

Not Yet Uhuru!
Attuning to, Re-imagining and Regenerating
Transgressive Decolonial Pedagogical Praxis
Across Times

Khapa(ring) the Rising Cultures
of Change Drivers in
Contemporary South Africa

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by

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Abstract

The “Not yet Uhuru!” project positions itself as emancipatory African research in motion. It is a regenerative project that responds to the concern that whilst dominant discourses can articulate what African states, societies and economies *are not*, we still know very little about what they actually *are*. This is a particularly important gap in how research on Africa is conceptualised, especially as it pertains to apprehending the futures that the majority of young people on the continent are instinctively leading themselves to (Mbembe, 2001, p.9). The project seeks to forgo youth development strategies that act as a form of containment by prescribing normative aspects of citizenship on young leaders in ways that stifle the transgressive impulses they have reason to value (Kelley in Tuck and Yang, 2014, p.89). The study traces rising cultures in transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis across times, as a way of “khapa(ring)” or accompanying the contemporary questions that Change Drivers in South Africa hold at the edge of their praxis.

The study co-conspired with 21 Change Drivers in South Africa who were interested in regenerating and re-imagining what transgressive decolonial praxis could be in these times based on their experiences and learnings. Residential art-based workshops that explored each co-conspirator’s offerings on the subject were distilled through the medium of film. These in turn were analysed using an “ethics of attunement” that produced songs as a reflexive pedagogical tool (Lispari, 2014, p.176). Sharing the resonate echoes of their praxis through song created another iterative reflection on their praxis two years after their initial offerings.

As a way of weaving together the findings with a historical perspective, the resonant praxis of Change Drivers was put into conversation with three unconventional reviews that trace impulses around transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis through fictional texts, political theory, poetry and intergenerational analysis, in order to surface resonant themes in praxis that echo across different times in history. This methodology sought to engage the question of the archive in pluriversal ways that appealed to different sensibilities, including the imaginative and hermeneutical, the traditionally analytical as well as the gifts of the lyrical and the erotic as different conceptual threads needed to resource the study. The reviews additionally spanned periods in the history of the continent that hold questions around precolonial and nascent colonial encounters, efforts to transgress within the liberatory

movements and the intergenerational transmissions embedded in women and queer people's struggles.

The themes that coalesced across times were leveraged into capsules of rising cultures that form an experimental nexus for the practice of transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis that is already underway. These rising cultures were conceptualised as meditations on what it means to live into a vision of home built on the explorations of a paradigm of peace, humanness, pluriversality and decolonial love for those like and unlike us that strive for freedom on this continent (Dlala, 2017, p.52; Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2013, p.142; Gqola, 2017, pp.197, 199). The rising cultures were reconciled through the creation of a litany that chronicles different refrains in transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis in contemporary times. The litany is a tool that charts particular experiences that are surfacing as symptomatic. It seeks to generously surface the contradictions that we are collectively starting to see past, whilst acknowledging the tensions that we need to straddle, integrate and navigate towards greater synthesis.

The litany is an honest way of acknowledging the glimpses gained of *who we are* in this present moment, while we continually challenge ourselves to open up to questions about what it means to grapple towards decolonial futures. This stance has influenced my role as an educator to unconditionally embrace movements that already underway, and reflect these back to those that I am conspiring with in ways that promote an ethic of care, solidarity and critical engagement.

The study celebrates what is possible when we do not theorise ourselves away from the questions embedded in our current praxis. This is an ethic that chooses to stay close to the phenomena arriving at present, whilst acknowledging the historical experiences that echo it as a collective pulse for meaningful experimentation and praxis. The study believes by being faithful to ways of amplifying, integrating and reflecting what has been emerging for us over time, we build our capacity to better respond with an ethic centred on transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis. This is the kind of accompaniment and care that Change Drivers across the continent deserve as they make the way towards a future worthy of their longing (Rushdie, 1999).

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Prologue and Positioning

0.1 Africa is a country¹? A few things to claim before we begin...

Postcolonial, postmodern and cultural theories have legitimised the breaking down of a transcendental African identity, claiming that the continent is so diverse that we cannot speak coherently about what it means to be African (Adesanmi, 2011, pp. 73-81). These theories emphasise that we should not accede to embrace terms such as “Africa”, “Africans” and “blackness” because these terms are, of themselves, “social constructs” (Kalua, 2017, p. 31). Whilst acknowledging a historical understanding of the way that “Africa” has been constructed, it is important to continue to appreciate why the idea of a transcendental African identity continues to persist within a contemporary African imaginary. Kalua (2017) explains why this could be so:

The reasons why the idea of blackness, as an index of identity, has seeped so deeply into the minds and souls of most black people are not hard to find. From the years of European expansionism through to the slave trade, European representations of Africa and blackness were informed by the notion of racial alterity or “otherness” ... So, what is Africa? How does one imagine Africa in the 21st century? Does the term Africa reference only the cartographical reality of a continent on the map? What kind of people are called Africans? Does “Africanness” pivot on the racial identity of a group of people called “Africans”? Or is it a shifting construct which was concretised because the majority of the inhabitants on the continent happen to be black? (p. 29)

This quote does well in pointing out the roots of the constructions of “Africa” and “blackness”. It paints a vivid picture of the diverse cultures, nations and experiences that have been uncomfortably pressed into these constructions. I concur with its underlying premises that problematise an essentialist notion of what it means to be “African”. I do however think that dismissing the full impact that these constructions have, and continue to create in the present, blinds us from their enduring work. The quote above makes a sharp distinction

¹ This statement is indebted to the re-imagining and reclaiming of the common slur that Africa is a country. It stems from the irritation that often occurs when people refer to Africa; they refer to the continent as a whole in the way one would refer to a country. Over time the idea of Africa has often been seen as an undifferentiated symbol that doesn't hold the complexity and vast diversity of the lay of its lands. More recently, an online platform of the same name does work set to “challenge the received media wisdoms about Africa from a left perspective, informed by the experiences of resistance movements to Apartheid” (<https://africasacountry.com/about>). As a way of both challenging the assumptions made about Africa as a continent, and signalling the desire to speak about what we hold in common, the title of this section draws on this phrase to outline its premises.

between the advent of colonialism and the present conditions in the 21st century that need to be re-imagined on our own terms. I am curious about how this line of thinking would fare if it not only looked at colonialism and slavery as the defining architects of “alterity” but also stretched its awareness towards the impact that coloniality continues to have on the construction of the African continent. Coloniality in this instance refers to:

...long standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the structural limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. (Maldonado-Torres, 2008, p. 243)

To assert a fluid and shifting sense of African identity in the 21st century without being conscious of the pervasive impact of *coloniality* might mean inadvertently taking on aspects of coloniality as part of who we are – without questioning where some of these ideas and ways of being stem from. This releases coloniality from the indelible impact that it continues to have on the construction of this continent and the world. Instead, we are besieged with narratives that insist that we should take greater responsibility as inhabitants of this diverse continent. This sense of responsibility:

... fosters an awareness of the need to avoid putting the entire blame on colonialism as the sole cause of Africa’s woes, when experience shows that quite a number of African problems can be blamed squarely on the crassness of its leaders. (Kalua, 2017, p. 27)

Yes, indeed, there is a great need for us to take responsibility for what is currently emerging in 21st century Africa. However, what is emerging in these times needs to be read carefully in ways that provide a layered analysis for the phenomenon under scrutiny. We need to see what is emerging not only as manifestations of who we have been in precolonial times, but also as what the effects of colonialism created, and how layers of these experiences have come to define who we have become in contemporary times. As a part of this we need to look deep enough into the current power structures in order to understand the enduring hallmarks of coloniality within them. In a sense, we are in a place where the vestiges of coloniality continue to mutate and merge with the pitfalls of our precolonial, modern and contemporary history. It is this heady mix of circumstances that we must learn to appreciate and discern. A refusal to appreciate the colonial history that Africa has in common does not help us in this endeavour. It simply fragments the issues that are at play into separate and diverse experiences on a constructed continent. By asserting an ahistorical diversity of African identity, we lose focus of related issues that we have in common. Pious Adensanmi states in

his book *You're Not A Country Africa* that a fragmented African identity makes it more difficult to recognise the struggle against dominant power structures including the precolonial (and the way that coloniality strategically grafted itself on some aspects of this while destroying others (see Mamdani, 2001)), the colonial and right through to the neo- liberal world order that continues to inhibit Africa's development as a whole (Adesanmi, 2011, pp. 73- 81). It is these dominant power structures across times that this research project seeks to highlight and transgress towards a reimagined vision for Africa in the 21st century. This is a political stance that affirms what we commonly share in our historical identities, and the elements of this history that continue to persist through present day coloniality.

The intention of this research project is to find a way to speak concurrently about the elements of Africa's struggle and progress that different countries have in common, whilst also zooming in on the particularities that are manifesting in South Africa through the voices and experiences of Change Drivers. As such, the theoretical underpinning of this project is rooted in an ongoing conversation about the continent as a whole – as contested as this might be. This conversation is not concerned with the universalisation of the African experience. It does not feign an appreciation of African unity “premised on origins, descent or phenotype” (Erasmus, 2017, p. 32). Instead, it seeks to highlight “a common (albeit differentiated) experiences of oppression and a common ideal of liberation that [are] at the heart of this political unity” (Erasmus, 2017, p. 32). The ability to assert an “African identity” or “African” unity on these grounds is an essential part of recognising the terms under which we are mutually bound in the present, and the collective efforts that we need to make in order to accede to our own visions of the contributions we want to make in the world.

0.2 Seeing Africa?

The Meaning of Africa
You are not a country, Africa,
You are a concept,
Fashioned in our minds,
Each to each,
To hide our separate fears,
To dream our separate dreams
(Nicol in Adesanmi, 2011, p .x [excerpt]).

We often measure what we understand in the world according to an understood criterion of what we should be looking for. We look at the world around us and use the lenses that we value the most to interpret and translate what it is we are seeing. The discursive lens frequently employed to see Africa often invalidates its long history stretching to antiquity. Instead, we arrive abruptly at an analysis that presents Africa today as “essentially the European made Africa, waiting to be ruled through Western philosophical thinking” (Viriri, 2010, p. 34). Ways of seeing Africa continue to be “entrapped within the existing global matrices of power underpinned by Eurocentrism and coloniality” (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2013, p. 332). At worst, discourse around Africa’s future includes viewpoints that see “the future horizon [as] apparently closed”, whilst also viewing “the horizon of the past [as] apparently receded” (Mbembe, 2001, p. 17). In this perspective, “blackness is the figure of being late and the pressure to be punctual to a time that is not ours” (Akomolafe, 2017, p. 183). The horizon is “closed” in this regard because the aspirational requirements of what Africa should be are already wrapped in a neo-liberal discourse that defines the performative and administrative requirements of the state. The underlying assumption here is that this way of being ought to continue to be our primary aspirational imperative. The past in this perspective has been eclipsed and has no “redemptive possibilities” to offer us (Santos, 2016, p. 75). We are in a sense trapped between an impotent past that marks our supposed inferiority in modern history, and a steep learning curve towards a future defined by criteria that continue to emerge from outside of ourselves.

The Cartesian paradigm of Western philosophical thinking continues to influence the discourse around how Africa is rationally understood. Three notable ways in which Cartesian dualism has produced the modern world include:

- (1) the imposition of an “ontological status upon entities (substances) as opposed to relationships (that is to say energy, matter, people, ideas and so on became *things*)”;
- (2) the centrality of a logic of either/or (rather than both/and); and
- (3) the idea of a purposeful control over nature through applied science (Watts 2005; Glacken 1967 quoted in Moore et al., 2016, p. 88).

Paulo Freire substantiates the view around turning entities into things by stating that this kind of “oppressor consciousness” “...tends to transform everything surrounding it into an object of its domination. The earth, property, production, the creations of peoples, people themselves, time- everything is reduced to the status of objects at its disposal” (Freire, 1970, p. 40).

This ontological way of being has created “tightly knit coordinates” of “a matrix of power” that prescribes the status quo (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 332). The way that this matrix of power manifests itself in our waking worlds includes prioritising key elements such as:

... the regulation of labour, of the economy, of nature and of space; control over gender and sexuality’ authority embodied in the state and the military; controls over inter-subjectivity and knowledge (Mignolo, 2013 and Quijano, 2000 in Erasmus, 2017, p. 9).

