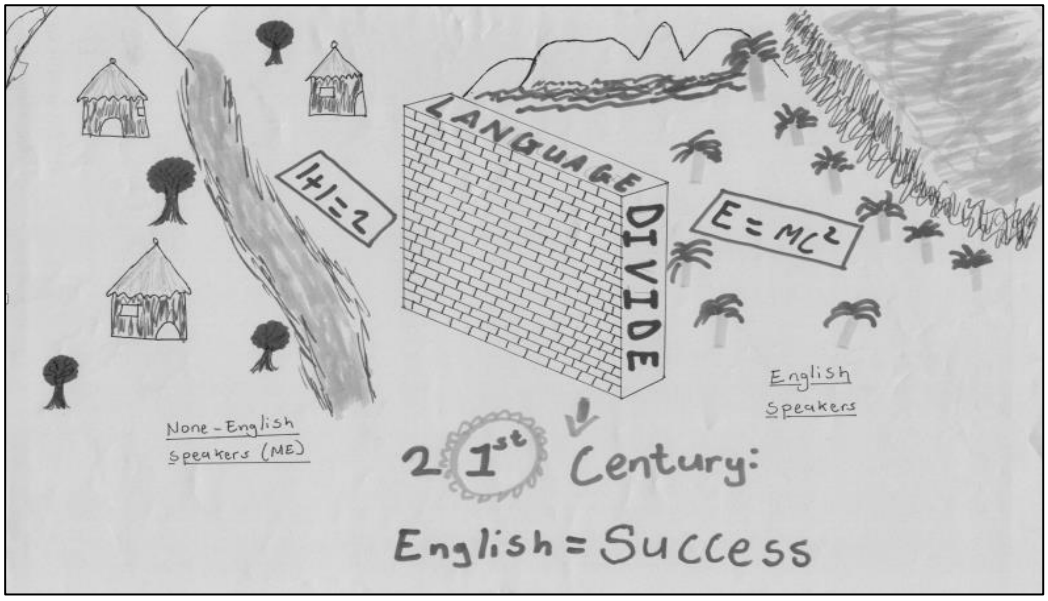


Image 3: Student C



Images 2 and 3 are illustrations done by Students B and C, whose home language is isiXhosa. In both images, Students B and C depict a barrier that, for them, hinders the attainment of success in contemporary society. In Image 2, the barrier to success is represented by a steep mountain for an individual (Student B) to climb uphill, accompanied with the words "isiXhosa" found on the left side of the mountain, and "English" found on the right side of the mountain. In Image 3, the physical barrier is represented by a brick wall accompanied by the words "language" and "divide." Both Images 2 and 3 illuminate the students' interpretations of the English language as a barrier to success, with the intention of communicating three contrasting and powerful messages. We infer the first message in terms of Student B and C's elucidation of a colonialist construction of contemporary society, in that success is very much dependent on being attuned to a Western ideology according to which one must acquire an income to live a good life, accompanied with the desire for material wealth—which in Image 2 is represented by motor vehicles, and in Image 3 by a beach resort in an affluent area. Hence, from both images, it can be inferred that success is equated to economic and social wellbeing. This interpretation is further confirmed by Students B and C in a focus group interview:

> *[On] the other side, everything looks nice, the sun and trees and everything is green and nice, and there are hearts going up, which shows that people who knew English from a very young age, and they speak it every day, it's easier for them when it comes to English. (Student B)*

> *English [is considered] the course to success, which is the mind-set that we have . . . when I look at the people that were born speaking English, or born into the English culture, and look at them, and then they would seem [to me] privileged, hence why you see on one side of the wall there's—you see the beach, and then there's trees, it's all beautiful. (Student C)*

A second interpretation of Images 2 and 3 is that the two students have different understandings of their own identities. In Image 2, Student B sees herself as an isolated individual, which resonates with a kind of neoliberal Western ideology that determines one's success as being very much dependent on the unique characteristics of the individual, as Higgs (2003) contended. This is further vindicated by Student B's comments in the focus group interview:

> *So in my drawing it shows a picture of me and the things that I go through and how hard it is for me as I grew up speaking Xhosa throughout. So now I have to speak English and everything is in English, so here I have a picture of myself and it shows how hard it's been for me. And so I have a mountain, and here there are stones on the side, which shows that it hasn't been an easy journey.*

The student's use of the words "myself," "I," and "me" positions herself as an "isolated" individual who faced challenges in her educational context from early childhood to adulthood due to her perpetual struggle in adapting to the English language in her academic schooling. The student's success in her academic schooling is very much linked to her inherent drive to academic success as a result of her characteristics as an "atomistic being."

In stark contrast to Image 2, Student C in Image 3 sees himself embedded within his own society as part of a group, which resonates with Mbiti's (1970, p. 108) elucidation of ubuntu within a communitarian understanding of the individual in African society in that "whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group and [that] whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual." In other words, it is the individual's drive to contribute to his or her economic and social well-being that would be to the betterment of his or her community. More specifically, it is the desire to better his or her own societal conditions and that of the community that drives him or her towards a perpetual struggle for the attainment of education as a result of the language barrier that often marginalises individuals whose mother tongue language is not English. This is confirmed in Student C' comments in the focus group interview:

> *It's easier for you to learn things because most—in education especially, things are taught in English, so it's easier for you to understand that.*

The student further associates contemporary South African society's use of English as perpetuating a constant struggle for non-English speaking individuals in attaining success in society. This is confirmed by Student C's comments:

> *While on the other side [of the brick wall] it's more rural and the mathematical equation that side, this one is 2 meaning that you don't get . . . for you to get an education you need to work harder, and the education that you do get, you must struggle to get.*

Student C uses the term "struggle" as a means of resisting the status quo of contemporary society through the English language as a means of advancing his economic and social wellbeing for the betterment of himself and his community. A third interpretation is that, in uncovering the hidden meaning behind Image 3, language is depicted as a barrier that excludes non-isiXhosa speaking individuals from experiencing the richness of African culture. Higgs and van Niekerk (2002, p. 42) purported that if (higher education) educators could start with the indigenous knowledge systems that provide the framework for their students' initial experiences, then (university) students would be encouraged to draw on their cultural practices and daily experiences as they negotiate new situations. Hence, defamiliarisation in this study as a pedagogical technique could be said to have assisted both Students B and C in depicting their lived experiences within the contexts that they are situated. Therefore, defamiliarising Student B and Student C's illustrations serves as a means through which we were able to ascertain those students' interpretations of both a colonialist identity and culture within contemporary South African society. Through defamiliarising Images 2 and 3, we infer that the two students' illustrations served as a means of critically self-reflecting on their own contexts within the discourse of culture, language, and power in a self-reflexive manner (Hooks, 2003). The latter is confirmed by Student C's comments in the focus group interview:

> *As soon as you can speak English and you are fluent in English, people expect you to be smart, or they have the idea that you are smart in some or other way. So being in a tertiary institution, when I look at other people, this is what I see, when I look at myself this is what I see on that side.*

In other words, having integrated defamiliarisation through such a pedagogy and in this research study, afforded Students B and C a means to disrupt their own colonialist constructions of identity in which language, culture, and race are inextricably avoided among higher education educators and students in some higher education settings.

Image 4: Student D

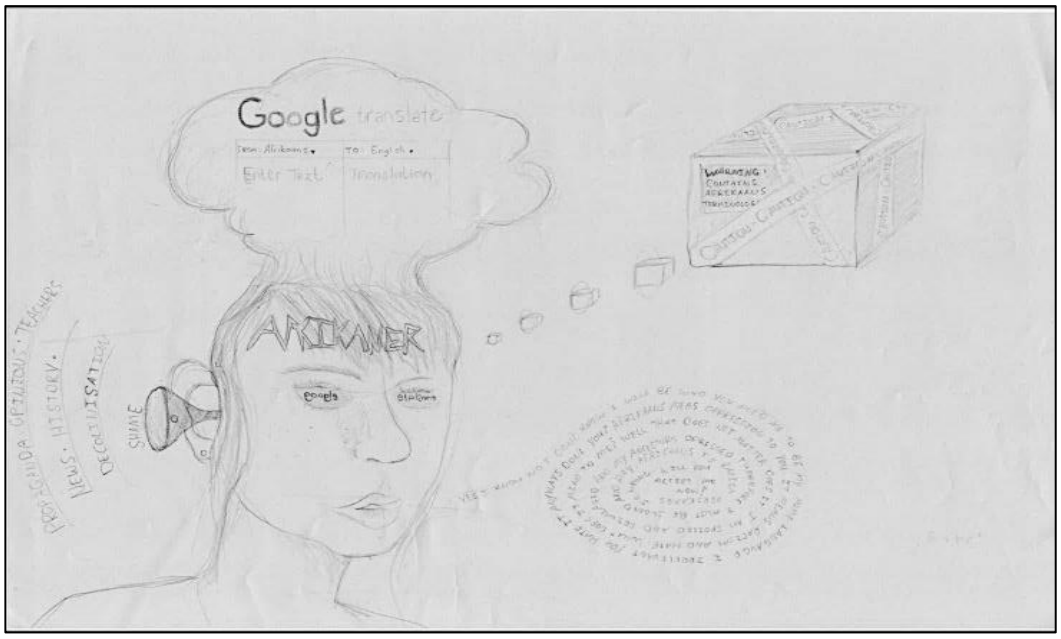


Image 4 is illustrated by Student D whose home language is Afrikaans. We infer four interpretations from Image 4. First, in the image Student D reflects on her experiences of language translation from English to Afrikaans, and from Afrikaans to English. This process and experience is portrayed as an internal struggle depicted by the student's illustration of a mushroom cloud. This is confirmed by Student D in a focus group interview:

> *So, I started with just a rough sketch of myself, and then I just thought of how many times in a day I have to use Google Translate to translate, not only from English to Afrikaans, but Afrikaans to English.*

Second, in Image 4, the word "Afrikaner" is placed above the mushroom cloud in the image of the woman (Student D) which, when uncovering the hidden meaning behind the image may either signify how she (Student D) identifies herself in society, how society has "branded" her, or how she sees herself having been branded in society. Third, the thoughts of the woman in Image 4 depict an enclosed box with the sentence, "Warning Contains Afrikaans Terminology," and the word "Caution," which are used across the box as a means of creating a conscious alertness for Student D not to use Afrikaans terminology perhaps in the predominantly isiXhosa or English context that she finds herself in at the university. This is further corroborated by Student D's view or perception of this in a focus group interview:

> *So, my language [Afrikaans], I feel it is kind of like, when somebody speaks Afrikaans in a class, you get this uncomfortable feeling because, oh the people are going to get so angry because they're speaking Afrikaans, stop speaking Afrikaans. As Afrikaans is associated with apartheid era. (Student D)*

The discomfort that Student D experiences is due to the fact that her experience of society's perception of Afrikaans is associated with the legacy of apartheid. In this regard, standard Afrikaans as a language is associated with colonialism in the minds of many nonwhite and non-Afrikaans speaking university students. Much of Student D's perception of how the Afrikaans language is portrayed, or perceived by others, is further linked to how she illustrates herself in the image as a "white Afrikaner" student. This is further corroborated in the focus group interview in which she explicates the following:

> *I am one of two noncoloured girls in the hostel, beyond black girls, you know, you have to tread on a fine line, and we are constant, I constantly get the feeling like I am judged for being the colour that I am, you know. [Students] just assume I am privileged, and get what I want and the language plays a big role in that. (Student D)*

Certainly, the stigmatisation displayed towards the Afrikaans language in the mind of Student D is rooted in historical, political, and cultural significances in South African society. This is despite the fact that English is also considered a colonialist language. Fourth, Image 4 further indicates that the rhetoric around decolonisation is filtered down to students through "teachers," the "news," and "history." Student D in Image 4 uses the words "propaganda" and "opinion," which may suggest that, as a student, she is not able to express herself in and through her thoughts, and that much of the rhetoric regarding decolonisation emanating from teachers, the news, and the subject history in South Africa influences her opinion. This is explicated in the focus group interview with Student D:

> *Oh this is the type of stuff that influences you. Propaganda, opinions, teachers, news, history, decolonisation. It is basically like, what part of what you are saying is actually your own thoughts, you know, because not only do you have teachers and people telling you that this is wrong. You have either a teacher telling you that is wrong, but you don't really have the opportunity to express what you really think. You're just constantly been influenced by opinions of others, to formulate what you must say.*

The above view, is further corroborated in Image 4 where the words "oppression" and "oppressed" can be seen being produced in the speech of the woman. Taking into consideration the fact that Student D was required to illustrate her interpretation as an African student learning in an English language as the medium of communication, Image 4 denotes a contrasting picture to Images 1, 2, and 3. Much of Image 4 delineates Student D's experiences in relation to the social, cultural, and historical underpinnings of contemporary South African society. Although Student D emphasises the struggle that she has with English terminology, the image overwhelmingly and lucidly depicts the association of the Afrikaans language with colonialism and oppression. We aver that, only if we are able to afford higher education students the means to critically reflect on their experiences of language use in society, are we then able to develop a curriculum that would be more attuned and acceptable to all South Africans, irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, and culture, while taking into consideration the need to decolonise both university students' perceptions regarding language, history, and culture. Student D in this pedagogical activity and research study within a higher education context was afforded the third space, as Gutierrez (2008, p. 152) contended. This was a space in which she could illustrate her lived experiences as a white female Afrikaans speaking student in an English and isiXhosa speaking context, and represents a means by which Student D was able to share, through a visual representation a stereotypical misinterpretation on the part of many university students, of language, race, identity, and culture coloured by colonialism.

Discussion

From our interpretation of the data, it is clear that defamiliarisation as a teaching method assisted the students—and us as educators—in decolonising our thoughts and perceptions in the higher education context. Furthermore, we confirm from the data that defamiliarisation as a pedagogical technique succeeded in expanding the preservice educators' critical perspectives. We now offer our insights on the implications of this research on practices in higher education.

First, it is clear that the creative illustrations as a form of defamiliarisation created spaces necessary for the sample students to articulate their voices and emotions, which are considered a social construction (Abu-Lughod & Lutz, 1990; Dewey, 1922; Lasky, 2005; White, 1993), inextricably connected with belief, context, culture, identity, and power, as Lasky (2000) posited. In this regard, the creative illustrations were used as a means through which the students were able to explore and express their identities within their sociocultural contexts. We infer that this defamiliarisation conscientised the students through a process of problem posing, which was found to assist them in a process of becoming aware of, and consciously opposing dominant power, and in turn transforming oppressive situations, as Freire (1995, p. 8) submitted. Therefore, we consider that defamiliarisation in this study was able to begin to develop and foster a critical capacity in the students as a way of enabling them to resist the oppressive or colonised spaces that they encounter in both higher education and in society. The meanings that they constructed in language and in visual communication can be seen as a way in which these and other university students can be presented with the means of expressing their lived experiences of a colonised society. Moreover, we consider that the making of the illustrations offered the students, together with the higher education educators—in what should be seen as a collaborative process and pedagogy—opportunities for deriving a number of possible understandings of decolonisation in higher education.

Second, the creative illustrations afforded the sample students the means to disrupt their own thoughts regarding the often negative perceptions—their own and others—that some of the sample students (A and D) are faced with in their social and cultural context inside and outside of their school or university contexts. We aver that the process of making the illustrations, and then discussing them, assisted the sample students in critically reflecting on the need to disrupt their own thoughts regarding the assimilation of their (socially constructed, deficit) identities into the dominant Western ideals of society. Therefore, we maintain that defamiliarisation, as commensurate with ubuntu, encouraged and inspired the students to expose themselves to others (students in the class) and, in so doing, to encounter the difference and sameness of their humanness with others, thus informing and enriching their own humanity, as Sindane (1994, pp. 8–9) postulated. Therefore, we saw the defamiliarisation process in terms of expounding the communal embeddedness and connectedness of the students to each, other as Higgs (2003, p. 13) claimed. We suggest that this aspect of defamiliarisation has the potential to open up a variety of well-structured discursive spaces in higher education, spaces in which meaning can be negotiated with the purpose of encouraging equitable participation and inclusivity in higher education contexts.

Third, defamiliarising the sample students' (A, B, C, and D) creative illustrations served as a means by which we were able to explore and ascertain the sample students' interpretations of a colonialist identity and culture within contemporary South African society. We would claim that creative illustrations have the potential to serve as a means for university students to allow themselves to be open to critically self-reflecting on their own contexts within the discourse of culture, language, and power in a self-reflexive manner as hooks (2003) described this process. Moreover, we argue that defamiliarisation holds the possibility of affording university students the means to disrupt their own colonialist constructions of identity in which language, culture, and race are inextricably avoided in higher education settings. Through a process of "de-automatisation," where "art removes objects from

the automatism of perception in several ways" as Shklovskij (1965, p. 2) postulated, we argue that, having university students' habitual responses to the familiar in some way refreshed, or even subverted, may further assist university students in finding more profound, complex, and nuanced meanings within and behind familiar texts. Through de-automatisation as we infer, such texts would be rendered more consciously perceptible not only to students, but also to their higher education educators.

Thus, we venture to claim that defamiliarisation can contribute positively towards decolonising students' thoughts in higher education. We propose the need for teaching in higher education to include defamiliarisation as a pedagogical technique and, in so doing, assisting in cultivating equitable spaces for both students and higher education educators to decolonise the curriculum at universities substantively. More specifically, teaching in higher education through defamiliarisation holds the potential to cultivate in university students and higher education educators the capabilities to look at colonisation in society from a defamiliarised perspective with the desired aim of cultivating inclusivity and diversity. In this way, it is hoped that defamiliarisation would directly impact social and educational change in higher education. We suggest that defamiliarisation should always be considered an apposite pedagogical technique in higher education as a way of deepening students' and higher education educators' social, economic, political, and cultural awareness in relation to identity and power. This is due to the fact that cultural understandings, as espoused by Waghid (2016), have some affinity to people's expanded political awareness and intellectual growth and alertness. Moreover, if university students' capacities for learning and for critical reflection are cultivated through forms of defamiliarisation that highlight instances of colonialism, the possibility exists that higher education contexts can be shifted towards a more decolonised spectrum.

Concluding Remarks

We have argued that, in order for higher education institutions to decolonise and turn more meaningfully and fully to their role as discoverers and disseminators of knowledge, framing higher education curricula and modes of delivery needs to be underpinned by attention to defamiliarisation processes. The findings from the research described in this article showed that the illustrations—a form of defamiliarisation—created spaces necessary for students to articulate their voices and emotions, both of which are inextricably connected with, or intersected by, belief, context, culture, and power (Lasky, 2000). The findings further revealed that defamiliarisation afforded the sample students the opportunity to express their identity, more specifically in terms of sharing with others a nuanced understanding of their identity within contemporary South African society. The support this offers to the theoretical proposition in terms of disrupting habitual thoughts about identity assimilation, the barrier created by the English language for non-English speaking students, and the Western neoliberal ideologies that measure success in terms of the individualistic pursuit of wealth, was described and discussed in the previous section. Through the processes of defamiliarisation described, we infer that the sample students' illustrations served as a way for them to self-reflect critically on these issues in terms of their own contexts within the discourse of culture, language, and power in a self-reflexive manner (hooks, 2003). The ways in which integrating defamiliarisation in this research study enabled these students to begin to disrupt their own colonialist constructions of identity, in which language, culture, and race are inextricably avoided in higher education settings, has been described—together with the opportunity it afforded them to illustrate their lived experiences in their social and economic contexts, and to share and interrogate society's stereotypical misinterpretation of language and identity through the lens of colonialism. We would argue that the direction in which decolonisation of pedagogy at higher education institutions in South Africa is being nudged requires a general shift in the social and intellectual ethos prevailing at higher education institutions so that students may ultimately be better prepared to contribute to furthering the country's economic, social, and political aims to the benefit of all. A curriculum underpinned by the

principles of defamiliarisation has the potential to invite students to begin to establish the kind of networks that could contribute to sustainable local practices through their, and our, ongoing search for multiple critical perspectives. Further research calls for the use of other mediational defamiliarising tools such as literature and literary texts, media, and technology in assisting higher education educators to disrupt and decolonise the higher education curriculum.

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Transformative Praxis Through Critical Consciousness: A Conceptual Exploration of a Decolonial Access With Success Agenda

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Abstract

This paper is a conceptual exploration of a decolonial perspective towards the notion of access with success. Attention is drawn to the significance of students' schooling backgrounds in the perpetuation of inequity that accrues from coloniality. Decoloniality is factored into teacher identity formation and professional development in the interests of the attainment of ontological density with specific reference to the black preservice teacher cohort. The view presented here is that colonial cultural capital in social justice has ramifications for access with success. A counterstrategy in the interests of the decolonial turn is the development of a professional identity where a culture of critical consciousness yields attributes that are indicative of, and consistent with, emergent transformative praxis. The overarching theoretical explorative tool of this discussion is couched within the transformative paradigm. This tool is used to draw attention to a critical decolonial social justice agenda that conceives of the university as a site for the inculcation of organised and multidimensional critical change agency. The attendant view is that preservice teachers' role as change agents is actualised through transformative praxis that is informed by critical consciousness. In this discussion, the decolonial strategy of breaking the cycle that is informed by mentalities of coloniality is poised to play a pivotal role in the attainment of the cohort's epistemic reflectivity and ontological density in the interests of social transformation.

Keywords: access, critical consciousness, decoloniality, preservice teachers, success, transformative praxis

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Introduction

The subject of access with success forms part of the body of knowledge about equity in relation to entry into, and participation in, higher education. This discussion conceptualises the agenda of access and success as part of the decolonial project. For purposes of this conceptual exploration, the notion of access with success pertains primarily to how the intersection of critical consciousness and transformative praxis facilitates the professional identity formation of the black preservice teacher cohort. In this light, social transformation is considered as contingent upon professional teacher identity formation that entails counteracting the ill effects of colonially constructed inequities. However, the various social justice issues that are part of the social justice imperative do not immediately fall within the ambit of this exploration. The intention with this is to maintain fidelity to the access with success agenda within the project of decoloniality. The delineation of this discussion is thus education, with specific regard to the preservice teacher cohort. In this respect, attention is drawn to the coloniality constructed pre-university conditions that have a bearing on the equitable entry and successful academic participation of the black preservice teacher cohort.

The realities of disadvantage in the pre-university school contexts of the black preservice teachers are exemplifications and manifestations of the colonial bifurcation (Santos, 2007) agenda that is perpetuated through a coloniality mentality of inequity. Within the context of this discussion, disadvantage is presented as a by-product of coloniality and a ramification of colonialism. Decoloniality, in this case, is posited as an antithetical stance from a perspective of epistemic reorientation towards the attainment of ontological density. In this regard, coloniality is conceived of as mind-sets and practices that have outlived the hegemonic historical epochs of colonialism (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo, 2014).

In the South African context, these mind-sets have been perpetuated through the colonially constructed apartheid system, which has evidently sustained white privilege and black disadvantage (Muswede, 2017). What is worth noting in this regard is Biko's assertion (in A. Stubbs Ed., 1978) about the need for a consciousness that promotes positivity that will eradicate the deliberate constructions of colonialism namely, inferior/superior black/white complexes. The conceptualisation of coloniality is, therefore, in tandem with the argument presented here that access with success is influenced by factors that are linked to colonially conceptualised and constructed school systems. Attention is drawn to the three areas of analysis of coloniality in this regard (Grosfoguel, 2007). The first is coloniality of power, where the bifurcation of power yields two binaries, namely the zone of being (that of the colonialists) and the zone of nonbeing (that is occupied by the colonised). This bifurcation is undergirded by abysmal thinking that entrenches unequal power relations that perpetuate oppression (Fanon, 1968; Santos, 2007). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (2009) equated this to metaphysical colonialism. By inference, his argument is that this hinders the attainment of ontological density. Those who have been and continue to be marginalised on the basis of race and class, such as the black preservice teacher cohort, are located in the zone of nonbeing. As such, they are constantly exposed to the effects of colonial mind-sets, thus necessitating a counter-hegemonic strategy of decolonising of the mind. Ngũgĩ (1986, p. 384) was of the opinion that the aforesaid serves as an antidote for what Mignolo (2007) referred to as abysmal thinking on the part of the colonialists. Elsewhere, in a different slant and context, I argue that this results in thinking patterns that create conditions that give rise to subjugated thinking with implications for identity formation (Maseko, 2015).

The decolonial counterstrategy, as it is envisioned in this paper, is proffered in part through a decolonially constructed critical agency. Here, critical agency entails counteracting hegemonic forces and epistemic practices at an individual level with transformative implications for identity formation and social transformation. This paper provides pointers to social transformation from the perspective

of transformative praxis and its implications for preservice teachers' critical agency and ontological emancipation.

The second area of analysis is coloniality of knowledge, which has to do with the generation of knowledge. Here criticism is levelled against knowledge that does not contribute towards the decoloniality agenda of access with success with implications for individual and social transformation. Knowledge that entrenches and perpetuates the superiority of particular knowledge bases to the exclusion of others (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015) would also be critiqued as superfluous if not obsolete. The by-product of this consciousness is a new way of being characterised by critical agency (Ayers, 2004). This draws attention to the third area of analysis, that is, coloniality of being, which is about the search of human ontology as a result of denied ontological density (wa Thiong'o, 2009). This phenomenon is conceived of as the attainment of wholeness, the true self which, I argue, should have its genesis in the pre-university schooling context. The assertion here is that pre-university schooling conditions bear significant relevance for the issue of access with success.