The authority of the state plays an important role in coordinating this outlook. The state “becomes the pivotal organisational nexus” that is “analytically central to the making of the capitalist world- ecology” (Moore, 2016, p.10). It is privileged as the primary organising principle of evolution and progress. “The state becomes, then, the guardian of a root that does not exist beyond the state” (Santos, 2016, p. 81). It continues to impact upon what is thought to exist by being intensely self-referential. It is thus telling that what we know about Africa is wrapped up in this kind of discourse, a discourse that is:

Mired in the demands of what is immediately useful, enclosed in the narrow horizon of “good governance” and the neo- liberal catechism about the market economy, torn by the fads for “civil society”, “ conflict resolution” and alleged “transitions to democracy”, the discussion, as habitually engaged, is primarily concerned, not with comprehending the political in Africa or with producing knowledge in general, but with social engineering. (Mbembe, 2001, p. 7)

Even if we recognise this way of seeing and being as an ontological construct, we cannot underestimate how far-reaching the power of the state is, and the impact of its performance or non-performance (on these terms) on the well-being of the people it is meant to serve. We cannot operate as if the behaviour of the state is not an important part of our daily reality; it

certainly is. However, to only see Africa through the efficacy of the state as an organising principle is to diminish the narratives that exist between these constructs and what continues to persist and endure despite the worst of its institutional trappings.

What Africa is, is thus reduced to its ability or inability to put the demands of “good governance” into place. Commentary about Africa in this regard has often included necessary and broad “condemnation of brutality, conflict, corruption and unaccountable regimes deaf to the needs of impoverished peoples” (Wisner et al., 2005, p. 3). We know that these stories are part of what Africa is and what we critically need to evolve from. We also need to be clear about the vision of change that needs to be championed in the face of this situation. De Sousa Santos challenges us to discern the means through which emancipatory futures can be generated. As part of this he argues that “Cartesian and capitalist recipes are of little use for the reconstruction of a human personality with the capacity and desire for social emancipation” (De Sousa Santos, 2016, p. 63). In other words, even as we understand the need to evolve from our faults, that evolution cannot rely on the reproduction of Cartesian and capitalist modes of thinking. These will only continue to produce the world as we have come to know it. And such, we need to wake up to other parts of the African story, the story of humanity of the earth and other sentient beings that persist between and beside the logic of the Cartesian paradigm. Here we are calling on the parts of Africa in which “people show remarkable resilience and adaptability to difficult situations... where people demonstrate great effectiveness in harnessing their skills and assets to improve their living conditions” (Wisner et al., 2005, p. 29). This Africa could also be spaces in which people mobilise for a better quality of life outside the constructs of Cartesian and capitalist modes of thinking.

Purposefully limiting how we see Africa is an intellectual cul de sac that has us trying to assert ourselves as worthy players in a history defined through values that continue to provide very “weak answers” to the biggest questions of our time. This intellectual trap ensues by wholeheartedly thinking that “the current paradigm provides answers for all the relevant questions” (Santos, 2016, p. 20). Instead, it is imperative that we continue to interrogate the current paradigm and the questions that it validates. It also follows that we should expand our ways of seeing the present and embolden the unanswered questions that continue to rise in our thinking. By expanding the way that we see Africa, we can better constitute a broader understanding of what the political entails in Africa. Through this, we can start to produce knowledge that reflects varying contemporary experiences, that include ways of knowing that

have been previously excluded. In line with this thinking, Edward Said, one of the fathers of post-colonial thinking, reminds us that:

Human history is made by human beings, and since the struggle for control over territory is a part of that history, so too is the struggle over historical meaning. The task for the critical scholar is not to separate one struggle from the other, but to connect them (Said, 2003, in Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2013, p. 336).

By attending to the variations of historical meaning that are present in this contemporary moment we can begin to look for alternative answers, or better yet, alternative questions that defy an overdrawn logic of what is relevant and what is not.

0.3 Beyond the Certainty of Africa's Script: Transgressing into What is 'Not Yet'

Internally driven historical narratives of Africa's evolution and progress have always been accompanied by a contention that we are *not yet* where we can be; that we are *yet* to realise our full potential and what is more, we are *yet* to step into a full sense of the life-giving possibilities that we can generate on our own terms (see Mathaai, 2008; Biko, 2009; Hountondji, 2009; Harsch, 2014; Macmillan, 2014; Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2014). Robert Sobukwe took this even further by stating that "world civilisation will not be complete until the African has made his full contribution" (Sobukwe, 1949, p.10). This "Not Yet Uhuru" research project seeks to amplify the stories and perspectives that endure within this other Africa as a way of trying to live into the contributions that Africa can make to humanity. The popular phrase "Not Yet Uhuru!", simply translated as 'we are not yet free' was coined by Oginga Odinga in 1968. His book was a searing interrogation of the newly established independent government of Kenya. Its major concerns included the demise of a socialist agenda in Kenya. As such, the book criticises the assimilationist policies that underpinned the Kenyan government in the late 1960s (Odinga, 1976). Over three decades later, a song by the same name "Not Yet Uhuru" was written and performed by Letta Mbuli, an iconic South African musician. The song was written in 1992, on the eve of South Africa's transition to a democratic dispensation. The concerns and rallying cries the song evokes continue to haunt present day South Africa and Africa with its unresolved demands.

This research project seeks to pay attention to the quality and nature of what is 'not yet' but emerging, before, between, within, outside and in response to the current state of affairs. It is a strategic way of accounting for the many experiences, dreams, questions and actualised

possibilities that exist across times. The project trusts the continued assertion of what is *not yet* as a through- line from the past to the present towards a future that is worthy of our longing (Rushdie, 1999). It sees the ‘not yet’ as a creative opening that can lead us to become more of ourselves in these times. Zimitri Erasmus describes the ‘not yet’ as “a space in which to reconfigure the world. A space in which to reconfigure subjectivity, resistance, learning, living and doing” (2017, p. 146). The Not Yet Uhuru project was designed to follow the traces of what is emerging so that I as an educator (in community with others) can better shape pedagogical responses that can help us delve into the imagined possibilities that we hold for South Africa, Africa and the world. The central premise of this research project is that emancipatory education ought to position itself in ways that encourage those that are intuitively grappling towards a desirable future to further investigate, traverse and live into the possibilities that they have reason to desire. In this way, emancipatory pedagogies are conceived as experimental tools to help us individually and collectively relate to and explore what is ‘not yet’ in ways that are generative and meaningful to our own evolution. Emancipatory pedagogies also ought to provide the space to articulate what is “no longer” and to think creatively about how to subvert and traverse these limitations through our own decolonial rites of passage. The tensions, possibilities and openings of such decolonial rites of passage are the subject of this thesis.

Intellectual activists from the global south (Maldonado- Torres, 2008; De Sousa Santos, 2016) have begun to articulate the power of staying faithful to the present moment by affirming what is ‘not yet’. In particular, De Sousa Santos challenges us to:

...invite open ended formulations of an alternative society whose strength relies more on the intensity with which it rejects the current state of affairs than on the precision of alternatives advanced.

They consist of affirming the possibility of a better future and another possible world without knowing if the latter is possible and what it will be like. (Santos, 2016, pp. 28, 108).

The careful wording of this quote prompts us to consider that the creation of viable futures depends on our ability to read into the dynamics that continue to produce the current state of affairs. This is an invitation to subvert the logics that underpin our precarious present. We are encouraged to lean into and listen intently to what is left in exile in the present.

There are many experiences and ways of being that constitute what is left in exile. Listening simultaneously to these different sources shows us that alternative “African social formulations” cannot rely on a “single point, trend or cycle” (Mbembe, 2001, p.16). We cannot seek to replace one way of thinking with another; this will not suffice. May says more about the dangers of “single-axis” thinking in this regard:

When single axis models are relied on, the experiences and knowledge of some are often (falsely) universalised as if they could adequately represent the experiences, needs, and claims of all group members... single-axis forms of redress adhere to, rather than challenge the conceptual “building blocks” of domination. (2015, p. 82)

In other words, to replace one way of seeing with another is to simply replicate the logics of domination which rely on a hierarchical ethic that find its expression by usurping one way of being with another. This is a situation in which the “oppressed find in the oppressor their model of ‘manhood’ ” because:

The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be men is to be oppressors. This is their model of humanity. (Freire, 1970, p. 27).

The objective here is to become ‘king of the pile’, ascending to exactly the same seat of power that was previously reserved for another, purposefully forgetting and diminishing all the other ways of being that are still left in exile. What we are inviting here is a different way of listening and being with various ways of being that are still left in exile. The challenge here is to listen to what demands expression *simultaneously*, instead of creating new hierarchies. This way of listening emerges

...precisely that moment when different forms of absence become mixed together: absence of those presences that are no longer so and that one remembers (the past), and absences of those others that are yet to come and are yet anticipated (the future). (Mbembe, 2001, p. 16)

This entails consciously weaving a collective vision that encompasses what no longer exists and what wants to be lived into in the present. Embedded in this way of thinking and seeing the future of Africa and the world are two crucial faculties that we need to develop concurrently.

The first is the generation of a different relationship with conceptually verified ‘*certainty*’ as the way in which we interpret and create the future. This implies acknowledging the demands that certainty has had on the history of the world and, if we are honest with ourselves, the

many ways in which true ‘certainty’ is always out of our grasp. Okri explores the indelible impact of certainty on the world’s history:

This certainty, whether its name be religion, imperialism, ideology, class, caste, race or sex, has been the great undoing of our measureless heritage, and has narrowed the vastness of human possibility and marvellous variety... Those who suspect that the true beauty of the human dream has *not yet* emerged from its hidden and silenced places celebrate, albeit with some sadness in their hearts, the fragmentary edifices of certainties strewn about the world. (Okri, 1997, p. 25)

And what have these certainties helped to produce in our waking world? Increasing ecological stress, unsustainable patterns of economic production and consumption, greater vulnerability, mobility and inequality paint a picture of a future that is susceptible to many threats and also potentially receptive to many hidden possibilities (UNESCO, 2015, p. 3). These possibilities cannot emerge in their fullness if we are only concerned with the limits of what has established itself as the most ‘relevant’ and ‘certain’ ways of knowing. Instead, our task as educators needs to be concerned with:

... enabling individuals to prosper amid supercomplexity, amid a situation in which there are no stable descriptions of the world, no concepts that can be seized upon with any assuredness, and no value systems can claim one’s allegiance with any unrivalled authority. (Barnett, 2004, p. 252)

This way of working insists that the future is a collective “nomadic process” that “approaches the sense of subject formation in a distributive, dispersed, and multiple manner” (Braidotti, 2011, p. 6). There is a sense of inviting open ontologies as part of this educational task. This is ‘an epistemological break’ that allows us all to catch our breaths, think and articulate what it is that we see and are experiencing on equal terms and begin our work from there. UNESCO’s recent publication on “Rethinking Education Towards a Global Common Good” puts out the call for us to “move the centre” of what education ought to be by opening up our understanding of what it could be (Thiongo, 1993);

Dominant utilitarian conceptions of education should accede to the expression of other ways of understanding human well-being, and thus, to a focus on the relevance of education as a common good. This implies hearing silent voices of those who have *not yet* been heard. The immense wealth that such diversity represents can enlighten us all in our collective quest for well-being. (UNESCO, 2015, p. 34)

It seems that what constitutes the ‘common good’ is now conceptually open terrain. This is a bold invitation for us to recast our nets and discover more of ourselves in this moment than ever before. Additionally, this epistemological break acknowledges a historical power

imbalance in the way that meaning is produced in the world. In particular, it insists on being particularly discerning about the way that:

the powerful tend to have appropriate understandings of their experiences ready to draw on as they make sense of their social experiences, whereas the powerless are more likely to find themselves having some social experiences through a glass darkly lit, with at best ill-fitting meanings to draw on in the effort to render them intelligible. (Fricker, 2007, p.148)

The above quote is useful in the way that it shows a power imbalance between the meaning making of the ‘powerful’ and the ‘powerless’ (besides the problematics of this binary based definition). However, it is important to interrogate the underlying assumptions of its premises. In particular, the wording used here can inadvertently perpetuate an understanding of the ‘powerless’ as incapable of articulating their experiences, as if the powerful can access and articulate a neutral sense of their reason while the powerless cannot (Crary, 2017, p. 53). There are some important questions to consider that can interrogate her argument. One pressing question is; in the face of *what exactly* are the ‘powerless’ having to find their expression through “a glass dimly lit”? My contention here is that often those constructed as the “powerless” know exactly what it is that they think and believe. It just so happens that in the face of other dominant knowledge constructs that do not consider their knowledge as knowledge, the struggle to articulate their experiences can be silenced or ‘rendered’ unintelligible by the ears that hear them. It is not the speaker per se that should be problematised but the ability to hear. Siseko Kumalo substantiates this point by stating that it is a sense of ‘denial’ that produces this dynamic:

A denial which manifests itself through a reinscribed and reaffirmed misleading logic which maintains that the western epistemic tradition is allegedly superior and the only legitimate knowledge framework within the academy. (Kumalo, 2018, p. 199)

Fricker’s usage of the words “ill-fitting” and “effort” only make sense if the work and struggle entailed in finding the appropriate expression for what one is experiencing, is appreciated when it inevitably exists outside the constructs of dominant meaning making. This can be particularly true of experiences that can only be explained adequately through another language that holds a different cultural epistemology, or an alternative cosmological worldview that does not adhere to the premises as those more popularly explored. Opening the space for expression under these circumstances requires a shift in what is considered ‘reasonable’, on the part of those often constructed as ‘unintelligible’. It is an undertaking that requires practice, grounding and lack of deference especially in the face of dominant

narratives that can quickly devour one's assertions and reasoning. There is an important epistemological struggle that needs to be waged at the sites of such instances. This is a struggle on the part of those deemed unintelligible 'to find the language' appropriate to the situation or experience and to interpret and perform this language within a shared imagination that might be able to appreciate what it is saying (Smith, 2012, p. 39). The practice and process of finding the language and naming social experiences is thus a generative act that puts one in an applied dialogical relationship to what one is trying to create. The collective result of this kind of grappling can be an undergrowth of subversive and alternative possibilities that are capable of reshaping our world by potentially de-centring the current state of affairs. This way of working ultimately acknowledges the way in which "thought and messy life-making unfold in ways that are always partnered", that it is language and meaning making that give way to alternative ways of being that are needed for emancipatory futures (Moore et al., 2016, p. 7). The struggle to generate, acknowledge and live into language in this way is an essential part of this research project, because without the language to firmly anchor a broader understanding of the contemporary African experience, we lack vital epistemological roots to grab onto as we trace our way forward.