This is partially illumined through Fataar's (2012) discussion about engagement and schooling in the South African context. He drew from a study about working class lads, which was conducted in the United Kingdom by Willis (1977), to proffer useful insights about the role and significance of schooling backgrounds. Albeit in a different mode and context, Fataar (2012) opined that schools should ideally be "more meaningful places of cultural and intellectual inclusion and engagement for disadvantaged students" (p. 53). He referred to the essentialist cultural non-engagement of a particular group of young people (from disadvantaged backgrounds) in school practices. In this discussion, he highlighted the complexity of navigating the space between the cultural divide of disadvantage and disengagement on the one hand, and a school context that strives to foster a culture of productive engagements on the other. He warned against a reductionist view that undermines the potential of schools to create engaging knowledge creation environments. In his discussion, Fataar argued that "it is in a re-oriented pedagogical re-contextualization approach at the site of the school where such a productive engagement can be established" (2012, p. 62). The aforesaid is in tacit perspectival consonance with the ideological orientation presented in this discussion about the role of schools and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997). In this case, reference is made to South African schools that, as it were, disallow the acquisition of cultural capital to the detriment of successful participation in the academia (Maseko, 2015).

McFadden and Munns (2002) tacitly concurred with the view about the role of schools when they made reference to teachers who seek to open "pathways so that students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds have greater chances of educational opportunities to succeed" (p. 359). The above bears relevance for a decolonial social justice approach that takes into account school conditions, and the cultural capital associated with them, as part of the either constraining colonial or enabling decolonial factors. Cultural capital that is, in this case, consistent and compatible with an access with the success agenda (Bourdieu, 1997) would also have a bearing on cultural engagement, as pointed out previously (Fataar, 2012). In this paper, cultural engagement would also include the extent to which students from disadvantaged backgrounds are able to envision themselves as free from internalised alienation accruing from external institutionalised machinery (Biko in A. Stubbs Ed., 1978). In this case, the machinery is colonialism, and its bedfellow, apartheid, which is tied up with white supremacy, capitalist exploitation, and deliberate oppression. This discussion conceives of universities as appropriate sites for effecting the emancipatory decolonial turn (Maldonado-Torres, 2011) that is intended to dismantle the ill effects of debilitating oppressive systems. One of the ways in which this is facilitated is through various movements and summer schools. The Black Consciousness Movement is seen as a vehicle for social consciousness that allows for rethinking and reconceptualising ways of countering ideologies that produce debilitating social and material conditions.

Steve Biko, as a proponent of black consciousness (BC), defined the BC movement as an antithesis to white racism and a striving towards the attainment of the real self—ultimately a rediscovery of true black identity. His contention was that the pursuance of black consciousness was, in essence, "the quest for a true humanity" (Biko, 1978, p. 87). In Biko's, *I write what I like* (A. Stubbs, Ed.,1978), several instances of the BC ideology are expressed. Biko's views about the role of schools and how they subsequently influence perceptions about superiority and inferiority are a tacit confirmation of the claims in this discussion. Reference is made to, for instance, academic playing fields in which black students seem to be academically out performed by white students who, because of their schooling backgrounds, have a linguistic advantage in the language of learning and teaching in higher education institutions. The resultant erroneous perception in such instances is that the white students are more intelligent. Consequentially, the black students are plagued by feelings of inadequacy, resulting in what Taylor (1992) referred to as misrecognition, with negative implications for their academic performance and identity. This was confirmed by Bachelor of Education (BEd) students in a study about the interplay between language, as a cognitive factor, and identity, as an affective ontological factor (Maseko, 2015). As part of a responsive strategy to this anomaly, Biko (in A. Stubbs, Ed., 1978) showed the significance of the interrelationship between the consciousness of the self and the emancipatory project of black consciousness. For purposes of the argument presented here, the ideology of emancipation in relation to consciousness and conceptualisation of the self is in tandem with the social justice principles espoused within the attainment of the ontological density mandate of the ongoing decolonial project. Biko's argument is instructive in this regard:

> *As long as blacks are suffering from inferiority complex—a result of 300 years of deliberate oppression, denigration and derision—they will be useless as co-architects of a normal society. . . . Hence what is necessary as a prelude to anything else that may come is a very strong grass-roots build-up of black consciousness such that blacks can learn to assert themselves and state their rightful claim. (in A. Stubbs, Ed., 1978, p. 21)*

The above would have seemed anachronistic, had it not been for the persistent anomalies and their ramifications in our current educational contexts. The question that begs an answer in this regard is: "Why have these inequities continued apparently unabated for so long?" In this regard, I concur with Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015) in his views about the incomplete struggles for decolonisation. The decolonial agenda is thus an ongoing imperative in pursuance of the liberatory social justice ideal of the attainment of ontological density (Ngũgĩ, 2009). This bears specific relevance for black preservice teachers' envisioned contribution to emancipatory social transformation.

Access With Success: A Decolonial Social Justice Imperative

A pursuit and actualisation of the social justice access with success ideal into a responsive equitable decolonial reality is posited in this discussion to assist significantly towards counteracting the effects of disadvantage. Decoloniality is envisioned as part of an ongoing epistemic process of re-membering (or reconstitution), where the intention is to construct an identity that is geared towards transcendental emancipation to remake the world in the interests of multidimensional ontological density (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Ngũgĩ, 2009; Quijano, 2007). The view posited here is that this carries positive implications for the black preservice teacher cohort, in terms of their active participation in the academia and professional identity development. Access with success is associated with the idea of *open access* as a decolonial social justice imperative in the ultimate interests of social transformation. This imperative is connected to the directive presented in the Higher Education Act (Department of Education, 1997), which emphasised equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise potential through higher education while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities. This discussion is thus a reinforcement of this directive and a continuation of the quest for decolonial equity in the face of "nebulous politics of

transformation . . . trumped by empty policy formalism, devoid of discursive traction" (Fataar, 2015, p. 5). In the case of this discussion, the aforementioned bears specific relevance in reference to policies around the access with success imperative. Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2012, p. 1) observation that decolonisation "is a political, epistemological and economic liberatory project [that] has remained an unfinished business" is instructive in this regard.

The account about the disinclination to participate in school activities, as discussed earlier, is symptomatic of a paradigmatic orientation related to cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1997; Fataar, 2012). Despite the contextual differences, this finds resonance in the argument presented in this discussion in relation to the need for appropriate responsiveness. This is captured aptly thus by Bourdieu (1973):

> *If all [emphasis added] pupils were given the technology of intellectual enquiry and if in general they were given rational ways of work . . . then an important way of reducing inequalities based on cultural inheritance would have been achieved. (p. 17)*

The creation of equitable conditions for all, relates to cognisance of the role of intellectual enquiry (or paradigmatic orientation) as it relates to the cultural capital with which students from various backgrounds access academia. As part of a social justice agenda, Ladson-Billings (2005) argued for the need to uncover the various ways in which ingrained societal disparities support systems of privilege and oppression. Within the context of the South African higher education landscape, the widening of access is a strategy that has been used as an ameliorative redress measure; however, this has resulted in massification, with possible implications for commodification (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). The equity agenda, as it pertains to access with success, is thus marred by the fact that it has created a paradoxical situation of further widening the access with success gap it is attempting to close.

The disparate conditions accruing from coloniality are thus inadvertently perpetuated through heightened risk to attrition and retention (Moeketsi & Mgutshini, 2014). The issue of widening access should, therefore, be a carefully considered quest that brings into view all associated realities to ensure that success, with all its associations and ramifications, is attained. This is a new dynamic concept, a curriculum based on a transforming, transcendental purpose of education that culminates in a transformative network, from which a new sense of order emerges. The fusion between critical consciousness and transformative praxis is critical in the execution of the tenets of the new order. These concepts of critical consciousness and transformative praxis are brought into focus as pivotal components in the attainment of ontological density in the decoloniality agenda. The interplay between critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) and transformative praxis (Mezirow, 2003) is a critical part of decolonial reorientation. Success is seen in the light of transformative academic participation that has cyclical implications for professional development (Mezirow, 2003, 2005). In this instance, the decolonial social justice mandate situates the preservice teacher cohort as key contributors towards breaking the vicious cycle of disparity between school preparation (or paucity thereof) and academic participation with implications for social transformation. Biko's (1978) views about growing awareness of the role of black students in the emancipation of the community are instructive in this regard.

The Freirean notion of praxis, that is, reflection translated into action, holds that disadvantaged people can acquire a critical awareness of their own condition and ultimately take ownership of their own liberation with ramifications for social transformation. (Freire, 1970). Liberation here is associated with a critical emancipatory agenda where the professional identity of teachers is conceptualised in terms of critical agency (Biesta, 2015; Biko, 1987). Of significance to liberatory social transformation is the maintenance of equitable entry and participation conditions, with positive connotations for the identity construction of disadvantaged black preservice teachers. The process of identity formation conceives of an educational philosophy that comes into close contact with sociocultural issues and

practical concerns, and which calls for a practical and theoretical collaboration (Deleuze, 1990). In this discussion, the concept of critical consciousness is associated with the theoretical aspect, while transformative praxis has to do with the practical and pragmatic part. In this case, the former is in line with the notion of paradigm shifting facilitated by, for instance, exposure to professional decolonial discussions and engagements. This has the potential to position teachers for decolonial transformative praxis. Consistent with this idea is the view that, "as agents of change, transformative teachers ought to be equipped for an explicit emancipatory, critical and transformative role" (Hill & Boxley, 2007, p. 54). This has implications for the role of the teacher as central to social transformation, with implications for decoloniality as an antithetical stance to the disempowering hegemonic paradigm of neocoloniality (Mignolo, 2014; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Nkrumah, 1965). This action should begin with a decolonial turn comprised of a fusion of critical consciousness and transformative praxis, leading to various manifestations of social transformation.

Theoretical and Conceptual Orientation

The transformative paradigm is an overarching bricoleuric theoretical and conceptual envisioning of the marriage between the theoretical and practical, as conceived of by Deleuze (1990). In this regard, critical consciousness and paradigmatic reorientation are related to the theoretical and conceptual while transformative praxis is aligned with the carrying out of decolonial tasks (Maldonado-Torres, 2007). These tasks are connected to the ways in which reorientation has ramifications for ontological density and social transformation. The theoretical lenses of critical theory (Kincheloe, 2007) and critical emancipatory research (CER) theory (Mahlomaholo, 2009; Mahlomaholo & Nkoane, 2002) are seen as apt paradigmatic vehicles for advancing reorientation and the agenda of criticality in classrooms. Critical theory finds relevance because of its positionality as an appropriate tool for promoting criticality and facilitating the translation of theory into practice, that is, praxis. Freire's (2005) tacit agreement with this observation is that critical reflection has to precede action to avoid destructive activism. His injunction that theory has to be coupled with collective social action to avoid escapist idealism is instructive. Here, the interconnectedness of critical consciousness and transformative praxis is seen in the interests of the attainment of ontological density leading to social transformation. The conceptual lenses of transformative learning (Ayers, 2004; Mezirow, 2003, 2005) and critical pedagogy (Apple, 2001; Freire, 1970, 1994) are also incorporated into this framework in the furtherance of reorientation and critical agency that is associated with the professional identity formation of the black preservice teacher cohort.

This paper is positioned within a critical emancipatory ideological orientation, which is conceived of as a troubling and critiquing of existential inequities and unequal power relations in the interests of identity liberation (Mahlomaholo, 2009; Mahlomaholo & Nkoane, 2002). The issue of access with success is not only measured by the entry of the black preservice teacher cohort into academia within a meritocratic system of coloniality (McNamee & Miller, 2004; Maldonado-Torres, 2007). It hinges on the capacity for transformative agency with multilayered ramifications for transformative praxis as well as individual and social transformation. This draws attention to what Reason (1994, p. 42) referred to as "knowledge in action," which transcends the divide between intellect and experience that is embedded in Western consciousness. This, he argued, is about creating spaces where thinkers are also doers, and doers are thinkers through reflection. Transformative learning is brought into focus because of its potential to bring about a meaning shift that revolves around personal change with implications for identity formation and transformative praxis (Mezirow, 2003). This is in alignment with the decolonial intention to reconstruct an emancipatory identity (Quijano, 2007). As pointed out earlier in this discussion, the decoloniality project is largely concerned with transformation through an ideological orientation that removes individuals from the zone of nonbeing into the zone of being, with positive implications for the ontological density of the preservice teachers under discussion here. The conceptual lens of critical pedagogy comes to the fore in this regard. Brookefield (2003) and Cranton

(2002) supported the idea that the impact of critical pedagogy hinges on transformative learning. Kincheloe (2008) implicitly concurred by noting that critical pedagogy should be about a deep conceptualisation of the role of the social, cultural and political in shaping human identity as well as the way schooling [or education] affects the lives of students from marginalised groups.

The envisaged power of critical pedagogy rests in its hope for social transformation, which is a key concern of the decoloniality projects as it is envisioned in this discussion. In this regard, critical pedagogy and critical thinking are constitutive of and in alignment with transformative learning and transformative praxis (Ayers, 2004; Mezirow, 2003). The notion of a liberatory education system continues to merit attention in view of the persistent disempowering practices and persistent anomalies that continue to harangue the disadvantaged. The tenets of critical pedagogy as espoused by, for example, Freire (1970) and Shor (1996), are regarded as pertinent to and in consonance with the liberatory stance of the decolonial project as it is conceived of in this study. In this regard, Servage's (2008) observation that the relevance of critical pedagogy is that it places a strong emphasis on the role of education in facilitating students' knowledge production and critical consciousness is worth noting. The intersection of decoloniality and critical pedagogy is, therefore, the inculcation of a culture of critical consciousness, which points towards actions that will lead to social transformation.

The aforementioned concepts and theories are deemed appropriate for envisioning a reflexive decolonial response to the multifarious situational realities related to the social justice issue of access with success. Reflective and reflexive pedagogies and teaching practices (Holmes, Cockburn-Wooten, Motion, Zorn & Roper, 2005; Mezirow, 2005; Ryan, 2005) facilitate appropriate responsiveness to these realities. Reflexivity is said to have an epistemological dimension that is conceptualised as epistemic reflexivity (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Ryan, 2005). This type of reflexivity is regarded as the constant analysis of the lived experience. The goal is most often to discover emancipation via critical thinking and action (Holmes et al., 2005) with implications for critical consciousness and its association with transformative praxis. This draws attention to "a new dynamic concept, a curriculum based on a transforming, transcendental purpose of education [which culminates] in a transformative network from which a new sense of order emerges" (Slabbert, de Kock, & Hattingh, 2009, p. 48). In this light, transformative learning in education is envisioned as a fundamental reordering of behavioural modes that are characterised and informed by an ideological and reflexive reorientation (Mezirow, 2005). The benefit for the black preservice teachers within the decolonial project is envisioned as agentic praxis that makes valid and sustainable contributions towards transforming the conditions that perpetuate inequity.

Reflexive Reorientation for Transformative Action

Praxis is part of critical consciousness through which one demonstrates the ability of reflexive thinking that leads to commensurate transformative action. Transformative praxis is a product of multidimensional critical consciousness, which is informed by the notion of education as a practice of freedom and praxis, which Freire explained as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (1970, p. 36). This is in keeping with the tenets of critical pedagogy, as discussed in the previous section with particular regard to a liberatory education system. Decoloniality involves a reflexive reorientation from colonial views relating to the three areas of analysis of coloniality, namely, coloniality of power, knowledge, and being as discussed earlier. The relevance of the aforesaid for this discussion lies in the decolonial stance of re-membering (re-ordering) in the direction of ontological density (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Ngũgĩ, 2009; Quijano, 2007), where knowledge systems (and, by implication, educational practices) are reviewed in the light of their relevance to the decolonial social justice agenda.

Transformative praxis is linked to identity formation that has implications for the professional development of preservice teachers in the interests of social transformation. In this regard, the connection between transformative learning and education is a re-ordering that entails epistemic reflexivity with implications for the professional development of the preservice cohort (Ryan, 2005). This carries curricular implications for reorientation in relation to pedagogical practices that consciously and explicitly promote a re-envisioning of the role of teachers in social transformation. Freire (1994, p. 97) asserted that knowledge should be linked to "dialogue that is characterised by participatory open communication focused around critical enquiry which translates into a social praxis." Of significance here is the conceptualisation of critical enquiry as part of critical consciousness that translates into critical agency in the "remaking" of the individual (Freire, 1970, 2005). This remaking can be equated with the quest for ontological density in the pursuit of wholeness as it pertains to the preservice teacher. This is attainable through a process of decolonising the mind, through paradigm shifting, and appropriate pedagogies and practices. Inherent in this are the implications for social praxis, that is, a remaking of the world as pointed out (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015; Ngũgĩ, 2009; Quijano, 2007).

Reconceptualising Access With Success in Relation to Critical Consciousness and Transformative Praxis

The term "critical consciousness" was first coined by Freire (1970, p. 36), who believed that education should serve an emancipatory role of empowering students to think critically about their education. In his view, students were to make a link between education and their social contexts. This entails a reading of the text, while also taking into account the context. Within the context of this discussion, this term is linked to the cognitive (the mind), subsequently leading to paradigm shifting and ultimately to transformative praxis. Critical moral consciousness (Mustakova-Possardt, 2004) is brought into view as connected to the affective (the heart and ontological development), leading to what Slabbert et al. (2009) referred to as supraconsciousness. Mustakova-Possardt (2004, p. 248) asserted that the case for transformative praxis requires a re-envisioning of education in the direction of integrating the mind and heart. This entails developing both moral motivation (heart) and critical discernment (mind):

> *Critical consciousness is in essence optimal consciousness, characterized by the integration of the intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual aspects of a human being. Levels and degrees of critical consciousness are the result of the lifelong synergistic interaction of moral motivation and structural cognitive development, leading to a progressively more harmonious working of mind and heart and an empowered unity of rational understanding, intuitive knowing and inner vision. (Mustakova-Possardt, 2004, p. 248)*

Critical moral consciousness is thus regarded as a necessary part of identity formation, with implications for the ability to do the morally right thing. Mustakova-Possardt (2004) posited the view that this quality is:

> *central to negotiating the challenges of the 21st century, [which should] be understood as a way of being, an optimal path of human development, which exhibits wholesome engagement with meaning and positive change in one's social world and . . . characterized by ever-expanding circles of agency. (p. 246)*

The above bears relevance for the decolonial access with success agenda in the sense that the moral aspect of critical consciousness forms a critical component of transformative praxis in relation to appropriate responsiveness to situational dictates. This results in an ideological and reflexive reorientation which, according to Mustakova-Possardt (2004), translates into:

> *moral identity, anchored in universal moral values and moral character, [which] predominates over, and mediates, the sense of identity derived from various social configurations such as class, race, gender, ethnic or other group membership. Identity, rooted in moral models and concepts, however simply understood, is a moral imperative [which is] stronger than self-interest and strengthens and expands in the course of life, leading to the progressive integration of self and morality. (pp. 253–254)*

Critical moral consciousness is seen here as part of the acquisition of professional identity formation in the form of ontological density as it is conceived of in the decolonial project. In this conceptualisation, professional identity formation is maintained through supraconsciousness. Slabbert et al. (2009, p. 49) conceived of this phenomenon as the ability to see things from a higher and wider point of view with a new set of emancipatory values. Within the context of this discussion, supraconsciousness is about envisaging education as the attainment of a higher level of consciousness that amalgamates the different conceptualisations of critical consciousness (Freire, 1970) and transformative praxis. The dividends of supraconsciousness are sustained through individual identity formation, with positive implications for lifelong learning and local community transformation. In this regard, Biko's (1978) assertions about the significance of growing awareness of the role of black students in the emancipation of their own communities are worth noting. The views presented here should be regarded as a long-term "project" that translates into a process of lifelong learning in the interests of social transformation. In this light, the 4-year BEd degree only serves as an impetus for generating the multilayered inculcation of a culture of critical enquiry and praxis with cyclical ramifications for social transformation. This factors in continuous consciousness raising to secure buy-in from preservice teacher educators who will commit to the actualisation of the access with success decolonial project.

Freire's (1970) notion of reading the world through the word for transformational purposes is, in essence, about foregrounding a social justice emancipatory imperative of engaging with curricula, with implications for critical change agency. This is particularly pertinent to this discussion, in view of the fact that this cohort is positioned to become teachers who carry the potential to play a significant transformational role. The inherent argument here is that this has cyclical transformational implications for the professional development of the liberatory preservice teacher. The envisaged cyclical benefits are the professional identity formation of black preservice teachers leading to a transformative praxis that is intended to yield transformational dividends for the schooling system.

In her research, Stewart (2002, 2008) observed black students' identity in predominantly white educational contexts. Despite the fact that Stewart's studies were conducted in an American context, they also bear relevance for the context of this study with regard to the complex dynamics pertaining to self-perceptions: multiple sociocultural identities (Cummins, 1996) and identity integration within the South African higher education landscape. Studies such as the ones conducted by Stewart (2002, 2008), reflect the need to mediate the complexities that are associated with the process of identity formation and integration. This is reminiscent of Okri's plea for an education that "awakens . . . genius rather than one that merely fills them with facts" (cited in Maseko, 2015, p. 157), expressed in a speech he delivered at the University of South Africa's Institute of African Renaissance. And:

> *Education ought to educate us to understand our world, instilling confidence [without which we will] fail to achieve our true potential. . . . the radiant truth that begins with self . . . the awakening of a people to their sleeping greatness. (as cited in Maseko, 2015, p. 153)*

Okri's observation about the role of education being to "educate us to understand our world" (as cited in Maseko, 2015, p. 153) is an echo of Freire's (1970) notion of critical consciousness to "read the world

through the word" (p. 34). Despite the differences in foci and emphasis, attention is drawn to Dewey's (1933) notion of reflectivity leading to pragmatism in relation to the association that is made in this discussion between critical consciousness and transformative praxis. His view that, "reflective thought involves not simply a sequence of ideas but a consequence" (1910, p. 2) and his observation that "the solution of a perplexity is the steadying and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection fits in aptly with this association (p. 4). Dewey's (1933) views about the utilitarian role of education are pertinent to the idea of the need for reflectivity in the direction of responsiveness. In this vein, Ledwith (2007) argued that emancipatory action places emphasis on the lifting of disempowering practices and attempts to challenge unequal power relations, with the ultimate intention to garner collective action for social change. This is in tandem with the decoloniality agenda as a search for a liberating perspective aimed at facilitating self-understanding in pursuit of a transformed world order with an education system that has broken free from neocoloniality (Fanon, 1968; Ngũgĩ, 2009; Nkrumah, 1965). In essence, the stance of this discussion finds apt resonance in the notion of a pedagogy of hope that is about bringing understandings of excluded communities and their perspectives and knowledges to academic consciousness meant to inform the critical pedagogical work of educators in school classrooms and university lecture halls (Fataar, 2015).

Conclusion

The issues that were raised in this conceptual exploration of a decolonial perspective towards the notion of access with success brought into view the role of students' schooling backgrounds in this agenda. The decoloniality project in teacher identity formation and professional development was discussed as part of the quest for individual transformation with envisaged benefits for social transformation. Attention was drawn to a reorientation informed by critical consciousness leading to emergent transformative praxis. Cultural capital and the role it plays in the creation of enabling or constraining conditions for access and successful critical participation was flagged in breaking the cycle of coloniality that perpetuates inequity. The above is facilitated through perspectival transformative orientation with self-transforming practices and a new set of emancipatory values that make way for equality of opportunity in the interests of ontological density for both the preservice teacher educators and the preservice teacher. Transformative praxis that places a strong emphasis on community engagement is presented here as a means through which social change can be effected in disadvantaged communities. As a reference point, I use Freire's (1994, p. 97) visualisation of knowledge generation through participatory communication. In his view, this should be centred around critical enquiry, which translates into a social praxis.

In sum, the infusion of a culture of decoloniality, with implications for preservice teachers' entry into and participation in the academia in the direction of social praxis, is not a short-term event. Rather, a realistic view is that the decolonial project of addressing the past imbalances, as they pertain to the preservice teacher cohort, ought to be a carefully calculated process of the facilitation of a multilayered paradigmatic reorientation leading to pragmatic responsiveness. With that in mind, the visualisation of this project is that it transcends the limited time and confines of the 4-year teacher education programme. This paper is thus an invitation for long term multidisciplinary and multilayered engagement, with particular regard to the creation of conditions that facilitate consonance between theory and praxis in teacher education spaces with the aim of achieving social transformation.

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South African Science Teachers' Strategies for Integrating Indigenous and Western Knowledges in Their Classes: Practical Lessons in Decolonisation

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Abstract

Framed within the broader discourse on decolonising African education, this article aims to contribute to the project of integrating indigenous and Western knowledges in southern African education. Following a participatory action research (PAR) cycle, a team of five South African science teachers and one German researcher explored whether and how indigenous knowledges (IK) could be integrated into the teachers' regular classes. The article focuses on the first two phases of the PAR cycle and discusses how challenges impeding knowledge integration were solved and how science lessons that integrated aspects of Western and indigenous knowledges were planned. While the South African science curriculum explicitly invites knowledge integration, it hardly contains any IK and there are no generally available teaching materials. Moreover, some of the participating teachers did not have IK. Yet, integration was possible, for example, through using the learners' communities as resources, a strategy that worked well in both primary and secondary grades. The article suggests that the very practice-oriented research process was also a process of intellectual empowerment and decolonisation. Calling on the agency of teachers, parents, community elders, traditional healers, and academics, the article argues for a bottom-up approach to knowledge integration and to decolonising education.