The subversive nature of these possibilities leads us to the second faculty we need to develop concurrently in the service of a future that is different from the past. The intuitive impulse to "*transgress*" the boundaries and limits of what is relevant is an essential part of creating an alternative future for Africa and the world. Again, we turn to Okri to paint a poetic landscape of what this could mean:

The only hope is in the creation of alternative values, alternative realities. The only hope is in daring to redeem one's place in the world – a beautiful act of imagination, and a sustained act of self-becoming. Which is to say that in some way or another we breach and confound the accepted frontiers of things... We need to tear down the barriers wisely, or else we won't be able to get out and nothing else will be able to come in. (Okri, 1997, pp. 45-46)

Mobilising alternative values and realities is a way of insisting that there are other ways that we can go about belonging to this world with others, and that we need to step into these other ways of being through our chosen languaging and actions. This is an essential act done to affirm oneself in the world. Martha Chaves stated as part of the transgressive learning research school "we resist in order to exist" (Chavez, personal communication, 14 June 2018). This sense of existing between and within the current state of affairs is poignantly captured below, emphasising the role of transgression within this:

In the peripheries, transgression is almost a necessity. It is transgressive because it does not know how to be order, even as it knows that order exists (Santos, 2016, p. 62).

To transgress in this way is to affirm life. It is a movement against and beyond boundaries (hooks, 1994, p 12). To transgress is to hold oneself accountable for what you bring into this world and how this works towards or falls shy of our evolution. It is about mobilising one's desire and creativity in the service of humankind, the earth and all sentient beings – all of which are currently threatened by the ensuing state of affairs. Transgressing also implies taking our lead from other sensibilities that have thus far been grossly unappreciated. It insists on listening in other ways to what is emerging beyond dominant meaning making:

There are songs that trees know that we haven't heard; there are alliances that termites and the pheromones they secrete forge that we can learn from; there are wild things that do not know the moral discipline of purpose or the colonizing influence of instrumentality; and then there are murmurings- the waltz of wind, sky, starling, and ground – which are not meant to be spoken about but merely to be seen and appreciated. In short, there are other powers, other agencies, and other clocks. And, perhaps, we release ourselves not only to the performance of our many colours, but we free those in posh parties that have somehow denied us entry from their secret fears of losing their own seats at the table, when we say “there are other clocks, and we will not be on time”. (Akomolafe, 2017, p.183)

This implies strategically devaluing institutions and systems that are no longer a part of this vision: “We are talking here about moments of defiance in which the representational order is confronted by an emerging new order” (Santos, 2016, p. 225).

Mbembe argues that “the future of the state’ in Africa will be predicated “at the point where the three factors of war, coercion, and capital (formal or informal, material or symbolic) meet (2001, p.77). In as much as we have already begun to see the interaction of these three features in our lives, my decolonial sensibilities (which I will elaborate on in greater detail at a later stage) prompt me towards an exercise in going beyond the “paradigm of war” as the only way the world and its future can be created (Maldonado-Torres, 2008). In this perspective, the enduring inevitability of “war, coercion and capitalism” in the future of the state are part of what needs to be transgressed as ‘certain’ aspects of our experience as human beings. “War, coercion and capital” impose the continuation of the precariousness, danger and humiliation that come with them. Despite this variance in our ways of seeing, I am however comforted by the following comments that Mbembe made about the value of paying attention to what is emerging from new struggles in Africa:

There is, then, something to be gained by considering a series of significant scenarios of which glimmers can be made out emerging from the struggles now under way. These glimpses suggest that not only a different structuring of African societies, but also a radical shift in the material order, are in progress. (Mbembe, 2001, p.77)

The emancipatory potential of what is emerging is thus given credence and is invited as something that can guide us towards alternatives that are burgeoning in African societies. I would like to believe that these alternatives can transcend the dictates of “the material order” referred to in his quote and perhaps bring into being and build on other ways of understanding that challenge the status quo. It will be interesting to hear and juxtapose the significance of the current order with the trajectories that Change Drivers in South Africa feel that we should be building on. This will be a way of seeing into variables of our current and future existence that Change Drivers value (see Chapter 6 and 7).

This Not Yet Uhuru research project is a journey with and through the uncertainty of the times that foregrounds the dreams and transgressive impulses of Change Drivers in South Africa. It sees the ability to work concurrently with uncertainty and the transgressive impulses of young people as a formative drive that can help us think carefully about how emancipatory pedagogies can be of better service to what is trying to emerge.

As I present this treatise, I can hear murmurs of the potential ‘chaos’ evoked through uncertain ways of seeing Africa beyond the normative constructs which we have become accustomed to. The concerns I am used to hearing include critiques that are mounted against the distinctive terms of engagement chosen here. They often go along the lines of seeing these aims as systematically courting the impossible and the transgressive in a world that actually exists within certain parameters. I can hear one say: ‘where does one hope to make these impossibilities possible?’ And what critical issues present themselves in the interface between what is idealised, and the brutal reality that manifests itself through the resilience at “the nexus of coloniality, patriarchy, capitalism and Western modernity” (May, 2015, p37)? Here the question of ‘effectivity’ and ‘pragmatism’ raises its head, asking us ‘of what use is all this transgression, all of this dreaming and resistance if it does not produce *tangible* results?’

There are two responses to this that I would like to use to reinforce the foundation of this research. The word *khusena* in Luhya, a language spoken in western Kenya, describes the

process through which the clay is fortified to make the foundation of a house. It describes a process where one uses one's feet to compact and systematically smear the ground in order to lay the foundation of a new house. This is the way the foundation of the house is established. The first definitive response to the questions raised above that I would like to use to layer the foundation of this research is the contention that:

We cannot decide what resistance is, based on its perceived effectiveness. We have to understand where people are coming from – the limits, the cultures, the experiences, the stories, the memories – and see self-activity as self-active, self-generated modes of struggle. We don't have to like these self-activities. We don't have to think that they're great or grand. We miss the point if we only judge them strictly on whether or not they succeed. (Tuck and Yang, 2014, p. 91)

This project is not about the practical effectivity of the transgressive dreams that Change Drivers hold, it is instead about the audacity of spirit that is characterised through their actions, and what these transgressive moves signal as discursive moves towards freedom for Change Drivers. In addition to this, it feels apt to further overlay the outlook of this research by underscoring the important role that the 'impossible' has to play in emancipatory African praxis:

In the face of white supremacy and an increasing repressive governmental apparatus, the assertion of an African historical praxis and mode of politics is exactly what is impossible. A historical imagination of the future is a politics as theory of the impossible since it is able to think a political future that is *not yet* real. Politics as the theory of the impossible is this realisation of that which cannot yet be thought: the true liberation of Africa and the assertion of an African historical/ praxis. This is not achievable through the application of a pragmatic politics... A liberatory politics had to be able to prove liberation as a possibility in an impossible situation... (Delpont, 2016, p. 49 [my emphasis])

In accordance with the fervour of this thinking, the concerns of this research project are not to quickly accede to the prioritisation of what can be understood as possible. It is instead concerned with the (r)evolutionary dreams of Change Drivers on the continent that dare to assert a vision of the future that is worthy of their longing (Rushdie, 1999). Impossibility in this regard does not diminish the cogency of the dreams and practical aspirations of Change Drivers. Conversely, to further build on this argument, De Sousa Santos put a different spin on why some things are considered impossible while others are not:

The oppressors tend to experience the world in which they live as the best possible world. The same is true for all those who, not directly oppressors, benefit from oppressive practices. As far as they are concerned, it is rational to wager on the impossibility of a better world. (De Sousa Santos, 2016, p.113)

These words pointedly affirm the importance of generating alternative ideas about how the world could be. They remind us that the practice of re-imagining the world is inherently a counter-hegemonic practice in motion. Ta Nehisi Coates adds to this by articulating the ways in which capitalist-consumerist-driven ‘dreams’ perpetuate themselves: “The ‘Dream’ thrives on generalisations, on limiting the number of possible questions, on privileging immediate answers. The Dream is the enemy of all art, courageous thinking and honest writing” (Coates, 2015, p. 50). Courting the impossible within a world held captive by the dictates of the ‘Dream’ serves as a catalyst towards practising other ways of being. This is worthy material for us to engage and grapple with as intellectual activists, educators and Change Drivers. Robin D.G Kelley further captures the spirit of what this project is about when he explains his desire to champion visions of the black radical imagination in his book *Freedom Dreams* (2002). His introduction to this book lays the terrain of what he hopes to achieve by charting a history of the radical black imagination:

I did not write this book for those traditional leftists who have traded in their dreams for orthodoxy and sectarianism... Instead, I wrote it for anyone bold enough to still dream, especially young people who are growing up in what critic Henry Giroux perceptively calls ‘the culture of cynicism’ – young people whose dreams have been utterly co-opted by the marketplace... The question remains: What are today’s young activists dreaming about? We know what they are fighting against, but what are they fighting for?

... These are crucial questions, for one of the basic premises of this book is that the most powerful, visionary dreams of a new society don’t come from think tanks of smart people or out of the atomised, individualistic world consumer capitalism where raging against the status quo is simply the hip thing to do. Revolutionary dreams erupt out of political engagement; collective social movements are incubators of new knowledge (Kelley, 2002, pp7-8).

This line of thinking provides a useful theoretical layering for the foundation that we are trying to build here. The Not Yet Uhuru! research project seeks to honour the political engagements of Change Drivers in South Africa in this regard. More information about Change Drivers will be shared in the next sub-section including what a Change Driver is and how my work with Change Drivers instinctively led me towards the questions articulated in this research project. But before we get into that, it is important to layer this research with an understanding of how young people are seen on this continent.

0.4 Growing perspectives on Youth in an Increasingly Young Continent

Keeping in mind the imperative seeing of Africa in different ways, we also need to take cognisance of *who*, more often than not, gets to speak on behalf of this continent and where

power has been historically concentrated. For many decades Africans have lamented the fact that Africa has increasingly become an old man's continent, often governed by long standing aged members of an elite class. The average age of presidents in Africa is 78.1; paradoxically the continent has the youngest population in the world (Kiwuwa, 2015, p. 2). It is further estimated that the population of young people under the age of 30 on this continent will continue to grow to an estimated prediction of 65% of its entire population by 2030 (World Bank, 2015).

Research on youth in Africa has the ability to stun any reader because of its propensity to churn out incredible statistics about the excess of the present and growing majority of youth on the continent. There are a range of terms (concerning and otherwise) that have been used to describe the burgeoning numbers of young people on the continent and the influence they have on the future. Some describe the excess of youth as a 'bulge', denoting something unsightly and in surplus, woefully imposing on the prospects of the future (Gyimah-Brempong and Kimenyi, 2013, p. 3). Others describe the numbers of youth as a demographic in 'waithood' denoting a suspended transition from being a dependent in a household to becoming a contributor in their own right (Singerman, 2007; Honwana, 2011 in Oosterom et al. 2016, p. 9). Through these descriptions, we get a sense of the demographic burden that youth present as they somewhat parasitically leech onto scarce and existing resources whilst being unable to generate much through their own contributions. Related to this way of seeing African youth are the staggering facts around youth unemployment that cast a dark premonition on the future especially when this is linked with the risk of youth radicalisation.