Keywords: Bottom-up approaches, decolonisation, indigenous knowledges, integration of knowledge systems, participatory action research, science education, South Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa

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INTRODUCTION

While the struggle against the colonial legacy in African (higher) education gained new momentum during the student protests in South African universities in 2015, the calls for decolonising the education system are not new. For over two decades, scholars have criticised the dominance of so-called Western epistemologies in African education and advocated for the integration of indigenous knowledges (Abdi, 2006; Breidlid, 2013; Dei & Simmons, 2009; Nyamnjoh, 2016; Odora Hoppers, 2002; Odora Hoppers, Moja, & Mda, 1999). Framed in the broader discourse on decolonising African education, and building on the calls for knowledge integration, I discuss how five South African science teachers developed strategies to integrate indigenous and Western knowledges in their teaching. The purpose of the article is to contribute to the knowledge integration project by sharing, and reflecting on, practical experience. By *knowledge integration project* I mean the multi-levelled discourse that ranges from the abovementioned calls to indigenise education, to theorising how such an Africanisation might be realised (e.g., Yishak & Gumbo, 2012), to foregrounding cooperation between teachers and traditional healers (e.g., Hewson, Javu, & Holtman, 2009), or collaborating with communities to suggest suitable IK and integration strategies (e.g., Keane, 2006; Khupe, 2014). The final step completing the knowledge integration project would be its actual operationalisation, that is, teaching indigenous knowledges in education. Some of the few existing studies on this will be reviewed in the discussion part of the article. It is essential that all levels of the knowledge integration discourse be continued to enable educational practices that are embedded in theory and to prevent turning IK integration into a technical exercise. However, additionally, it is important to proceed to a practical exploration of knowledge integration, because decolonisation of education will not take place until educational practice actually changes. In the case of South Africa, the integration of indigenous knowledges into education has featured in the curriculum since 1997 and in the national Indigenous Knowledge Systems Policy since 2004. The newest version of the Grades 4–9 science curricula invited teachers to integrate IK (Department of Basic Education, DBE, 2011a, 2011b), but hardly any indigenous knowledges are specified in these curricula, nor are they part of the examinations. To date, (South) African teachers lack strategies to put into practice the existing theories and policies. What is therefore needed in addition to theoretical discourse, is (reflection on) practical experience about how the integration of knowledges can (or cannot) work in today's African education systems, thereby creating a foundation also for long-term educational transformation. By exploring some of the practical aspects of knowledge integration, the presented study aims to contribute to the practical level of the knowledge integration project.

Indigenous knowledges are here understood as ways of

> *knowing developed by local/indigenous peoples over generations as a result of sustained occupation of or attachment to a place . . . with the result that such occupancy allows peoples/communities to develop a perfect understanding of the relationship of their communities to their surrounding natural and social environments. (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2006, p. 54)*

I use indigenous knowledges in plural to acknowledge the multitude of indigenous epistemologies. *Western knowledge*, on the other hand, refers to a single albeit diverse knowledge system that "originated in 16th-century Europe and together with industrial capitalism produced a specific kind of knowledge that is embodied in modern science" (Breidlid, 2013, p. 1). What separates indigenous and Western knowledges is not necessarily the knowledge as such—there can be both overlaps and

discrepancies. Rather, the difference can be found in the underlying worldviews or ontologies, and the resulting understandings of what knowledge is and how it is generated.[1]

The main research question was: "How can South African science teachers integrate indigenous and Western knowledges in their teaching?" However, given the many challenges our team identified, the question *if* integration was possible was implicitly asked as well. The questions where not explored in relation to a specific grade, but the focus was on all the grades that my coresearchers taught, namely, Grades 4–12, the actual integration of IK being tried out in Grades 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10.

While I am the sole author of the article and while the reflections in the discussion are mine, the research process and parts of the data analysis were a collaborative endeavour. Therefore, it is my pleasure and duty to acknowledge my coresearchers, Abongile Ludwane, Farasten Mashozhera, Margaret Speckman, Sipho Nuntsu, and Noluthando Mhlekwa. It is their experiences and our collaborative learning that I share in this article. I also make their contributions visible by using the pronoun, "we" whenever reporting on the collaborative aspects of the research.

(DE-)COLONISATION OF THE MIND AND OF EDUCATION

> *I think the black man is subjected to two forces in this county. He is first of all oppressed by an external world through institutionalised machinery, through laws that restrict him from doing certain things, through heavy work conditions, through poor pay, through very difficult living conditions, through poor education, these are all external to him, and secondly, and this we regard as the most important, the black man in himself has developed a certain state of alienation, he rejects himself, precisely because he attaches the meaning white to all that is good, in other words he associates good and he equates good with white. (Biko, 1978/1987, p. 100)*

This article is guided by calls against what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1981/1986) has called the *colonisation of the mind* and what Steve Biko in the above quote described as the second force of oppression. Relatedly, Frantz Fanon (1961/2004; 1951/2008), Aimé Cesaire (1955/2000), and Albert Memmi (1957/1990) have described the dehumanising effects of colonisation as a complete internalisation of the idea that everything connected with the white man and his culture is the desirable norm. With regard to education, this form of colonisation is connected to the truth and universality claims of Western scientific epistemology that imply a subjugation of indigenous knowledges (Breidlid, 2013) as well as equating education with European education (Abdi, 2005). More than two decades after the end of apartheid, African education has been characterised as continuing to be a "victim of a resilient colonial and colonising epistemology, which takes the form of science as ideology and hegemony" (Nyamnjoh, 2016, p. 69).

Many of those who call for the decolonisation of African education today are inspired by the idea of an African Renaissance, which, in turn finds a theoretical framework in the above-mentioned thinkers. Stating that the ideals of the African Renaissance are not new, Odora Hoppers et al. (1999) pointed out the need to acknowledge openly "the unsung heroes like Steve Biko and earlier and simultaneous struggles for African consciousness" (p. 234). The aim then and now was to become aware of, and overcome, intellectual colonisation as well as advancing an agenda of transformation and re-Africanisation (Ntuli, 1999). African indigenous knowledges are seen as foundation to reshape African curricula and education systems, thereby advancing the "cultural and socio-educational transformation of the African continent" (Higgs, 2016, p. 90), creating an African identity (van Wyk &

[1] See Seehawer (2018) for a more elaborate discussion of the differences and similarities of knowledge generation in indigenous and Western epistemologies.

Higgs, 2012), and counteracting colonial influences. Breidlid and Botha (2015) described indigenous knowledges as "a counterhegemonic cultural force to that of colonialism" and, thus, "well-suited to exposing the Eurocentric assumptions inherent in conventional ideas about knowledge making, and formal education, in particular" (p. 319–320).

Biko's Black Consciousness movement was not about anti-whitism, but about enabling equal coexistence of black and white people. Relatedly, the African Renaissance neither calls for an "uncritical romantisation of the past" (Ngara, 2012, p. 134), nor for chasing out the former colonisers or their knowledge. Odora Hoppers et al. (1999, p. 237) declared that "whether we like it or not, we are of two worlds, both Western and African" and "the success of our renaissance will depend on how we position ourselves and reconcile the world views we have inherited." Likewise, Abdi (2005) did not propose a return to pre-colonial education, but a constructive integration of both indigenous and Western knowledges in education. Odora Hoppers (2002) cautioned that such an integration needs to go "beyond finding an aggregate position or middle ground upon which the two knowledge systems will then enter into an ahistorical dialogue" (p. 20). Instead, integration would include "power and knowledge critique and analysis of the hegemony of mainstream knowledges in terms of their silencing effects, paying attention to their nature, potentials, omissions and consequences" (Odora Hoppers, 2002, p. 20).

It is these calls and traditions of thinking that build the intellectual basis both for the content of the study that is discussed below (I will critique the extent to which we managed to follow these ideals) and the methodological approach that I now outline.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

The main approach to data generation in this study was participatory action research (PAR). The rationale for choosing PAR was twofold. First, the need to take serious the critique of so-called Western methodologies as inappropriate for research on indigenous epistemologies, and as causing harm to indigenous peoples and being an inherent part of the colonial endeavour (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999). As an approach where research is done not *on*, but *with* people, PAR has been suggested as compatible with, and sensitive to, indigenous methodologies (Khupe 2014; Kovach, 2009). Second, including steps of reflection, planning, action, and evaluation/reflection, PAR bridges the gap between theory and practice and has the potential to achieve positive change in areas of concern for the people involved in the research. PAR was thus considered an appropriate approach to generating practical knowledge about the integration of indigenous and Western knowledges in the classroom.

Invited Participation and Research Team

The research team was composed mainly through voluntary sampling because the study required teachers with an interest in IK and in coresearching on this subject over a duration of several months. The science teachers from all public primary schools in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape, were invited to participate. Additionally, convenience sampling was used in that my host at Rhodes University invited secondary school science teachers whom he knew through his course lecturing at the university. The resulting research team consisted of three primary and two secondary school teachers, teaching all grades from Grade 4 to the final year. We perceived this breadth as an advantage because it allowed us to explore the integration of IK with different age groups.

My own role in the team was that of an initiator and facilitator of the study. While my coresearchers are South African or Zimbabwean nationals and have lived in the Eastern Cape for many years, I am

European and my longest stay on the Sub-Saharan continent did not exceed six months. Unlike my coresearchers, I am not a teacher but worked as an education adviser in an NGO before reentering academia. There are advantages to an outsider perspective. As coresearcher Margaret remarked, "you come from overseas and stir up people that are so comfortable watching things go wrong [in education]" (personal communication, October 16, 2015). While the careful study of decolonising and indigenous methodologies and ethics has been at the core of the presented study, my academic and epistemological socialisation took place in the Global North. There is a risk is that I too will become part of the "long and bumbled history of non-Indigenous peoples making moves to alleviate the impacts of colonisation" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3). Choosing PAR, employing careful participatory data analysis, and validation were some of the measures taken to counteract this risk. Moreover, my host provided cultural mentorship in terms of appropriate ways of gaining access and consent. For detailed critical reflection on ethics, participation, and the problematics of positionality in this study see Seehawer (2018).

Data Generation, Analysis, and Validity

The main data used in this article stems from 15 workshops of the research team between July and November 2015, and a joint presentation of this research. Additionally, I draw on the reflection notes that I took during the research, notes on personal conversations and semi-structured interviews with my coresearchers. The workshops took place on a weekly basis and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The research evolved as a collaborative learning process with the different stages of the action research cycle informing each other. Initially, only the main research question, "How can science teachers integrate indigenous and Western knowledges in their teaching?" was defined. All other questions and steps taken were developed collaboratively. I recorded the workshops, transcribed the recordings, and summarised the main outcomes of each workshop in a handout. The handouts served as basis for the following workshop as well as a form of validation and collective data analysis. My coresearchers had the chance to confirm, correct, or build on what they had said previously and we engaged in meaning making of, and reflection on, our findings. In addition, we jointly revised our main findings at the end of the research period. Other means of collaborative data validation were copresenting our findings to an interested audience and coauthoring a booklet for other teachers (Seehawer et al., 2015), which created a common narrative of our research journey. In addition to the above mentioned data sources, I observed my coresearchers teaching and conducted semi-structured focus groups with some of their learners. This data is not utilised in this article, but contributes to validity through triangulation. After returning home from the fieldwork, I continued to analyse the data by myself, seeking out my coresearchers' participation from a distance. For example, I sent them all publications resulting from the study, including this article, inviting them to check quotes and provide feedback or input.

The Action Research Process

Our study followed an action research cycle of reflection or mapping the current situation, planning, action, and reflection/evaluation. In the reflection phase (Workshops 1–6), we discussed questions such as "What are indigenous knowledges?" "What is the relevance of IK?" and "Why integrate indigenous and Western knowledge in science education?" We mapped challenges regarding (the teaching of) IK and brainstormed possible solutions. In the planning phase (Workshops 7–12), we discussed different strategies of integrating IK and possible teaching methods. Each teacher planned a lesson or curriculum unit that integrated IK with the regular curriculum content. Action, that is, the teaching of the planned lessons, took place between Workshops 12 and 14, while Workshops 13–15 were devoted to evaluation.

This article focuses on the first two research phases, namely, reflection and planning, although reflections and findings from the latter two phases are included wherever applicable. Aspects of the

latter two research phases, action and evaluation, will be discussed in more detail in a forthcoming publication (Seehawer & Breidlid, 2018). There are findings at each stage of the action research cycle that inform the next phase and make process and findings partly inseparable. For example, planning the lessons was a part of the research process but also an important finding, contributing to answering the question how teachers can integrate IK. I first present and discuss these *process findings*, before situating and discussing the findings in the framework of decolonisation.

RATIONALE: WHY INTEGRATE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES?

The main research question was *how* science teachers can integrate indigenous and Western knowledges. However, this question depends on *why* these knowledges are sought to be integrated. Method and approach might differ depending on whether IK is understood as a tool to facilitate learners' access to "real" science or whether learning IK is regarded as an end in itself. As discussed above, IK integration is here understood as a prerequisite to decolonise and Africanise education. However, my coresearchers requested to discuss the relevance of indigenous knowledges before developing integration strategies, to enable them to "emphasise to learners the importance to know about [IK]" (Noluthando, Workshop 5, May 19, 2015). This is in line with Òtúlàjà, Cameron, and Msimanga (2011) who stressed the importance for teachers to become clear about their own thinking regarding IK to prevent further misuse or devaluation of these knowledges. These are the reasons our team identified, all of which are also discussed in scholarly literature:

- *Decolonisation. To decolonise people's minds and advocate against the perception of IK as inferior (Abdi, 2006; Breidlid & Botha, 2015; Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2006; Dei & Simmons, 2009; Ngara, 2012).*
- *Relevance. Making classroom science more relevant through:*
    - *Teaching knowledge that is relevant for learners' daily lives (Keane & Malcolm, 2003)*
    - *Using IK as a tool to make Western science more accessible, moving from the known to the unknown (Mawere, 2015).*
- *Widening perspectives. To offer alternatives and broaden horizons: There are several options in the world to know or do the same thing in different ways, "two-eyed seeing" (Aikenhead & Elliott, 2010, p. 326).*
- *Sustainable development. To promote local solutions and a healthy, sustainable lifestyle, environmental protection (Breidlid, 2013; Glasson, Mhango, Phiri, & Lanier, 2010).*
- *Cultural identity. To connect learners with their culture and bring back the role of parents, community, and elders into education (Khupe, 2014; Mawere, 2015; Msimanga & Shiza, 2014).*

The teachers' personal motives to integrate indigenous knowledges were visible in the research process. For primary school teacher, Farasten, integrating IK would make science classes relevant to his learners' life realities. His concerns were environmental sustainability and appreciation of nature, and he planned his lessons accordingly. Margaret thought that "the science that we teach" is defined "by people who have never taken the learners' [indigenous] knowledge into consideration," which turns classroom science into "something being imposed on them to a certain extent" (Workshop 4, August 12, 2015). Relatedly, Sipho integrated IK to build on his learners' prior [indigenous] knowledge,

his strategy for making the science class "very attractive" for his Grade 6 learners (personal communication, October 20, 2015). High school teacher, Abongile, was interested in localising the curriculum, wishing her learners to value what is "in their own backyards," instead of associating "good things" only with "developed" urban areas such as Johannesburg or Cape Town (research presentation, November 11, 2015). Noluthando wanted to enable her Grade 10 learners to use indigenous practices to clean "dam or river water. So even if they don't use this water for consumption, [learners can use it] maybe for washing purposes." This would be helpful "in terms of our water scarcity, because that dam doesn't go dry and it's there in the location [where the learners live]" (Workshop 14, November 4, 2015). She let her learners apply both indigenous and chemical cleaning processes and had them test the water samples afterwards, to compare the results. Thus, in my coresearchers' case, IK integration mainly evolved around aspects of recognising and engaging learners' lived realities and their indigenous knowledges, a motivation to decolonise and localise the curriculum, and developing local, sustainable solutions.

Building on Òtúlàjà et al. (2011), I propose that becoming aware of one's own motivation is a useful foundation at the start of the planning process because it gave the teachers ownership over their teaching of IK. I argue that all of the reasons listed above can contribute to the overarching aim of decolonising education, because all of them emphasised different nuances of IK. Understanding IK as a tool to make Western science more accessible might be problematic in this regard because it could insinuate the continuation of skewed power relations between Western and indigenous knowledges. However, in the understanding of African Renaissance outlined above, decolonisation does not mean throwing overboard Western knowledge. While African indigenous epistemologies are at the heart of the Renaissance project, the aim is a constructive integration of different epistemologies in education. Thus, unless IK is perceived as a means to an end only, there is no problem with drawing on IK to help learners understand Western science. What is important, however, is an awareness of our aims when teaching IK (or any knowledge for that matter). Integrating IK just for the sake of integration (as an unspecified policy and curriculum requirement) becomes a meaningless technical exercise.

WHAT HINDERS TEACHERS TO INTEGRATE IK? IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Another aspect my coresearchers wished to discuss in the reflection phase, and which they frequently returned to, were the challenges regarding (the teaching of) indigenous knowledges. This is unsurprising, given the seemingly impossible task: how can teachers be expected to integrate IK, if teacher education does not prepare them to do so, if there are no teaching recourses available, if indigenous knowledges are hardly specified in the curriculum and if teachers do not necessarily have IK themselves?! The challenges that my coresearchers identified were of both practical and ideological nature. Finding solutions was an ongoing process that did not only contribute to answering the question, how teachers can integrate IK, but also whether it was possible at all. I am neither suggesting that there are no other challenges nor that ours were the best solutions, but wish to offer our team's experience as a basis for further exploration and debate.

Another explanation for why our discussions frequently returned to the challenges regarding indigenous knowledges might be found in the notion of intellectual colonisation outlined above, which neatly conforms to the common perception of indigenous knowledges as inferior knowledges pointed out by my coresearchers. For example, "When you go to an herbalist, you feel you go to a lesser qualified medical practitioner," Abongile explained (Workshop 4, August 12, 2015). Indeed, the internalised idea of indigenous knowledges as inferior permeates all challenges discussed in the following. Below, I will argue that while working on overcoming challenges that prevented the integration of IK and thereby aiming to contribute to decolonising education on a practical level, a process of theoretical or intellectual decolonisation took place among our research team.

Challenge 1: Curriculum and Structure of Education System Make It Hard to Integrate IK

- *Hardly any (guidance on) IK in the science curriculum*
- *Teachers are under pressure to teach to the test*

The most recent South African curriculum lists "valuing indigenous knowledge systems" as one of seven principles of the education system (DBE, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, p. 5). This could be read as an acknowledgement of the African Renaissance's decolonisation calls. However, it is unclear how this principle actually features in education. The Grades 4–9 science curricula contain a statement about teachers having "the freedom to expand concepts and to design and organise learning experiences according to their own local circumstances" by selecting examples of IK that "reflect different South African cultural groupings" (DBE, 2011a, p. 14; 2011b, p. 16). The taught IK must not depart from the curriculum, but should "link directly to specific content" (DBE, 2011a, p. 14; 2011b, p. 16). The Grades 10–12 science curriculum mentions that "all scientific and technological knowledge, including Indigenous Knowledge Systems . . . is used to address challenges facing society," whereby some indigenous concepts "lend themselves to explanations using the scientific methods while other concepts do not; this is still knowledge however" (DBE, 2011c, p. 8). The curriculum thus opens up for different epistemologies, but there is no specification about how these should be integrated. In all grades, the science curricula contain few, if any, explicit mentions of IK. Thus, as Sipho repeatedly remarked, the integration of IK is up to the teacher's creativity, which is possibly an advantage for some, but certainly a challenge for many in a hectic everyday teaching life. Time to cover the curriculum is scarce because teachers are under constant pressure to prepare their learners for the examinations that terminate each of the four terms of the school year and that do not comprise IK.

Thus, what we needed was a strategy that enabled the integration of indigenous knowledges without IK necessarily being mentioned in the curriculum, without departing from the curriculum, and without losing teaching time. This proved easier than my coresearchers expected. "The topics we are teaching are Western science. The designers of the curriculum are Western oriented. IK was never considered," Farasten elaborated, indirectly referring to the colonial subjugation of indigenous knowledges, "so you find that for some topics it is difficult to integrate IK. Sometimes, when I am teaching electricity or photosynthesis, I really ask myself, which IK can I integrate to make this relevant [for my learners' lived realities]?" (Workshop 4, August 12, 2015). Nevertheless, my coresearchers did not have difficulties to identify topics in the curriculum that invited the integration of IK. I will elaborate our approach below.

Challenge 2: Lack of (Access to) Indigenous Knowledges

- *There are no generally available teaching materials*
- *Teachers do not have (the right) IK*
- *Learners have different IK, which should we teach?*

Abongile, a young science teacher in her first year of teaching, grew up in an urban township without IK being part of her upbringing. She wondered "how teachers, from the upcoming generation like myself with so limited IK, can teach and advocate for indigenous knowledges?" (Workshop 4, August 12, 2015). Efforts to document and make available relevant IK for teachers are "still in its very formative stages" (Msimanga & Shiza, 2014, p. 143) and to date, science teachers receive "Western education [a] type of education that regards IK as inferior" (Farasten, Workshop 4, August 12, 2015). Some teachers, such as my coresearchers Sipho and Margaret, have much IK—because of personal interest or growing up in families in which indigenous knowledges were valued and passed on. Others, such as Abongile, do not. Farasten's IK stems from his home country, Zimbabwe, and might differ from Eastern

Cape IK. Moreover, South African classrooms are multicultural. Many teachers may find themselves in Abongile's situation—Xhosa, Shona, and Zulu learners in the same classroom, all of them entering school with different backgrounds and different IK. Whose IK should Abongile teach these learners? As stated above, the curriculum suggests including IK examples from different South African cultural groupings. But to do so, even Sipho's or Margaret's rich indigenous knowledge would not have been sufficient.

Inspired by previous research, we compiled strategies that neither require teachers to have the actual IK themselves nor to rely on textbooks and teaching resources:

- *Give an assignment to the learners to inquire about specific indigenous knowledges or practices with their families and communities. Discuss the knowledge in class (Keane, 2006; Khupe, 2014; Schabort, 2011).*
- *Collaborate with IK holders such as community elders, herbalists, or traditional healers. Possibly invite them to the classroom (Hewson et al., 2009).*
- *Take the learners to places (e.g., nature, museum) where they can learn about indigenous knowledges (Cocks, Alexander, & Dold, 2012; Khupe 2014).*

An important realisation was that if we do not have IK ourselves, we could use the learners' families and communities or other knowledgeable persons as resources—a measure that supports the idea of bringing back community into education. From the teacher, it requires a willingness to give up the monopoly on knowledge and, rather, to assume the role of a facilitator of classroom discussion. This is in line with Odora Hopper's (2002) suggestion that integration should be critical engagement that also addresses power imbalances between epistemologies. Naturally, the level of discussion and reflection will vary according to the age of the learners, but our experience showed that, already, Grade 6 learners could discuss the advantages and disadvantages of indigenous and Western sun protection practices, which might be a start of such critical engagement.

My coresearchers chose to focus on the first of the above strategies. Except in one case where Grade 7 learners had not done their homework, arguing they had no one at home to inquire with, this strategy worked well with all involved age groups. For example, Farasten sent his Grade 5 learners to "find out from home the various uses of soils" and was impressed by the breadth of examples they reported in class: "I was so surprised when they were presenting, really, you could write a good thesis on that!" (research presentation, November 11, 2015). Similarly, Noluthando's Grade 10 learners, who had been asked to inquire about water purification practices, presented a large variety of suggestions. This strategy ensures the integration of IK of all cultural groupings present in the classroom, which links to the aims of building a bridge between school science and home knowledge and making science teaching relevant to learners' daily lives. It does not, however, include examples from cultures that are not present, which is what the curriculum suggests. Here again, the question is with what aim IK should be included and to choose a strategy accordingly. Not all of the learners' examples were IK. When asked about different ways of protecting against the sun, Sipho's students talked about sunscreen as well applying a paste mixed from water and clay soil to the skin. We did not regard this as problematic given that the aim was not to integrate pure IK, but to be inclusive of all knowledges the learners brought to class. In Sipho's case, he put the epistemologically different sun protection practices in context for his learners.

Challenge 3: A Clash Between Christianity and the Spiritual Aspects of IK?

Abongile's interest in indigenous knowledges had motivated her to participate in our study. However, as a faithful Born-Again Christian, she was concerned about the common perception of IK being "somehow connected to the spiritual site of life" and feared that persons engaging with IK might be regarded as "less of a Christian" (Workshop 4, December 8, 2015).

Indeed, some South African churches discourage the use of indigenous knowledges and practices, whereas others embrace them as a part of culture. Scholars take different standpoints regarding the role of spirituality in Southern African IK.[2] For example, Òtúlàjà et al. (2011) emphasised that "only some aspects of IK are spiritually rooted while . . . perhaps the largest part, has to do with the science of day-to-day experience" (p. 698). Others such as Breidlid (2013) or Msimanga and Shiza (2014) regard spirituality as a central aspect of IK. According to Breidlid (2013), spirituality differentiates IK from Western epistemology, the latter based on the Cartesian divide that separates spirituality and knowledge.