In policy circles and in the field of international development, high levels of youth unemployment are considered problematic for a number of reasons. First of all, it will have a negative impact on young people as they seek to sustain their livelihoods and further the development and wellbeing of their families, and it will negatively affect the economic development of the country at large. Second, the presence of demographic youth bulges (where youth form the majority of the population) and youth unemployment are regularly associated with increased levels of instability in a country and, in the age of so-called 'war on terrorism', with the increased risk of radicalisation that encourages young people to join extremist groups, despite the fact that there are major evidence gaps to support these claims (UNDP, 2015 and Cramer, 2010 cited in Oosterom et al., 2016, p. 3).

In the above description the threat of youth unemployment takes on greater levels of anxiety through the tenuous links drawn between unemployment, instability and the radicalisation of youth. Recent research such as that done by young activist Aya Chebbi (2016) has begun to

challenge the claims around what creates youth radicalisation in Africa. Through a comparative study on Tunisia and Kenya, she argues that it is not simply poverty or unemployment that creates youth radicalisation but more pressingly the marginalisation of youth within the state. It is the enduring politics of the ‘big man’ that exacerbates youth marginalisation. “In the context of political science, ‘Big Man’ refers to autocratic, corrupt and usually totalitarian rule by a single person” (Chebbi, 2016, p. 10). This marginalisation entails:

The youth use the site of marginalisation as space of negotiation, resistance and struggle. Accordingly, marginality could be a site that fosters the capacity of the marginalised youth to resist and imagine new alternative worlds in a peaceful progressive or more radical violent forms. (Chebbi, 2016, p.12)

Through this analysis the role of the state in Africa again takes precedence, this time emphasising the role that it plays in the marginalisation of youth. Chebbi’s research gives us another theoretical lens to understand youth trajectories on the continent, by bringing greater complexity to the rhetoric around this potentially precarious demographic. It is fitting that as part of this analysis we look into the way that the state has historically tried to address sustainable youth futures.

On a governmental level there have been sincere efforts towards integrating youth into economic growth strategies, mainstreaming and developing effective youth policies and improving the quality and scope of data on youth (Gyimah-Brempong and Kimenyi, 2013, p. 27; see also Sommers, 2010, p. 328 and Resnick and Thurlow, 2015, p. 10). These aspirations, however worthy they may be, seek to solve the threat of the ‘youth in crisis’ by requesting that the state adequately recognise the power and potential that the numbers of youth represent. Youth policy initiatives have been undertaken in several African countries including Ghana in 2010, Gambia which launched its third Youth Policy in 2009-2018, Kenya’s National Youth policy and the strategic plan of 2007-2012 which tried to tackle youth development through an agenda of for peace, and lastly, South Africa’s National Youth Policy of 2009-2014 (Gyimah-Brempong and Kimenyi, 2013, pp. 11-19). The challenges that face youth policies of this nature include concerns that:

- 1) “the assessments of the problems facing youth are complicated by data limitations”,
- 2) “the effectiveness of programs depends crucially on economic growth and the types of jobs that are created”,

- 3) “there is a lack of comprehensive youth policies that are integrated with national development plans and broad macroeconomic policies”,
- 4) the burden of the “costs of programmes”, and lastly
- 5) “governments lack the capacity to undertake comprehensive monitoring and evaluative processes.” (Gyimah-Brempong and Kimenyi, 2013, pp. 20-23).

It is hard to speak comprehensively about the effectivity of youth policies in the face of these concerns, if we are not certain that the assessment of problems affecting youth is thoroughly done or that they indeed represent the most pressing issues that youth are experiencing. It is also significant that the effectiveness of the programmes is beset by necessary economic growth, an issue that is at the forefront of Africa’s development strategies. Additionally, if these initiatives are not strongly conjoined with the development plans that would make them more effective, then the regenerative sustainability of these programmes is called to question. Lastly, and perhaps even more grievously, the fact that governments themselves lack the ability to adequately track the efficacy of the efforts they have put into place renders the efforts being made unintelligible in some ways and therefore difficult to progressively build on. Under these conditions I cannot help but wonder about the trajectories that are being promoted through these efforts and the extent to which a weak state in this regard can assist youth to grow in the ways that *they see fit*. To be clear, it is the conceptions of what ‘youth development’ entails that I am skeptical about and seek to interrogate. Critical perspectives into the normative constructions of young people’s agency are shared in the following quote giving us more to critically interrogate:

One of the challenges for understanding young people’s agency is that their actions are often contrasted with normative conceptions about what behaviour is deemed appropriate... the tension between, on the one hand recognising young people as agents and their right to participation and, on the other hand policies and interventions that seek to discipline or re-educate young people to adopt particular kinds of behaviour, especially when young people’s actions challenge a certain moral or political order. Which agency is deemed ‘good’ thus depends on the context in which it is exercised, and on who asks the question. (Bonodaro and Payne in Oosterom et al. 2016, p.11)

The insight shared here calls into question the relevance of the futures that are assigned to young people on this continent, and if they are compatible with what young people desire for themselves. The tension between what it is they have reason to value and what is expected of them often comes to a head in the discourse of ‘youth development’ in ways that can obscure the trajectories for the future that youth have reason to value. Here I am referring to a

growing dissatisfaction and conscientisation around ‘youth development’ strategies that are “actually a form of containment under the guise of preparing young people for democracy and citizenship” (Kelley, Tuck and Yang, 2014, p. 89).

The potential clash between what youth desire and what is expected of them becomes heightened when young people intentionally transgress the limits of what is deemed appropriate. “Young people in Africa (and across the world) have changed governments in Tunisia, Egypt, Senegal and Burkina Faso, and recently [they have] staged major demonstrations in South Africa and the Republic of Congo” (Honwana, 2015, p.3). Recent research has investigated the reasons behind over “100 popular uprisings staged by young people in over 40 countries across the continent” (Strong, 2017, p.3):

An expanding body of literature ...takes seriously the intentionality of African youth uprisings – namely, to disrupt the social order, even temporarily. This literature recognises the possibility within rebellion of “passionate idealism,” which utilises violence strategically to deliver the failed promises of liberation and dignity that were thought to be underwritten by elders, the state, and institutions such as schools, but which have failed to materialise. (Bozzoli, 2007, p 184; see also Diouf, 2003; Honwana and De Boeck, 2005; Phillips, 2013 in Strong, 2017, p. 4)

The images that spring to mind of these protests include masses of young people taking up space in major cities to demonstrate how fed up they are of the conditions that underpin their lives. The presence of young people in protest persists in these times as a growing response to “this generation’s struggle for political, social and economic emancipation” (Honwana, 2015, p. 3). Again, it is said that young people choose protest, demonstration and other ‘subaltern’ ways to exercise their agency to emphasise the fact that they are a marginalised social group. As such these protests often emerge as “potentially subversive” and particularly “challenging of structures” as they feel they have no other effective recourse of bargaining (Oosterom et al., 2016, p. 11).

The aspirational imperatives of young people on the continent are additionally relevant in this time, not only in relation to their marginalization by the state, but also more broadly within the narrowing corridors for emancipatory engagement within the work of non-governmental organisations, universities and centres for technical, vocational education and training. These spaces are being increasingly criticised for their inability to produce emancipatory outcomes for youth on the continent (see Resnick and Thurlow, 2015, p. 133 and Matthews et al.,

2017). Commenting on the emancipatory potential of non-governmental organisations, Firoze Manji concluded that the recent outbreak of ‘revolutionary situations’ all across the continent:

have been fueled by decades of dispossession and pauperisation that accompanied the latest phase of capitalism, popularly referred to as ‘neo-liberalism’. Yet, when the millions took to the street of Tunisia, Egypt and Burkina Faso, this was not the result of the work of NGOs, nor was it appeals for more developmental aid. It is in popular mobilisations like these that the hope for emancipatory freedoms is rekindled... The majority of NGOs today constitute an obstacle to the emancipation of the oppressed and exploited. This is not to suggest that such formations are by their nature ‘anti-emancipation’, but rather that emancipation is a political task. Most NGOs perceive themselves to be ‘apolitical’ or, if they recognise the political nature of their work, arrogantly assign themselves the role of representation rather than enabling the oppressed and exploited to present themselves. The principal role that NGOs can play in contributing to the struggle for emancipatory freedoms must take the form of solidarity with the oppressed and exploited. For in that approach there is hope for creating a world in which all human beings can reach their full potential. (Manji, 2017, p. 30).

This view concurs with the criticisms of the sense of containment that youth development strategies proffer. Alternative suggestions to the continued co-optation of youth within the non-governmental organisation section stress the questions of what solidarity with the struggles of youth on the continent could mean. Additional points of view paint a picture of what the missing pieces of such solidarity might look like in action:

Young people are contained by youth development models in which there is no critique of representative democracy ...
Instead of youth development, we should look to young people and their self-activity to produce new ways of thinking about how to organize society...
We don’t need to prepare youth for active citizenship. They need space for completely revamping and rethinking and interrogating [African] citizenship and [African] democracies as they are currently defined. The opportunity is to make educational space to see contemporary youth movements... for what they are, a remapping [] of society. (Kelley, Tuck and Yang, 2014, p. 89 [my insertions])

Similar concerns have been weighted against universities and centres for technical, vocational education and training. Despite the steady presence of protests across the continent for decades, Phillip Machanick when reflecting on South African universities, commented on the inability of university institutions to adequately reflect on themselves in the face of student protests in 2015 and 2016 (Machanick, 2015). His diagnosis of the stagnant state of universities reads:

A university encapsulates the problem neatly, it is full of young people with energy and cognitive tools to demand rapid change who are running up against a rigid, seemingly immovable structure. (Machanick, 2015, p. 2)

In South Africa students in universities have been asserting the need for a decolonised landscape through the removal of colonial statues, the changing of colonial names, transformation in universities and curriculum change in higher education institutions (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2016, p. 3). These protests have been an important part of the growing audacity of young leaders across South Africa (within and beyond university communities) who are finding the language to name and transgress the complex challenges they face in their communities. The statements that young people in South Africa and across the continent are making through protests and subversive mobilisations are an important part of the drive for this project especially when the call is to stand in solidarity with the visions they hold for the future.

Despite some of the wary associations made about young people in Africa, there is also the growing recognition of the ways in which they are ingeniously navigating the spaces that they find themselves in. Some descriptions that echo the sense of generative agency that young people in Africa demonstrate include insight into youth as “constantly engaging in creative and innovative acts to pursue their aspirations (Locke and Lintelo, 2012; Jorgensen, 2015). Or even further, the extent to which “they invent and fashion new ways of surviving in the margins of society” making “youth escapes” that “become dynamic sites for improvisation and survival (Honwana, 2015, p.3). Through these descriptions the role of young people is elevated to that of indomitable ‘hustlers’ navigating complex spaces at a fast pace (Jorgensen, 2015).

For some young people the sense of survival they desire is not simply pitched at an individual level; it exerts its influence in a way that intends to open up viable trajectories in their communities for the common good. To add even more variety to the plethora of ways we can look at young people on this continent, some young people that you will encounter in this research project describe themselves as ‘unemployed’ and then in their next breath begin to chronicle the numerous campaigns, ventures and strategic mobilisations they are part of in order to protect and build on the social and economic freedoms that should be accessible in their communities (interview with Motsatsi unpublished, 2016). These young people are clearly mobilising for the public good; they are however seldom recognised or remunerated (monetarily or otherwise) for the value they bring into their communities. This perspective is substantiated through the assertion that “the label ‘youth unemployment’ masks the fact that many young people are active in a range of income-generating or otherwise productive

activities (Oosterroom et al., 2016, p. 14). The failure to acknowledge the intricate workings of an informal economy influence the pronouncements made about youth unemployment in Africa, especially because the informal economies hold much of the life force of local communities (Oosterroom et al., 2016, p.14).

Growing discourse in development thinking that acknowledges the positive contributions that young people make describes those who do as “Change makers” or “Change Drivers”. There is a huge proliferation of emerging formal and informal organisations that are concentrating on building the capacity of youth as drivers of change in society. Seeing young people as valuable social agents and casting them as heroes is a growing phenomenon that needs to be watched closely and understood in terms of the expressions of youth that this invariably champions and those that it fails to appreciate (decoloniality.net) . It is the framing of what it means to drive change that requires discernment of the ways that young people are asked to comply and promote the parameters of neo-liberalism or whether they are encouraged to affirm the impulse to transgress.