Given these different standpoints, here more than for the other challenges, an individual rather than a general solution was viable. For my other four coresearchers, all of whom are avowed Christians, using IK did not conflict with their religion. Margaret elaborated: "I feel that God has given us the freedom to use everything he has created and has put on earth for us. There is only a misunderstanding when we undermine Him as our creator" (Workshop 6, August 26, 2015) She said the problem was not utilising herbs for healing purposes, but that the same plants could be misused for witchcraft; a temptation that, as Farasten pointed out, would affect "people with a weak faith, " but not "the mature Christian" (Workshop 13, October 28, 2015). With three of my coresearchers being Seventh-day Adventists, we consulted with an Adventist pastor. He did not see anything wrong with the use of herbs either, but found it decisive to whom the healing process was attributed: whether to the ancestors or to God who speaks through the herbs (personal communication, August 2015). Abongile explained that her coresearchers' and the pastor's clarifications dispelled her concerns.

PLANNING THE INTEGRATION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES

Building on our learnings from the reflection phase of the study, we planned the integration of indigenous and Western knowledges in the following steps:

Choosing a Suitable Curriculum Unit

As elaborated above, we required a strategy that allowed the integration of IK without losing teaching time or departing from the curriculum. Pressure on my coresearchers was even higher because the school year had proceeded to the final term, which is dominated by the annual examinations starting around a month into the term. We thus decided that the lessons had to be held during the first two weeks of the term. This narrowed down the choice of curriculum topics for the integration of IK considerably. With the exception of the Grade 7 curriculum, none of the Grades 4–12 science curricula contains IK in Term 4. Nevertheless, all five coresearchers identified suitable topics for five different grades without difficulty. For example, with her Grade 10 class, Noluthando had to cover the Chemistry of the Hydrosphere (DBE, 2011c, p. 60). She thought this topic invited the integration of IK because learners have to study the ecology of rivers and learn about water purification. Abongile found Mining of Mineral Resources in Grade 9 (DBE, 2011b, p. 80) a suitable subject because she could integrate IK

[2] The debate is ongoing; for example, at the 3rd conference of the African Association for the Study of Indigenous Knoweldge Systems (AASIKS) at the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) in November 2017.

about limestone mining in Grahamstown, focusing on the local anchorage of her topic (personal communication, October 2, 2015).

Reflecting on What Kind of IK to Integrate Into the Chosen Topic

Apart from the mentioned exception of Grade 7, the chosen curriculum topics did not include IK in the set syllabus, which left the decision of which IK to integrate to us. As my coresearchers did not necessarily have IK on the chosen topic, our approach was to decide what the integrated IK should be about rather than listing specific knowledge. For example, in her lesson plan, Noluthando noted that she would integrate IK on water purification but did not determine specific indigenous water purification methods. This strategy gave learners the chance to contribute with all practices they gathered from their families rather than limiting their participation, while it enabled Noluthando to integrate IK without having to be aware of all indigenous water purification methods. She just needed to assume that IK about water purification existed.

Identifying the Purpose of Integrating IK in the Respective Lesson: The Possible Benefits Learners Should Gain From the Lesson

I argued above for the importance of being clear about one's motivation to integrate IK to avoid turning it into a technical exercise. Thus, in this step of planning, the teachers reflected on what they wished the learners to take away from the lessons. In other words, we answered the why-question for each respective curriculum unit and did so by choosing from the list of reasons we had generated earlier (see above).[3] For example, in his lesson on sun protection, Sipho aimed to connect his Grade 6 learners with their culture and bring back the role of parents, community, and elders into education. Moreover, he wished to broaden his learners' perspectives by discussing both indigenous and Western sun protection measures. He said integrating knowledges would give learners "a wide knowledge. They must not only concentrate on the Western knowledge, they can also know: oh, in the years before, people were using these practices. Even today, they can choose which way to go" (Workshop 11, September 30, 2015). Finally, Sipho thought that including indigenous practices from learner's everyday lives would build a bridge between home knowledge and classroom science and make his teaching more relevant for his learners.

Choosing Suitable Teaching and Learning Methods

Shava, O'Donoghue, and Ngcoza (2015) suggested a number of strategies for the teaching and learning of indigenous knowledges and kindly permitted our team to pilot them. The methods take into account that IK "is about holistic, context-based, integrated people-environment interrelationships" and can, therefore, best be acquired in "practice-oriented" activities (p. 28).

- *Observations: Many indigenous practices are embedded in everyday practices and can be learned through observation or,*
- *through participating in these activities, namely, experiential learning/learning by doing.*
- *Investigations: About indigenous practices with the learners' communities.*
- *Deliberations: Classroom discussions on (particular aspects of) IK can reveal the wealth of IK and be a process of "learning from each other" (p. 27).*

[3] The same list of aims also served as evaluation criteria in the last research phase.

- *Storytelling: As a traditional way of passing on IK can also be practised in the classroom.*

These teaching methods harmonised with the above list of IK integration strategies we had compiled, especially, as Shava et al. (2015) suggested inviting elders or other IK holders to the classroom to share their knowledge or demonstrate indigenous practices. My coresearchers mostly chose investigations in combination with classroom discussions about the inquired knowledge.

Examples of Lessons or Curriculum Units

Below, in Tables 1 and 2, are two examples of how we planned the lessons or curriculum units. The upper part of each table (underlined grey) is copied from the respective science curricula without changes. The bottom part indicates the indigenous knowledges that the teacher aimed to integrate with the given curriculum content, the teaching methods, the hoped benefits for the learners, and the mode of integration, that is, a specification of how the teacher planned to integrate IK and curriculum knowledge in the lessons. The reason for dividing the table between curriculum content and IK was not to present the two knowledges as necessarily separate or oppositional, but to ensure that the curriculum was followed—which was important to my coresearchers. “I must make sure that whatever indigenous knowledge I bring in, it’s in line with what the curriculum requires me to teach,” Farasten said (Workshop 10, September 23, 2015). As mentioned above, time is scarce to cover the obligatory content and it is an official requirement that IK must be directly linked to specific curriculum content. Our tables thus aimed to make transparent both that the curriculum was followed and that curricular and indigenous knowledge matched and complemented each other.

Table 1: Lesson plan, Grade 5, Term 4

Grade 5 – Term 4 – The Surface of the Earth – 2 ½ weeks (8 ¾ hours)	
Information from CAPS	
CONTENT & CONCEPTS **Rocks** • the surface of the Earth is called crust, and consists of rocks (even under the oceans), and soil • soil, air, water and sunlight support life on Earth Soil comes from rocks • the land is made up of rocks, subsoil and top soil • soil supports life on Earth • top soil lies on the surface -- top soil is formed when rocks break into small grains over time **Soil types** • soil is usually a mixture of different types of soil grains in different proportions -- sandy soil – has a high proportion of course sand grains -- clayey soil – has a high proportion of fine grains of clay -- loamy soil – has a mixture of sand, clay and other soil grains. Loamy soil also contains humus (decomposed compost) • the soil also has air, water, remains of dead organisms and very small living organisms in it • soil forms very slowly in nature – once topsoil is lost, it cannot be replaced, and thus we need to conserve it	**Suggested activities** • Investigating – different soil types - writing and drawing about the colour, smell and texture of the soil - measuring and recording on a table how much water different soils can hold - using the results to draw bar graphs and / or Investigating – growing seedlings in different soil types (Integrating with Life & Living) - measuring, recording and comparing the heights of the seedlings - using the results to draw bar graphs [This can be used as a possible project]
Indigenous Knowledges to integrate: • how to make soil fertile (before there was fertilizer); • What to plant into which soil and how, fruit sequencing; • Other IK about soil (e.g. indigenous usages of soil such as for sun protection or paint of houses) **Activities & teaching strategies:** • **Investigations** at homes, with communities, elder people to access local/indigenous knowledge; • **Classroom discussion** of the knowledge the learners brought (relating this knowledge to the scientific experiments and observations that the learners make in the classroom, e.g. planting a bean in different soils, etc. See Caps above); discussing indigenous vs chemical ways of fertilizing soil	**Mode of integration:** IK will be integrated with Western science in all the lesson, to show that the knowledge can complement each other and that there is no contradiction between the knowledge **Possible benefit for the learners:** • Making use of, and valuing, locally available resources (soil and crops that grow at home) • Making learning more relevant and directly applicable to learners' daily lives • Building a bridge between classroom science and "home knowledge" (discovering the science in the local knowledge) • Bringing parents and community back into education • Offering alternatives to Western knowledge (e.g. how to make soil fertile)

Grade 10 – Term 4 – The hydrosphere (Its composition and interaction with other global systems). **8 hours**			
Information from CAPS			
Content, Concepts & Skills	**Practical Activities**	**Resource material**	**Guidelines for Teachers**
The hydrosphere consists of the earth's water. It is found as liquid water (both surface and underground), ice (polar ice, icebergs, and ice in frozen soil layers called permafrost), and water vapour in the atmosphere.			The focus of this section should not be the chemical equations or any rote learning, but should encourage application, interpretation, and environmental impact.
- Identify the hydrosphere and give an overview of its interaction with the atmosphere, the lithosphere and the biosphere. Water moves through: air (atmosphere) rocks and soil (lithosphere) plants and animals biosphere) dissolving and depositing, cooling and warming - Explain how the building of dams affect the lives of the people and the ecology in the region	Study the ecology of the dams built to provide water for communities. For this activity learners will have to rely on interviews with the people who have lived in the area under investigation for many years or rely on literature about their areas -Study the ecology of rivers in your area - Study the ecology of the dams built to provide water for communities Investigate how the building of dams has changed the ecology of rivers and the livelihood of people in the areas around them by applying the science you learnt this year	Use TETRA-test strips to test for water (buy from pet shop for fish tanks). Silver nitrate, microscope or magnifying glass, filter paper and funnel.	The hydrosphere is not a global cycle. The emphasis should be on the CHEMISTRY of the hydrosphere. This topic can be given as a **project** to save teaching time.

Indigenous Knowledges to integrate:

- indigenous methods of water purification and protection of the environment (i.e. how did/do people protect water where there were/are no tabs)

Activities & teaching strategies:

- **Investigation** at homes, with communities, elder people to access local/indigenous knowledges;
- **Classroom discussion**: of the knowledge that the learners brought to class; linking and comparing it with classroom science ➔ "interaction" between IK and scientific knowledge; discussing indigenous/traditional vs. scientific methods of water purification: what are advantages and disadvantages (e.g. in terms of environmental protection)

Mode of integration:
Continuous integration from one lesson to the other

Possible benefit for the learners:

- Practical applicability of knowledge (i.e. water purification when technology is not available)
- Environmental awareness
- Awareness that there are different knowledges/different ways of doing things which each have advantages and disadvantages
- Open-mindedness

DE-COMPLICATING AND RE-COMPLICATING KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION

Integrating Indigenous Knowledges Is Easy—for Decolonised Minds

After spending much time discussing the challenges that seemingly precluded integrating indigenous knowledges, doing it was surprisingly easy. Reviewing these challenges at the end of the research period, we realised that none of them had proven to be a serious obstacle. Besides developing practical strategies, the most important prerequisite to enable knowledge integration may have been a process of overcoming an internalised idea of IK (integration) as necessarily problematic or difficult. In contrast to tangible integration strategies, this process, which I argue was a process of learning, empowerment, and intellectual decolonisation, happened inwardly. It is, therefore, hard to capture in explicit statements but might best be visible through the team's gradual shift away from connecting indigenous knowledges with challenge. Instead, there were realisations such as that despite its Western nature it was easy to identify suitable topics in the curriculum, or that it was possible use learners' families as resources if the teacher lacked IK. The focus shifted to constructive planning and, eventually, teaching of lessons. Some of the challenges my coresearchers had identified initially, such as the problem of some IK being threatened by extinction, caused amusement during the evaluation phase. Not, because this should not to be taken seriously, but because of having recognised teachers' agency to counteract this problem through their own teaching: "I think that is the main reason why we are here," Farasten remarked, "for empowerment. We search for information, we implement, we share, so that we as educators become recourse persons" (Workshop 13, October 28, 2015). Fanon (2004) wrote about intellectual decolonisation that the stage of assimilation to the coloniser's culture is followed by a process of awakening, in which the colonised's "conviction is shaken" (p. 159) and, finally, a combat stage: "Instead of letting the peoples' lethargy prevail," the formerly colonised intellectual will turn "into a galvanizer of the people" (p. 159). Some of this activism, I argue, is noticeable in Farasten's above statement and in Margaret's repeated wish to raise awareness about "the fact that the curriculum designers don't mention indigenous knowledge" and argue for its integration, for example by having the local newspaper report on our research or publishing "something together as a team" (Workshop 8, September 9, 2015).