What remains evident in all these varying descriptions around young people’s agency is the fact that this present and coming majority constitutes an important part of Africa’s future. Whether the experience of youth is one that stresses their marginalisation, their immobilisation, their dissatisfaction, their assertiveness or their resourcefulness in the present moment, who they are and what they hope for in the future poses many fundamental challenges and opportunities for the continent as a whole. Through the vast and unheard stories of her youth we can begin to intonate that Africa is “caught in unpredictable generational crosswinds between her past and her future (Kiwuwa, 2015, p. 4). The visions embedded in the different perspectives that youth hold show us that they are trying to bring into being a vision of the future that foregoes the emancipatory assumptions that were held in the thinking around “independence” that their forbearers held. They have a historical vantage point of the past struggles that their diverse forebears fought for whilst facing the growing burden of their own struggles and stifled concerns for the future. The aspirational imperatives of young people in Africa deserve to be unleashed from the strongholds of what is deemed appropriate for them, whether this is defined by the state or any other overseeing narrative. The questions they have hold redemptive possibilities for the present that ought to be activated. This is the focus of this Not Yet Uhuru project.

0.5 Situating the Relevance of South Africa...

Malaika Wa Azania, an astute young woman from South Africa vocalises what it means to be a part of this “generational crosswinds” (Kiwuwa, 2015, p. 4). In her first book *Memoirs of a Born Free* she dispels the myth that to be born in South Africa after Apartheid is to be a free person released from the burden of the past. In defiance of the way that the present continues to infringe upon the rights and freedoms of the black majority of the South Africa population, she poses some poignant questions for us to consider:

What about us is reflective of a ‘born free’ generation when our generation is born during a time of the struggle for economic freedom and the quest for the realisation of the objectives of the African Renaissance agenda?

I may not have been born during the times of constitutionalised apartheid, but I still remain a product of an epoch of systematic, individualised and institutionalised apartheid. So, nothing about me or those who were born after me is free. My story, my journey, is not a reflection of the freedom spoken about in the romantic speeches of government officials. It epitomises the ongoing struggle for liberation and for emancipation from mental slavery... (Wa Azania, 2014, p.8)

In her memoirs Malaika Wa Azania weaves a strong corollary between the past history of South Africa and the conditions that continue to underpin the present. In it she highlights specific issues that call to question the current democratic dispensation’s dedication to creating a just, equal and fair South Africa for all.

The story of South Africa’s progress is one that is continentally relevant for many reasons. As a country that is amongst the last in Africa to attain ‘independence’ through its democratic dispensation, it gives us the space to freshly appreciate the intrigues of the project of decolonisation in Africa. The many permutations that this country has undergone during and after Apartheid bring us face to face with the modern challenges of establishing a country that reflects the concerns and well-being of the majority of its citizens in Africa. It also gives us insight into the internal betrayals that continue to serve the dictates of a neo-liberal world order whilst the poor remain suspended or urgently rally as they demand the freedom that they fought for. Looking into South Africa gives us a chance to contemporarily observe some of the dynamics of the decolonisation process in slow motion, whilst also retaining the visceral memory of the way that other countries in the continent have fared in the long run. South Africa is a reminder of the way in which the liberatory aims of independence can quickly turn on themselves as Fanon warned us, creating forms of governance that in turn exhaust the potential of those seeking a new day in the life of the most marginalised (Fanon,

1963). Nigel Gibson commented further about the implications of democratic transition in South Africa and how this is linked to trends experienced in other African countries:

Post-apartheid South Africa has become much the same as other parts of Africa, where the mass of people experience the daily anti-humanism and economic authoritarianism of structural adjustment and its political enforcement. The homegrown neo-liberal shift in South Africa has created more unemployment than employment, along with an ideological justification for this. It has shifted the blame for poverty from the apartheid state to the free market, and thus on to the poor themselves, making poverty the fault of the individual and obscuring the real structural legacies of apartheid and colonialism. (Gibson, 2011, pp 105-106)

The South African story indicates how ‘things’ continue to ‘fall apart’ in Africa as Chinua Achebe warned us on the eve of Africa’s independence from British colonialism (see Chapter 2 for an in depth discussion on this) (Achebe, 1959). These corollaries between the injustices of the past and those that persist of our own creation provide an incredible vantage point from which to look into what is not yet, and what resists and transgresses the current state of affairs in the service of an alternative future.

0.6 Calling in the Voices of Change Drivers: Rewiring the Future of Transgressive Decolonial Praxis on their Terms

Whilst considering the different ways that young people on this continent are described and their varied experiences in contemporary Africa, this research is particularly interested in tapping into the critical questions and transgressive learnings of Change Drivers on the move. It seeks to co- conspire² with Change Drivers because they are part of a collective of young people who *willingly* and with great risk put themselves out there in the world through their praxis. A Change Driver has been described as a person who connects their daily struggle with the greatest issues of their times. They align their efforts for a better future with the well-being of the ‘community’ of which they are a part and which they serve – however it is that they define ‘community’. A Change Driver is a young person that is distinguished by the work they are *already* doing for the common good (Why Activate, 2016). They are devoted

² The term ‘co-conspire’ is one that emerged conversationally when I was trying to explain the kind of relationship that I was wanting to foster with Change Drivers. I am aware that this term might not be grammatically sound because the word conspire in itself possesses the prefix ‘co’ denoting something that more than one person does together. Despite this, the spoken term ‘co-conspire’ was able to articulate an aspect of many groups of people working on what was important to them together with others. For the purposes of this study, the spoken term ‘co-conspire’ has been used in order to align this written study with how its key conceptual terms were communicated in praxis.

to creating a positive and progressive future for their communities and society as a whole in their own unique ways.

In an effort to not take the description of Change Drivers for granted, and to acknowledge how this in turn is a construction often levied on young people, I asked young people who identify with the term to define it for themselves as part of the a Not Yet Uhuru workshop process in 2016. They described a Change Driver as “a person who purposely disrupts the status quo for the common good” (Intake 2 unpublished data, 2016). Based on these descriptions there are many examples of Change Drivers on the African continent and in South Africa. This research project actively sought to bring South African Change Drivers that resonate with the aims of this project together to co- conspire with and contribute their learnings to this end.

I elected to work with 21 young people that identify as Change Drivers because the complexity of issues they willingly respond to and transgress give us a way of seeing the contemporary struggles of young people. Their transgressive learning i.e. what they are learning as they challenge the boundaries of the status quo, can help us see the intuitive ways these leaders are dancing at the frontlines of the future. Their efforts, questions and considerations show us the rising cultures of resistance and possibility in motion. In order to gain a contemporary perspective of how we can regenerate and re-imagine emancipatory pedagogies in Africa we need to be able to follow, reflect on and support the cultural wake of Change Drivers on the African continent. In the section that follows I briefly outline my own journey of working with Change Drivers in South Africa and how these experiences have led me to the research questions in this thesis.

0.7 Learning to Move With You: My Journey with South African Change Drivers



Figure 0.1 Change Drivers and I at Stanford valley about to embark on a walk together:

In South Africa an organisation called Activate! Change Drivers is specifically dedicated to understanding, capacitating and supporting the efforts of young people that are working to build a better society. It does so because it believes that thousands of young people are already active and committed to the common good, but they are often unsupported, have little social capital outside their immediate community and very little access to further opportunities. This organisation invites a diverse group of young leaders between the ages of 20 and 30 to be part of this network. The leaders they engage with literally come from all walks of life, from urban or rural contexts, different socio-economic statuses, formal or non-formal educational backgrounds and various identity and gender-based differences. These young leaders truly represent the stark diversity of people who make up South African society.

Change Drivers gain access to the programme by applying to be participants and then being interviewed to establish the extent of their involvement in their communities and their visions for the future of South Africa. The programme seeks to help amplify the successes that are already happening. Activate! believes that if one invests in young people who are already showing commitment to the common good then we can develop a new political constituency

that will be able to lead South Africa's transformation effectively at every level of society (Why Activate, 2016). At the time of its inception the programme identified five objectives that it sought to foster:

1. Building a network of young diverse Change Drivers across the poles of South Africa
2. Championing a critical cohort of youth leadership that can define a new identity and narrative for young people in South Africa
3. Capacitating Change Drivers in a way that assists them to clearly place problems in context and use innovative ideas to solve tough social challenges
4. Opportunities are created for personal growth and development for activities which can serve as a precedent for other young people
5. A purpose driven identity established amongst Activators focused on the common goal of public innovation. (Why Activate, 2016)

The programme began with a 24-day residential training course that was divided into three different modules running for eight days each. Each module invited Change Drivers to strengthen the work they were already doing whilst inviting them to see themselves as part of a dynamic collective that linked people from across South Africa in a collective vision for the future. These modules were held in three 'nodes' across the country, one in the Western Cape, Johannesburg and Durban. The intention was to create three local hubs where a diversity of Change Drivers from across the country could gather for residential training. The themes covered in these three modules included a foundation grounded in identity work that invited Change Drivers to grapple with who they were as individuals whilst also asking them critical questions about what they wanted to represent as a collective. Understanding leadership beyond the patriarchal and elitist frameworks often touted in leadership programmes was a significant aspect of the work. This was done by giving participants a chance to look into their individual gifts of leadership. The power of clear articulation was emphasised as part of the programme by creating the space for Change Drivers to sharpen their capacity to articulate themselves in creative and robust ways. Innovation could be seen as one of the most important cornerstones of the programme because the whole experience was designed to stimulate Change Drivers to look at the problems they face everyday in a different way so as to create relevant and innovative solutions that could make a difference to their communities. Socio-political navigation was also taught by exploring ways in which Change Drivers can better understand their socio-political contexts including the way that

local government works, so as to strategically operate within and between the way it functions. Lastly, the programme stressed the need to partner with each other so that the little ripples of change that each person is contributing to can develop into larger waves of change in society (Why Activate, 2016).

From 2012 to 2015 I worked successively as a team leader, quality manager and material developer for Activate! Change Drivers. Some of my deepest learnings about young people's experience of the world came from my work during these years. During the first two years my role was to ostensibly make sure that the quality of the facilitation in our node was at a level that encouraged the Change Drivers to connect freely and wholeheartedly with the themes of the programme. The overall programme design was very much inspired by innovations in adult learning and experiential learning and as such it sought to be a creative space where materials used could be tangible enough (as opposed to abstract) to invite full participation. Each day was invigorated by the singing of songs, paradoxically mostly old struggle songs that brought back visceral memories of the courage and determination of those who fought against apartheid. The energy of the space we created together gave us the opportunity to explore intimately some of our most painful memories as young people in South Africa whilst also allowing each person to think about and boldly articulate their vision for the future that could be brought forth through their actions. We purposely fanned the flames of the energy and drive of the young people present. As such, even though the programme schedule demanded that we work very hard, we also played very hard as a way of getting to the heart of what was important to us.

As a facilitator and nodal leader my first two years required an understanding of the vision of the programme, so as to offer the sessions in a way that would captivate the incredible diversity of Change Drivers in South Africa. As I began to relax into a tried and tested flow of each of the modules, my work as facilitator extended itself into trying to create a warm and conducive space for the work that we were doing together. This included paying attention to the realities each person faced in their context and finding ways to make sure the material we were exploring could speak directly to these diverse contexts. In many cases when faced with the harsh conditions that Change Drivers were operating in, I felt I had to make sure that the design of the module, however relevant and useful as it might be, did not anecdotally prescribe a way of working that would diminish the complexity of what Change Drivers knew to be true of their contexts. As a black middle-class Kenyan woman facilitator, I found

myself having to check myself consistently and the content that we were working on together for its applicability and relevance to the varying contexts of the Change Drivers. I noticed that as a facilitator I felt unprepared when participants would ask a question that would transgress and challenge the underlying thinking of a particular session. It was not so much that the question asked was an affront to me, it was rather the lack of space (owing to a rigorous schedule) to think through the kind of holding that I could provide (off the cuff) that could help us openly and adequately explore the issues being raised.

A case in point was when we collectively explored 99 creative strategies for non-violent protest. Whilst participants enjoyed some of the more humorous ways of protesting against injustice, they expressed some skepticism about whether these forms of protest would work to create the change they sought. This conversation quickly progressed towards talking about the experience of protests around the country and how, more often than not, according to Change Drivers, the issues that the poor raised were ‘only taken seriously’ if the threat of violence accompanied their protests. In addition to this, I will never forget one participant stating vehemently that the violence that the state unleashes on the poor remains unchecked, and that this violence, so brutal in its effects, cannot remain unaddressed in vulnerable communities.

It is important to understand that the comments that were shared were not advocating for violent protests per se; rather they demanded that we extend our normative understandings about who commits violence, why violence is committed and why some forms of violence are criminalised whilst others are not. They also challenged us to think about violence in much greater ways that go beyond the stereotypical image of the stone throwing angry black male youth. They challenged us to account for the structural violence that the poor endure on a daily basis, and where the sense of justice was with this. In a sense, Change Drivers were asking us to be more *politically rigorous* about the moral and political order that we were advancing in this session. These comments challenged me to consider adequate ways of exploring violence and non-violence in a way that affirmed their experiences. In this instance, 99 creative ways of non-violent protest seemed only to touch the surface of greater concerns that participants were raising. Historically, this was a session dreaded by many facilitators, because the painful realities articulated by Change Drivers could not be adequately explored or resolved in the session as it stood. The impact of violence, state-led or otherwise, was a big part of Change Drivers’ lived realities. It betrayed something to talk about non-violence as if

their contexts and societies genuinely appreciated its values. Furthermore, their experience of violence towards them and others was a painful reality that went bone deep, beyond what the session could explore.

Another example of an issue that piqued my interest on this journey was the emphasis on project planning in the second module. This session took participants through two grueling days of project planning, asking them to thoroughly consider innovative responses to an issue in their communities. Of the many projects that went through this process, only a small handful ever flourished in some shape or form. For others, the project planning was a great exercise on paper but did not ever manifest in reality. I realised that part of the formula of the project planning was that it shaped potential initiatives to respond to issues in the way that a non-governmental organisation would work. A significant part of this was the emphasis on ‘pitching one’s proposal’ and seeking adequate funding to make the project come to life. In terms of the most vulnerable members of the group, this was a particularly interesting session for me. I began to wonder if the focus on social entrepreneurship was overshadowing the very real need for regenerative and sustainable livelihoods for those who were unemployed but already did so much to uplift their communities. I thought that a balance needed to be struck between these two important concerns in a way that did not ask the most vulnerable to build a project on top of the work that they were already doing, but rather asked them to consider how creating a regenerative and sustainable livelihood for themselves could help build on their passions. Perhaps we needed a stronger language that invited Change Drivers to consider ways of growing and sustaining themselves by building and being part of a local economy; working in the opposite way was one of the quintessential means used during Apartheid to break down the capabilities of local communities.

It felt important to try and find ways to address this and to acknowledge that some Change Drivers were not in need of a perfect project proposal to register as an NGO-type of platform. They were already strategically doing work for the common good in their communities. What they did appear to need was a way of thinking about regenerative sustainable livelihoods in a way that could release them to do the work better that they were already doing. This way of working would help us tackle the issue of unemployment and the myth that employment means working for someone else. In this way, we could insist that the focus on building communities could be done without further depleting the resources, monetary and otherwise, of the most economically vulnerable Change Drivers. The message we would share with

them would not be: give more of yourselves without knowing how to subsist within a local economy. Rather, the message should be to learn how to subsist on and generate a more robust local economy as part of your work for the common good. I wondered how we could encourage Change Drivers to innovate around the complex reality of their economic situations as a way of building on their capabilities.

A last case in point was the emphasis on socio-political navigation. Before returning for the second module, Change Drivers were tasked with some research on their own municipalities in order to find out how they run and their strategic priorities for the year. The first day of the second module consisted of the report-backs of this experience. Over the years I began to notice just how jarringly different the experiences were around accessing what should be publicly available information. The experience of attaining this information varied: those based in more affluent suburbs could attain most information online while those in townships or remote rural areas were required to personally haggle with local government officials. Change Drivers that conducted this research in the latter contexts were often treated with suspicion as those in power wanted to know ‘why they wanted details about their municipal profiles’ and ‘what they were going to do with this information’.

Whilst this in itself was a great learning, it also became apparent later in the module that the information we shared about how local government is actually supposed to work was very different from how politics was experienced in the communities they lived in. While the *How to make local government work* handbooks that we shared were a big hit amongst Change Drivers, there was a sense of an enduring gap between how things were supposed to run in the books and what was taking place in reality. After a few years of witnessing this, I began to wonder what additional conversations we could be having about this phenomenon. How could we begin to have rigorous conversation about the way that local government has become a space riddled with politicking that severely affects the work that they are mandated to do. First-hand experience countrywide about the contradictions of local government became surreal. Based on the information we had, I began to wonder how we could start speaking back to this phenomenon beyond stressing forms of accountability that mostly ask some of the most vulnerable members to further marginalise themselves in their communities by standing up alone to powerful and often violent and corrupt local government politics. How else could we collectively challenge the injustices being faced there, and effectively raise the conversation about what was actually happening there?

By the time we reached 2014, it was also clear to me that the Change Drivers that gained access to the programme in 2012 and their counterparts in 2015 were very different. This could have been due to a rapidly changing political climate in South Africa where youth politics had asserted itself boldly onto the national stage. The creation of the Economic Freedom Front (EFF) by the then ousted member of the African National Congress (ANC) Youth League Julius Malema sparked an important resurgence in the fed-up voices of young people across the country (Wa Azania, 2017). Whether or not one agreed with Malema or his party, it was clear that young people in South Africa had stepped over the shadowy promises that the liberating party, the ANC, had not delivered. This was a time when the most contentious issues in 'post-apartheid' South Africa began to be put on the table again in an unapologetic way. The issue of ongoing racism in South Africa and the structural impact of this on the poor black majority was something that young people did not mince their words about. 'Economic freedom' became a term that captured the substantial desire for a better quality of life for the poorest in South Africa by whatever means necessary. The sense was that something had to give because the current situation was unbearably untenable. Equally, the issue of the redistribution of land that was unlawfully taken away during Apartheid was something at the forefront of young people's minds. The palpable tension around these issues made them the content for running jokes throughout our sessions. Paradoxically, even the farm on which we conducted our training became emblematic for some of the land that participants sarcastically identified as 'stolen'.

Whereas the 2012 Change Drivers would express their concerns about inequality in South Africa, in 2015 these issues came pouring out with emboldened and pent up anger as soon as we convened a workshop. The lions that we knew African history was made of showed up in these sessions. This had many implications for our work as facilitators; we had to become clear about what the space was for and what it was that we wanted to achieve. Interestingly, the content we were exploring during sessions was proving useful to participants (based on post-module evaluations). The levels of engagement that we had managed to foster in the programme were very encouraging. It seemed that our programme was an incredibly important foundational layer that served as a useful precipice from which both Change Drivers and facilitators were inspired to broaden the limits of their inquiry. I found myself drawn to the fervour of the debates and conversations that were taking place in the corridors, dining room tables and late at night in the participants' bedrooms. There was something happening in those spaces that I felt needed to be brought into the sessions that were part of

our daily timetable. I found myself analysing the quality of questions and expressions that Change Drivers brought to sessions and comparing these with what they launched into in their own time. I was concerned about a possible separation or division between the issues that were consuming their attention and those that we were exploring together, and furthermore the tenacity and rawness with which young people expressed themselves when they were outside the ‘gaze’ of our plenary sessions. I also became concerned that we as facilitators were not pushing the edge of our own praxis in response to what we were witnessing at the time. That there was a potential space between what the sessions asked of Change Drivers and other integral issues that needed our collective interrogation. There seemed to be a heightened progression of the work that was calling. It was calling me much further into the meaning making of Change Drivers at that particular time. I felt compelled to meet them – undivided – as they truly were, in order to try and find adequate ways to explore the issues most important to them.

By this time in my journey I had been promoted to the role of quality manager and material developer for Activate! As a result of this renewed desire to speak to what was politically relevant, the bulk of our efforts as the training management team were concerned with revitalising the programme content in a way that could provide the space to account for the changes that we were reading in the national climate and training room. This was a time of risky experimentation that sought not to patronise the concerns of Change Drivers whilst trying to provide a suitable pedagogical response to the issues of the time. In 2015 whilst trying to juggle the pressure of responding to the issues that were rising and being implemented ‘on the run’, we gained insight into the difficult questions that Change Drivers were asking themselves – questions they themselves were not afraid to actively challenge in their everyday lives. The levels of brilliance, frustration, vulnerability, courage, risk and ingenuity that I saw in motion literally jump-started a way of seeing into the future through the eyes of Change Drivers and the desire to trust and further explore the implications of what it was they were trying to bring into being. Furthermore, it was interesting to acknowledge the different parts of the dream of the ‘rainbow nation’ that Change Drivers had willfully transgressed in their praxis. There was also an awareness of the questions that were still unresolved for them as they moved forward and the frustrations they continued to navigate through their *transgressive learning*; meaning the practical learning they gained and built on as they intentionally worked to subvert elements of the status quo they felt were untenable.

As I looked deeply into the questions that Change Drivers were asking, I was fascinated by the implications their transgressive learning would have on the way that we think about emancipatory pedagogies in contemporary South Africa. It certainly had a profound impact on my understanding of how emancipatory pedagogies ought to contribute to creating emancipatory futures. For me, this is about finding ways to acknowledge the depth of what is actually happening on the ground and the way that Change Drivers are choosing to respond in the face of these issues.

I also began to question the extent to which we as educators use the skills that we have in the service of *what is emerging* rather than what we *think* needs to emerge. This was an indictment for us to be a “living part of Africa and her thought” as Steve Biko challenged us to be, by saying that “there is no place outside that fight for the artist or the intellectual who is not himself concerned with, and completely one with the people in the great battle of Africa and of suffering humanity” (Biko, 2009, p. 35). Surely, the work of emancipatory education needs to rise to this call by creating spaces with Change Drivers where we can probe into and explore what is happening out there and how they instinctively want to move in response to this? In other words, I have been compelled to think about how we can continue to support and run with Change Drivers as they fashion a future worthy of their longing (Rushdie, 1999). These questions acknowledge the way that I as an educator can be implicated in the maintenance of the status quo through my work. Change Drivers have challenged me to think intentionally about what the work that I love to do enables or discourages and beyond this; how to conceptualise emancipatory pedagogies in a way that challenges my power as an educator by working in ways that radically democratise and explore what should be considered worthy in these situations and what should not. This means that in my role as an educator, I need to accede to spaces where we can collectively negotiate, explore and experiment with the terms under which the potential of the future can be regenerated.

As a social practitioner who has journeyed with Activate since 2012, I have come to understand the huge potential in building on the Activate’s extensive work. It became apparent to me that within the varied experiences, learnings and dreams of this vast network (the biggest of its kind in South Africa!) lies an interesting blue- print for how Change Drivers in South Africa are intuitively evolving towards a future they desire. Since 2015 I have been interested in how Change Drivers’ perspectives about the world around them are evolving, beyond the programme they were a part of, and how they continue to grapple with

issues of social change in their contexts. This interest gave rise to questions about where this network is instinctively leading itself to, and after four years of crafting the curriculum as an organisation, what would happen if we let Change Drivers define what they themselves feel are the most crucial issues that we need to be paying attention to right now. This was an intentional endeavour to find the edge of the praxis of emancipatory pedagogies and allow it to be led by the transgressive learnings of Change Drivers in South Africa at this present moment.

0.8 A Renewed Vision for Transgressive Decolonial Pedagogical Praxis: Rearguard Theories and Change Drivers as Theory Makers

The questions generated through my work with Change Drivers in South Africa were the genesis of this research project. Once again, to further stress the conceptual foundations of this study, it is a regenerative project that responds to the concerns that while dominant discourses “know nearly everything that African states, societies and economies *are not*, we still know absolutely nothing about *what they actually are*” (Mbembe, 2001, p. 9). As such, discovering what is important for African Change Drivers is an important touchstone for this research project. Through the discipline of observing *what we are* and not *what we are not*, we remain focused enough to witness, speak of and generate knowledge that characterises Hountondji’s “African intellectual legacy” (2009, p. 8). This legacy seeks to create a useful distinction between “knowledge of Africa and the knowledge of Africans” (Hountondji, 2009, p. 2). This distinction clarifies the difference between research that simply generates information on or about Africa and research that can begin to showcase and celebrate a project of “creating an intellectual legacy deeply rooted in the African experience” (Hountondji, 2009, p. 9). More can be said on the characteristics of such an emancipatory project. It is a project that seeks to challenge African researchers to:

Not be satisfied with just contributing to the accumulation of knowledge about Africa, a kind of knowledge that is capitalised in and managed by the North as all other sectors of scientific knowledge. African scholars involved in African Studies should have another priority, which is to develop first and foremost an Africa-based tradition of knowledge in all disciplines, a tradition where questions are initiated, and research agendas set out directly or indirectly by African societies themselves. (Hountondji, 2009, p. 9)

This research sees itself as young African emancipatory research that seeks to nurture a grounded approach to academic inquiry and pedagogical praxis on the continent.