The final step of the knowledge integration project, the actual integration of indigenous and Western knowledges in the classroom, might not typically be perceived as the task of academics but, rather, as the responsibility of policy makers, education authorities, and teachers. However, I argue that academia and research have an important role to play not just at the theoretical levels of knowledge integration project, but on the very practical levels as well. Through collaborating and coresearching with teachers, learners, parents, communities, elders, traditional healers, teacher educators, or local authorities, integration strategies can be explored and solutions to challenges be developed. For example, Schabort (2011) worked together with a science teacher in KwaZulu-Natal to implement a curriculum unit on HIV/AIDS that integrated local and scientific knowledge. The Inkcubeko Nendalo project took urban Eastern Cape learners on forest excursions and provided classroom lessons on biodiversity IK (Cocks et al., 2012). In the Science and Indigenous Knowledge Systems Project (SIKSP), Western Cape science and mathematics teachers participated in argumentation workshops aiming to equip them to integrate IK (Hewson & Ogunniyi, 2011; Nhalevilo & Ogunniyi, 2014). Nkopodi and Mosimege (2009) found that the popular indigenous children's game of *morabaraba* can be used in the classroom to promote the learning of mathematics. Alternative to initiating own projects, researchers can discuss and theorise existing IK integration projects, thereby making them more widely available to relevant audiences, and provide examples to learn from (e.g., Burford, Kissmann, Rosado-May, Dzul, & Harder, 2012; Klein, 2011). Lastly, academics can continue to advocate with policy makers to make IK a more visible pillar of (South) African education. Thereby, studies like the above-mentioned can serve as policy input or examples of how to operationalise the existing policies.

What the reviewed studies—ours hoping to be one of them—have in common, is a constructive approach to knowledge integration that focuses on practical exploration, rather than on deficit discourses. They show that an integration of IK and Western knowledge in education is possible and appreciated by the learners and that different stakeholders such as teachers and traditional healers are willing to engage in (hitherto unusual) partnerships to make this happen. With regard to decolonisation, these studies can contribute to overcoming internalised notions of IK being inferior and pave the way to the critical engagement with different epistemologies within education that proponents of the African Renaissance are calling for.

Integrating Indigenous Knowledges Remains Difficult

On another level, knowledge integration is highly complex with many unanswered questions attached to it. As argued at the outset, the theoretical debates of the multilayered knowledge integration project need to be continued. If decolonisation and Africanisation of education are to be taken seriously, knowledge integration must go beyond integrating indigenous content knowledge as was piloted in our study and address the general structure and physical setting of education. Contributing to these debates exceeds the purpose of the present article, but based on our research experience I raise some questions that require further reflection and exploration. For example, is the classroom the right arena to teach IK? Pre-colonial African education has been characterised as informal, situated, orally transmitted, or practical learning (Abdi, 2005; Ocitti, 1994), whereas school as a formal institution was introduced by missionaries and colonisers. While African Renaissance is not about returning to pre-colonial times, the question is whether the formal classroom as a Western setup is the right space to learn indigenous knowledges. “When you are learning about soil, it’s an outdoor lesson,” Farasten said, “so I went outside [with the learners], I went to the garden. . . . It doesn’t really work well to conceptualise this inside the classroom” (Workshop 14, November 4, 2015). The question of suitable teaching methods was part of our study but needs further exploration together with the question whether written exams are appropriate to test knowledge that is traditionally transmitted orally or acquired through practical activity. Further, there might be a clash between the holistic nature of IK, versus compartmentalised school subjects, that became visible in some of our pilot lessons.

KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION AS BOTTOM UP-DECOLONISATION

With regard to decolonisation, the shortcomings of the presented study are obvious. We integrated African indigenous knowledges into a Western curriculum, into Western subjects that were being taught within a Western-type setting. Thus, my self-critique is that IK can still be regarded as other(ed) epistemologies that we integrated into an imposed norm. On the other hand, the question is whether it makes sense to wait for substantial changes in the education system before starting to integrate indigenous knowledges. In the case of South Africa, the postapartheid era has seen several education reforms, all of which brought some change, but none of which adequately addressed the decolonisation of the education system. Despite acknowledging indigenous knowledges as one of seven principles of education, IK has, to date, remained a mostly rhetoric add-on that leaves teachers wondering about how to proceed. Therefore, while advocacy and lobbying with policy makers and politicians remain central, this article calls on the agency of teachers, parents, students, community elders, teacher educators, traditional healers, and academics. Rather than waiting for top-down changes in the education system, it might be more realistic and promising to implement the bottom-up changes that these individuals and groups are able to do—which is what I mean by *bottom-up decolonisation*. In the words of Farasten:

> *The groundwork, you know, it's starting with us, the teachers. Are we convinced of the importance of indigenous knowledge? The universities where teachers are trained, are they convinced? If they are, what are they doing about it? Are we talking of something, which is going to take hundreds of years to become a reality? But even if it does, it must have a beginning somewhere. Remember, I was saying if we don't have [indigenous] knowledge, we should search for this knowledge, so that we have it, we own it. Then we apply it in our context. It's important. Otherwise, if we say let's have an [indigenous] curriculum, it's going to take years; maybe it won't happen. So it's something personalised, starting with me, the teacher. The learners whom we are going to promote, they must have this mind-set that indigenous knowledge is important, so when they come into university with this mind-set, maybe something will happen.*[4] *(Workshop 5, August 19, 2015)*

Teachers, parents, students, elders, traditional healers, and academics cannot change the education system from the top, but they can initiate decolonisation bottom-up. For example, teachers can integrate IK into their teaching, inspire colleagues to do so too, and nurture an interest among their learners. Student teachers can write their theses on IK, academics can initiate and research integration projects, teacher educators can make IK a part of teacher training. All of this is happening already in a small way, one example of which is my host's collaboration with a Xhosa elder who teaches science students at Rhodes University about the making of the traditional beer, *umqombothi* (Ngcoza, 2018). It is this kind of bottom-up example that mainstream educational discourses could learn from.

Two things are necessary: firstly, de-complicating IK integration and creating an empowering discourse that focuses on what teachers, teacher educators, and others can do, rather than on what they cannot do—in short, bottom-up decolonisation. Second, re-complicating the debates by taking seriously the unsolved questions on knowledge integration and decolonisation. Indigenous knowledges are about survival, identity, and flourishing of the people holding these knowledges, the practical nature of IK calling for a hands-on learning-by-doing approach. Indigenous survival, identity, and flourishing in present day African education systems might require adopting a bottom-up approach to decolonisation—while continuing to advocate for top-down changes.

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[4] With Farasten's permission, I have shortened his originally longer statement, making sure to maintain his own words.

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Book Report

See *Educational Research for Social Change* (ERSC) Volume 6 (1), April 2017 pp. 87-92 for a review of the following edited book relevant to this special issue:

Africanising the Curriculum: Indigenous Perspectives and Theories by Vuyisile Msila and Mishack T. Gumbo (Editors).
Stellenbosch, South Africa: SUN MeDIA, 2016.
ISBN: 978-0-992236-07-6 (paperback)
Review by Michael Anthony Samuel, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

http://ersc.nmmu.ac.za/articles/ERSC_April_2017_Samual_Book_Report_Vol_6_No_1_pp87-92.pdf

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Conference Report

Education in an Era of Decolonisation and Transformation
SAERA Conference
23–26 October, 2017
Boardwalk Conference Centre, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

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Introduction

The South African Education Research Association (SAERA) 2017 Conference was held at Boardwalk Conference Centre, Port Elizabeth, from Monday, 23 October to Thursday, 26 October 2017.

Conference Theme: Education in an Era of Decolonisation and Transformation

The theme called for the exploration of ways of decolonising and transforming higher education in South Africa. It provided the conference delegates the space to discuss how the university structures, epistemologies, knowledge systems, and curriculum can be interrogated to ensure the elimination of intellectual domination in the teaching, learning, knowledge acquisition, and research. The conference engaged with the following concerns: teaching, learning, research and engagement in educational contexts; education for all; voice of the voiceless; resistance, re-envisioning and renewal; pathways to decolonisation; and decolonising research in education. It had 276 paper presentations, 35 panel sessions, eight special interest group (SIG) presentations, and nine posters. The conference themes were:

- Leadership and learners' voice development.
- Reading as learning in the intermediate phase.
- Promoting science and mathematics learning in early years through activity centres.
- An exploration of leadership development in a learner representative structure in a secondary school, Oshana region, Namibia.
- Our stories: Issues affecting rural secondary school learners in the Eastern Cape.

- The impact of teacher professional conduct on learner experiences and performance in poor school communities in South Africa.
- This is how you take a selfie: The digitised stories of two Grade 3 Soweto boys.
- Strategies used by stakeholders to manage contemporary dynamic socio-educational issues in secondary school.
- Perceptions about small business development support in rural Eastern Cape.

Keynote Speakers

There were three keynote speakers drawn from three different areas of academic specialisation. The keynote speeches were of high quality.

Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni

The opening keynote speech was delivered by Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Head of the Archie Mafeje Research Institute at UNISA. He underscored the significance of decolonising the being, knowledge, and power against the dominating legacy of Westernisation and Eurocentrism. He advocated for education that challenges the students to think outside the box of colonial domination. Students have to be empowered to fight all forms of injustice (social, economic, historical, intellectual) and inhumanity brought by colonialism. He argued that people would be able to think and imagine possible worlds and knowledges only when they understood their subjectivity. In this regard, he emphasised: "I think from where I am."

Linda Tuhiwai Smith

Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Professor of Education and Māori Development, Pro-Vice Chancellor Māori, explained how research can either colonise or decolonise people. She further illustrated how indigenous researchers can design projects of dignity and equity through her Māori project. Her speech reminded the conference delegates to incessantly embark on research ethically at all the various stages—bearing in mind that their positionality as researchers impacts the participants in the project either positively or negatively.

João Paraskeva

João Paraskeva, Director Centre for Portuguese Studies and Culture & Professor of Educational Leadership, University of Massachusetts, advocated for a socially just curriculum, free from Western knowledge domination—a curriculum that does not privilege Western knowledge and silence or overlook other forms of knowledge.

Impressions of Some Paper Presentations

Most of the sessions that I managed to attend were very interesting and interactive. The presenters received good feedback. Some of the interesting debates that I listened to highlighted the difficulties of decolonising education when people still maintain a Westernisation/Eurocentric understanding of education.

Some conference presenters suggested that all universities have to decolonise their academic curriculum and ensure that the epistemology of the universities' programmes reflect the African context. Another presenter outlined the need for a decolonised curriculum that advocates for social

justice and addresses the epistemic violence of colonial knowledge and colonial thought. One presenter highlighted the need to distinguish Africanising and decolonising literature.

Some of the participants, during their presentations, contended that to ensure decolonisation of research methodologies, research must be rooted in the indigenous people's perspectives, cultural values, and languages. Furthermore, some highlighted the significance of researchers to interrupt the colonial forms of research by actively engaging the Africans in research—accommodating their thoughts and experiences.

Organisation

XL Millennium Conference & Event Management's organisation of the 2017 conference was superb. They sourced alternative accommodation for conference delegates that was slightly cheaper than the Boardwalk Hotel, venue of the conference. They also organised shuttle services for the conference delegates from the airport to their hotels or lodges. I personally experienced the efficient services of the shuttle company. The 6:00 a.m. plane that I was supposed to board was overbooked, meaning that I had to wait for the 10:00 a.m. flight. The shuttle services department called me to enquire my whereabouts. Furthermore, XL Millennium arranged with the management of the various hotels and lodges further away from the conference venue to provide conference attendees with shuttles to ferry them to the conference venue in the morning and back to their places of abode in the evening. This was very convenient for the delegates because it enabled them to attend evening events.

Food

The conference provided dinner for the three evenings unlike the previous SAERA conferences (which only provided the gala dinner). This was exceptionally good. I felt this accommodated, especially, the students and others who were not funded by their institutions. I hope this will be done in future SAERA conferences.

Entertainment

The entertainment was good. The young traditional dancers were very confident and displayed great zeal and interest in their songs and dance.

Areas for Reconsideration

I felt the second and third keynote speakers were not given enough time to attend to participants' questions. I also felt the Skyped keynote speeches would have had more impact had the speakers been physically present. This would have afforded more time for engagement with the participants during the course of the conference.

It was noted with great concern by some conference delegates that a few of the papers presented had nothing to do with decolonisation. One presenter was asked to explain how her presentation linked to the theme of the conference and she could not explain. During, one of the tea breaks, some colleagues expressed their dismay over the abstract selection process. They indicated that the abstract selection committee should not simply accept abstracts to get more conference attendees and money, but should embark on rigorous selection to promote quality.

Whilst it is the norm that participants may choose the sessions they want to attend, and to move from one session to another, it should not be overlooked that this practice may disadvantage some—

especially the novice presenters. In some sessions, after a renowned presenter from a university had presented, all the colleagues from that university would leave the room. In a few extreme cases, only the session chair and remaining presenters remained. One such presenter indicated that he was not sure whether it would be worthwhile to attend future conferences because he was always unfortunate in that his presentations were scheduled after 4:00 p.m., when people do not attend.

As a possible solution, all presenters in a session should be encouraged to remain in the room for the duration of the entire session and learn from each other. As well, if possible, a free afternoon could be scheduled on the conference programme to enable people to tour the city or nearby areas of the conference venue to minimise the number of so-called “graveyard sessions” in the afternoons.

Above all, the conference was a good space for networking and learning from others.