A question that was a compelling start for this research journey was “what does it mean to learn for an uncertain future?” and how can we elicit the existing trajectories of Change Drivers in Africa to shape the answers to this question? (Barnett, 2004, p. 247). In order to concentrate on these questions, I embarked on this doctorate project which provided a break from the work over the years with Activate! Change Drivers. The ensuing project has been one in which I have purposefully challenged myself to re-imagine my role as an educator by fashioning a project that aligns itself to take its cue from the everyday questions and struggles that Change Drivers face. In this way, the Not Yet Uhuru! project is testament to my own transgressions as an educator because it has required the willful submission of my own normative conceptions about what emancipatory pedagogies should entail. This has required that I recognise, accede and ‘provincialise’ the pedagogical traditions that have been part of my praxis as an educator in order to allow for the questions and transgressive impulses of Change Drivers to take precedence (Santos, 2016).

Additional theoretical credence that serves this way of thinking is decolonial in nature. Decolonial intellectual activists have recently challenged us to distance ourselves from Eurocentric critical thinking as part of our practices. In the vein of the suggestions made by Hountondji, they suggest we should align ourselves with the ways of knowing and being that are embedded in our own contexts. More insight into why this is necessary part of creating emancipatory futures is shared:

To create such a distance is the precondition for the fulfilment of the most crucial theoretical task of our time; that the unthinkable be thought, that the unexpected be assumed as an integral part of the theoretical work. (Santos, 2016, p. 44)

This thinking substantiates the thoughts previously shared by Delport, about the role of the seemingly ‘impossible’ in emancipatory African futures. De Sousa Santos goes on to describe theoretical work “that [does] not let [itself] be taken by surprise” as “vanguard theories” meaning theory making that is predisposed to lead from the front (De Sousa Santos, 2016, p. 44 [my emphasis]). The word ‘vanguard’ describes a group of people that lead the development of new ideas from the front (Oxford dictionaries online). De Sousa Santos challenges us to forego the desire to lead from the front as intellectual activists, a tendency that positions us as already cognisant of what we *think* is missing or needed. In this way vanguard theories pave the way towards a solution that has already been identified as

instrumental. He juxtaposes this way of working with the necessity of creating “*rearguard theories*”, by which he means:

theoretical work that follows and shares the practices of social movements very closely, raising questions, establishing synchronic and diachronic comparisons, symbolically enlarging such practices by means of articulations, translations, and possible alliances with other movements, providing contexts, clarifying or dismantling normative injunctions, facilitating interaction with those who walk more slowly, and bringing in complexity when actions seem rushed and unreflective and simplicity when action seems self-paralysed by reflection. (De Sousa Santos, 2016, p. 44)

This definition of rearguard theories describes a symbiotic partnership between intellectual activists and the popular energy of social movements of the times. This resonates greatly with the impulse that I am compelled by in my current work with Change Drivers. It entails that intellectual activists offer their skills in ways that move with the concerns that are being articulated by Change Drivers. It must be said that rearguard theories can also be motivated by a vanguard desire to work in this way. The point here is not to completely undermine thinking that tries to take the lead. It is rather the impulse to lead by witnessing and following what is emerging for Change Drivers that I find interesting. This way of working strikes me as indispensable to emancipatory education. It requires that we take our cues from the driving energy of the transgressions that Change Drivers are making in these times. Emancipatory pedagogies are thus defined as a “critical engine and space for the forging of new alliances and imaginaries of the world, and our relationship to it” (Bailey, 2013, p. 623). This is an umbrella term that seeks to appreciate the different waves of work that have taken place historically, work that has sought to redefine and set in motion emancipatory notions of how we can better exist in the world. Emancipation in this instance speaks to an ethic of releasing the fullness of human potential to create and be a part of a world that is not predicated on the political, economic, socio-cultural or environmental subjugation of ‘other’ humans, or the earth, in order to prop up the unsustainable appetites of an elite few. In this way emancipatory education implores us to:

consider carefully *what* education is for and *how* it can be put to use as a means for nurturing a more (economically, environmentally and ecologically) sustainable and critically reflective human polity. (Bailey, 2013, p. 632)

More information on what emancipatory pedagogies constitute will be explored in Chapter 1, as we launch head long into the diverse pedagogic imperatives that have underpinned the concerns for emancipation in Africa and the world.

The pursuit of education that can nurture a more “sustainable and critically reflective polity” requires that we consider Change Drivers as theory makers. That by virtue of being on the forefront of the struggles they experience in their communities, they should be considered as valuable partners and theory makers in their own right. This way of thinking about the contributions that young people make resonates with what Robin Kelley, a foremost scholar of youth resistance and social change, has boldly stated in his work. He entreats us stating that:

All around us, young people are at the forefront of asking how we imagine a different future, but their theorizing goes unnoticed because youth are still seen as junior partners of the social movement. (Kelley, 2014, p. 88)

Limiting the legitimacy of young people’s theorising removes the chance for us to slowly digest and meaningfully engage with the meaning making that propels their actions. It further alienates us from understanding the complex lived experiences that inform their choices and the transgressions they feel are necessary to make. This is an issue of testimonial injustice where “prejudice against some opinions can prevent speakers from successfully putting knowledge into the public domain” (Fricker, 2007, p. 43). In failing to fully understand the way the present moment is being experienced by Change Drivers we stifle and frustrate the regenerative potential of their actions and energy. We fail to productively engage in an ongoing conversation that asks us all to carefully consider:

how to resist the present, more specifically the injustice, violence, and vulgarity of the times, while being worthy of our times, so as to engage with them in a productive, oppositional and affirmative manner. (Braidotti, 2011, p. 268)

Without the commitment to do this, we risk gambling the potential prospects of the future that could perhaps be different from the present we have all come to know.

We can only honestly gain from the vast experiences of Change Drivers if we are willing to take their intellectual and emotional knowledge seriously (Gqola, 2011). Taking ourselves seriously in this way means creating the space where everything that Change Drivers feel and know can be considered as valuable knowledge. The sense of separation that I sensed in the training room between the range of expressions Change Drivers committed themselves to in their own time and what they contributed in plenary thus becomes a central concern in this research. It insists that Change Drivers arrive as an “undivided self” within a community that does emphasise whose way of seeing is right or wrong but can rather find ways to deeply acknowledge the questions that each person is journeying with (Palmer, 2004). The ethical

underpinning of this research insists that this study should create the kind of expressive space in which Change Drivers will be encouraged to share (and to consider as vital knowledge) aspects of themselves that go beyond the reigns of normative representations of logic. To draw on Barnett's words, the range of expression that comes with this can be anything; it can be...

A language of risk, uncertainty and transformation of human being... It may be a poetic language, a disturbance or of inspiration... Smiles, space, unease, frisson, humanity, empathy care and engagement may be helpful descriptors. (2004, p.258)

The range of expression captured in this quote gives us a sense of the depth of listening required as part of this project. It requires that we give cognisance to the embodied knowledge expressed by Change Drivers. It also requires that we give credence to the emotional undercurrents their expressions stem from. Much more can be said about the dimensions and range of expressions that are affirmed within this study. Audre Lorde would explain the need to express one's wholeness in a different but connected way. Her work generates the idea of a raw form of knowledge that we all possess: 'erotic knowledge' which goes beyond the celebration of mental and rational prowess as the benchmark of intellect. Lorde also explains 'erotic knowledge' as revealing the false dichotomy between the spiritual and the political. It is a space where what we hold sacred and what is real can be held with the same credibility. She also describes erotic knowledge as knowledge that is formed by the "erotic – the sensual – those physical emotional and psychic expressions of what is deepest and strongest and richest within each of us" (Lorde, 2007, p. 59). Here even one's deeply embedded skepticism is a form of knowledge that requires respect and understanding (Mkhize, 2016). The erotic for her "is an assertion of the life force of women [and men]; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work and our lives (Lorde, 2007, p. 55). The aspect of reclaiming captured in this quote loudly echoes the aspect of regeneration, re-imagining and emancipation invited by this research project. A few generations later, still in the black feminist tradition of Audre Lorde, bell hooks enters the scene and deftly builds on the sense of working with the erotic in her work by speaking about the power of 'embodied knowledge'. Embodied knowledge is "a way of knowing that is often expressed through the body, what it knows, what has been deeply inscribed on it through experience" (1994, p. 91). Through acknowledging what is deeply inscribed on the body, hooks created spaces that draw out and celebrate each person's unique experience in community with others. Affirmations that stem from such an engagement are captured below:

I have begun to find my true voice and that no pre-cut niche exists for it; that part of the work to be done is making a place, with others where my and our voices, can stand clear of the background noise and voice our concerns as part of a larger song. (hooks, 1994, p.185)

The methodology of this research project desires to create the kind of expressive space where the voices of Change Drivers and mine as a social practitioner, writer and musician, can develop the sense of community and freedom highlighted in this quote. It is a space where what is deepest and strongest for us and our embodied experience is given the space to express itself and this expression can be acknowledged as knowledge. Ethically, in the words of Miranda Fricker:

If one lives on a society or a subculture in which the mere fact of an intuitive or an emotional expressive style means that one cannot be heard as fully rational, then one is thereby unjustly afflicted by hermeneutical gap – one is subject to a hermeneutical injustice. (Fricker, 2007, p. 161)

This point is substantiated further by a broader assertion that it is unjust to have a “significant area of one’s social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to hermeneutical marginalisation” (Fricker, 2007, p. 158). In other words, different perspectives of the world also constitute valuable theories about the world that deserve equal credence. This research insists that we need to recognise Change Drivers in their capacity as knowers and theory makers in this regard. This implies that we acknowledge them as critical actors in the co-creation of the future. Reading into the transgressive impulses of Change Drivers shows us the everyday ways in which they resist, reimagine and regenerate the possibilities that lie within their contexts. The value of looking into everyday experiences and events as a revelatory site for emancipation is emphasised below:

Everyday acts of resistance are telling you what people desire. They are telling you what causes pain. They are telling you where there are trouble spots. They are telling you where people are confused. Everyday acts of resistance are revelatory, revealing things about social relationships and power. (Tuck & Young, 2014, p. 87)

The power of looking into the dynamics embedded in the everyday also slows down the tendency to think that people have something to say only when there is a protest. It embeds us in the ways that Change Drivers are strategically choosing how to navigate situations they experience every day. It is an invitation to look at what might seem routine and surface the innate embodied knowledge that colours it. More can be said on looking into the everyday as a space where we can begin to rethink what it means to be ‘radical’:

Radicalisation consists of searching for the subversive and creative aspects of the everyday, which may occur in the most basic struggle for survival. The changes in the everyday have thus a double valance: concrete improvement of the everyday and the signals they give of far larger possibilities. (Santos, 2016, p. 44)

Through the focus on the everyday transgressions that Change Drivers choose to make in their everyday interactions, we can begin to see some of the life-giving practices that sustain them. These transgressions build a picture of the movements that are already in play and provide us with the space to consider what these movements offer us in terms of an emancipatory perspective on education. The invitation is for Change Drivers to see and understand the value of sharing all aspects of their “undivided” selves as part of this emancipatory project (Palmer, 2004). This goes beyond simply seeking their permission to use their work. It is a sense of collusion that requires their complicity as part of the research project to uncover the meaning making that drives their impulses. This is why I have chosen to describe the collaboration with Change Drivers as one that requires that we ‘co- conspire’ and ‘co - inspire’ with each other in order to build an understanding of what they are currently thinking and feeling about the world around them.

The concerns raised in this sub-section address the particular role of Change Drivers within the study. It is important to put this in conversation with the overarching themes that this chapter charts as the intention of the study. The title of the thesis as a whole is shared:

Not Yet Uhuru!

Attuning to, re- imagining and regenerating

transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis across times

Khapa(ring) the rising cultures of Change Drivers in contemporary South Africa

The relevance of the book and the song *Not yet Uhuru* has been discussed, particularly as it pertains to the desire to pay attention to what is ‘not yet’ within the study. As part of its focus, the study hopes to attune to and re-imagine the creative resources we can use to help us see into a history of transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis across the continent, in particular, and in the diaspora in some instances whilst also acknowledging how these dynamics are replicated across the global South through the varying impacts of colonialism and conquest. It does so by working with a range of alternative sources that bring additional resources to use in our theory making. The idea of the study being regenerative is very important. It recognises that often academic work can be critically compulsive to the extent

that it can dismantle what it feels is problematic without adequately doing the work of trying to build a robust alternative from which we can embark on collective experiments together (see Braidotti, 2011 and Santos, 2014) . As such, in creating *regenerative* research in this study, the hope is to proliferate the study with as many pedagogical openings as possible that can enrich our imaginations around what transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis could be in these contemporary times. This is seen as an ethical stance to take in emancipatory African research. Lastly, the concept of ‘*ukukhapa*’³ within the title is used to signal a relationship in which somebody accompanies the other, or more simply keeps another company. In re-imagining my role as an educator and seeking to co-conspire with Change Drivers in South Africa, this concept became a useful symbolic metaphor for the way we have related to each other on this particular mile of research. In addition to this, the ‘rising cultures’ that Change Drivers have alluded to through their offerings are also accompanied by the voices of many that come before them who have in their own ways grappled with what it means to transgress towards decolonial praxis. Thus, the concept of *ukukhapa* is useful in signaling the relationship that I have tried to establish amongst ‘co- conspirers’, as well as the interrelated relationship that the past and the present have with those that are asserted by Change Drivers in this contemporary time.

0.9 Research Questions

The study can be divided in two parts. The research questions that informed the first half of the study emerged when asking questions about how to adequately accompany Change Drivers in Contemporary South Africa. The first part of the study (chapters two to four) explores three historical re-imaginings of transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis both on the continent and in the diaspora. The central organising question that helped guide this part of the study is:

- i) If we were to look at the emancipatory efforts that have existed across time on this continent and in the diaspora, what themes in praxis emerge out of their endeavours, and what questions remain when we put these into dialogue with contemporary times?

³ *Ukukhapa* is a concept in isiXhosa, it refers to a sense of accompanying someone or keeping someone company. The relevance of this concept for this study will be unpacked in greater depth in Chapter 2.

An important part of this has been to question and engage as diverse a range of texts and resources as possible so as to resource this study with many ways of seeing into the subject matter. These have been brought into conversation with the transgressive learnings of South African Change Drivers in the second part of this study (from Chapters 5 to 7). The transgressive learning of Change Drivers is accompanied by the some of the historical insights gained in the first part of the study in order to regenerate and reimagine the thematic concerns that ought to spearhead our understanding of what emancipatory pedagogies should look like in contemporary South Africa, and Africa and the world. These thematic concerns carve out pedagogical grounds from where the thematic concerns revealed in Chapter 6 can be explored further in an open-ended way in Chapter 7 and beyond. As such the thematic concerns embedded in the transgressive learning of Change Drivers open up a space for us all to reconnect with what has been articulated as relevant through their stories. This information challenges us to think about important steps and lines of inquiry that emancipatory pedagogies in contemporary South Africa should prioritise and address. Below is a breakdown of the questions that inform the second part of the study:

- ii) What transgressive learning is revealed in the experiences of Change Drivers?
What dreams are they instinctively leading themselves to?
- iii) As educators for social change how can we co- conspire with them to better respond to these visions of the future? How do these insights help us attune, reimagine and regenerate praxis based efforts towards a paradigm of peace, humanness, pluriversality (Dlala, 2017, p. 52 and Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2013, p.142)

0.10 Chapter Breakdown:

The intention of this prologue and positioning was to carve out and explore the theoretical questions that inform this study. This was done by asking critical questions about how we perceive the future in Africa and the particular role that Change Drivers on the continent can play in helping us in defining this. It sought to clarify why it is important to appreciate alternative emancipatory imaginations of what this could be at the same time as stipulating why the rising cultures that are emerging from the transgressive learnings of Change Drivers in South Africa are thematically important to trace.

The first chapter seeks to inscribe the themes found in this study by crystalising an understanding of the relationship between the past the present and the future through a story that was gifted to me about the journey of a young girl in order to be considered a young

woman in her community. The themes found here act as a leitmotif for the study, not only in its ability to highlight the relationship between the past, the present and the future in a visceral way, but also in its ability to talk about the intergenerational accompaniment as part of one's meaning making in the world. It solidifies the historical trajectory that is cultivated in the first part of the thesis using the metaphor of accompaniment as one that sparked the three diverse historical reviews that follow it. It sets out the reasoning behind the specific sources that were chosen as valuable archives to delve into as part of a historical analysis of transgressive decolonial praxis over time on this continent and in the diaspora.

The second chapter kicks off using story and fictional texts as an important archive in the understanding the transgressive history of the continent that are found in its nascent colonial encounters. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is engaged as a resource that explores a myriad of themes that provide for useful reflection. The chapter additionally structures itself as an intergenerational conversation between my mother and me. This is done in order to stretch the loneliness of single person authorship into a way of seeing that is historically grounded by the meaning making one can find within one's community.

The third chapter charts a history of past trajectories that showcase transgressive agendas for emancipation that have been pursued on the continent as part of its liberation movements and beyond. It focuses specifically on the work of Julius Nyerere as a baseline for the conversation, whilst weaving in comparative discussions about other emancipatory efforts on the continent. Critical questions about the operationalisation of transgressive decolonial strategies are considered including the gaps and possibilities in praxis that were considered at the time, and how (if at all) these trajectories ought to be reconsidered in these contemporary times.

The forth chapter changes form, mobilising a very different kind of historical reading on transgressive impulses on the continent. This time focus is on the role of women and queer⁴

⁴ The term 'queer' is used to denote humans that do not conform strictly to heterosexual, cisgendered and patriarchal identities. Cisgendered refers to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex. 'Queer' can include members who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Asexual, Queer or Questioning plus those other orientations not specifically labelled. Chapter Four of the study is cognisant that a significant number of the contributions of poetry that are shared are written by women who question and query heterosexual, cisgendered, patriarchal norms. I wish to signal that some of the poets included are 'queer' because this is how they identify themselves. I wish to do this whilst also acknowledging that the chapter does not delve in depth into Queer Theory, which is a large body of theoretical work. The chapter seeks to signal in passing that the meaning made in it derives some of its articulations from a queer perspective,

persons and the resources that sit at the heart of their praxis over time. The chapter uses poetry as its medium for exploration. It does so in order to highlight a different expression of the sensibilities that are embedded in their sustenance and survival over time. It asks us to consider as valuable the knowledge that women and queer bodies on the continent and in the diaspora have garnered intergenerationally within patriarchal structures. It seeks to uncover and comment on how they have been able to mobilise for change across generations. It brings this into conversation with what transgressive decolonial praxis asks of us in contemporary times and what important through-lines are important to honour as part of this struggle.

The fifth chapter delves into the methodological designs of this project, firstly by going further with a discussion on the methodologies that substantiate the forms of expression that the first 5 chapters showcase. This chapter also outlines the methodology that was employed in the ‘field work’ workshops that were the means through which the offerings in this thesis were gathered. Critical insight into the work that was necessary in order to create the workshops that could begin to answer the research questions will be shared in this chapter. Lastly, the methodological designs of the project are further explained by showcasing the way in which the offerings gathered in this research, were represented and why these forms of representation cohere with the ethical and theoretical ambitions of this project. It will also go into the choices made around how to honour and provide meaningful reflection of these offerings were made. The use of song as a medium that could fulfill a myriad of the ethical demands that the integrity of the study demanded will be shared.

Chapter 6 takes its time in exploring the imprints made by each of the 21 Change Drivers that this research co- conspired with. Through the use of film offerings and biographies of their own writing, readers will meet each Change Driver in depth highlighting in each instance what transgression means for them and how this plays out in their everyday lives.

Cartographies of the transgressive trajectories chosen by each Change Driver are shared in this chapter as well as a song that I have crafted in response to each Change Driver’s offering that captures the unique gesture that each person is making towards a future worthy of their longing.

therefore rendering the insight gained there outside the specific bounds of compulsory heterosexual, cisgendered and patriarchal norms. I hope that this can be appreciated as a useful layering on the poetry shared as part of this chapter.

The relevance and implications of what is emerging from the whole study will be highlighted in the seventh and final chapter, carving a way forward for the questions and practices that have meaning for Change Drivers in South Africa whilst accompanying them with resonances that affirm and query our praxis in contemporary times. This chapter brings the conversation back to the rising cultures in emancipatory praxis that emerge when we consider a history of transgressive decolonial praxis on the continent and beyond from the past into the present towards a future worthy of our longing. The possibilities in transgressive decolonial praxis are explored in this chapter through a litany that chronicles the experimental pedagogical practices that seek further co-engagement as a part of this work.

Part One

Chapter 1: Calling Back to the Past and Tuning into the Future: Journeys in Pedagogical Thought and Praxis Across Times

1.1 Introduction

One evening, as we were recalling the differences between our childhood upbringings, a friend of mine, Napiadi, told me the story of the initiation that marked her transition from being a girl to becoming a young maiden in Pedi culture. The Pedi are an ethnic group situated in the North West of South Africa. This particular ritual was set to take place in a village in Limpopo, home of Napiadi's maternal family. The village is situated close to a dark forest, the site where the initiation would take place. At nightfall many young girls gathered with their grandmothers to face this important rite of passage. One by one each paired grandmother and granddaughter team assembled at the edge of the forest to begin their initiation.

Napiadi told me that when it was their turn to perform the rite of passage, her grandmother led her to a fire at the edge of the forest. In the light and heat of the fire she carefully told her granddaughter about the process she was to undergo. The task set before her was clear. She had to walk through the length of the dark forest that stood before her and emerge safely on the other side. Many young women were terrified of going deep into the dark forest during daytime, so the thought of willfully entering it at night inspired fear and anxiety. Throughout the storytelling of her youth the forest was a place where strange creatures and spirits were believed to inhabit. Walking into the dark forest at night was a confrontation with one's deepest fears. This task, daunting as it was, had to be performed in order for her to be considered a young maiden in her community.

This journey was daunting, but something special was offered to help with the quest to the other side of the dark forest. Over generations each grandmother and daughter team would recite an incantation that accompanied the initiate as she performed this rite. This incantation took the shape of a chant that would be repeated as the initiate traversed the unknown and

mysterious path before her. The incantation was simple; it was a call and response between her grandmother and her granddaughter, said over and over again into the darkness of the night.

When it was time for Napiadi to begin her journey, she gathered the resolve needed to begin to say the words that would help carry her across the dense dark forest. “*Nkhono kea ea!*”⁵ she shouted, stating her intention. And her Grandmother shouted back in response, “*Tsamaea Ngoanaka!*”⁶ And so her journey began. These simple words, shouted out loud, confirmed the boldness of her determination. Her resolve was in turn met by the supportive reply of her grandmother. The power of their partnership became a call and response echoed over and over again into the darkness of the night. Napiadi explained to me that as she turned to face the forest, and never once looked back, she could hear her grandmother’s response echoing back at her every time she stated her intent; “*Nkhono kea ea!*”⁷. She knew to expect a reassuring reply “*Tsamaea Ngoanaka!*”⁸ lovingly exclaimed by her grandmother.

As she went deeper and deeper into the forest this call and response grew into a rhythm that animated every series of steps that she took. Before long, her grandmother’s voice grew fainter and fainter in the distance covered behind her. But her call remained loud and clear perforating the steps that she took. Napiadi remembered that when she was in the middle of her journey she could not hear the assurance of her grandmother’s response anymore. But her call steadily rang out, piercing the unknown sounds emerging from the forest. The rhythm they had created together traced out a space where she knew for certain her grandmother’s response belonged. Even if she couldn’t quite hear it, she knew her grandmother was egging her on throughout the darkest, most daunting part of her journey.

Only the sounds of the forest and the memory of her grandmother’s response accompanied her for a long, long time until, far in the distance before her, she could almost hear a whisper rhythmically adding itself to the sounds around her. She strained to listen to this new sound emerging in front of her. Her feet steadily carried her forward to the sounds that were emerging in front of her. “*Tsamaea ngoanaka,*”⁹ the voice faintly echoed. She strained to

⁵ Grandmother I am going!

⁶ Go my child!

⁷ Grandmother I am going!

⁸ Go my child!

⁹ Go my child!

listen carefully to where the voice was coming from and began to follow it while shouting forward to it “*Nkhono kea ea!*”¹⁰

With every step taken the whispering voice grew bolder and warmer in the distance in front of her. She steadily moved towards it until she began to see the faint glow of a fire emerging through the shadows of the trees within her sight. “*Tsamaea Ngoanaka,*”¹¹ a familiar voice bellowed out in front of her. Swiftly, her feet continued to make their way to the source of the flame. When she arrived at the fire’s warm glow she was greeted by the recognisable face of her very own mother, smiling proudly at her, ready to welcome her as young maiden in her community.

The metaphors and layers of meaning embedded in the story of Napiadi’s initiation are intriguing. Within the symbolic world presented here we are given a sensory experience of the relationship that one can have to the past and the future through initiation rites that call us to traverse the challenging terrain of the present. As part of her experience, Napiadi cut across the terrain of the present with the support and symbolic accompaniment of those who were behind her and those that were calling her forth. Her grandmother’s rhythmic response to her call assured her that she was not alone in the present moment, that as she walked she was accompanied by those who were behind her. Even when she could not hear her grandmother, she knew that her supportive response was echoed through every series of steps that she dared to take in the dark. Eventually, the future that she was making her way to also heralded her forward. This future expected her arrival. Even from the future, the response remained the same: “*Tsamaea ngoanaka!*” (*Go on, my child!*) The relationship between the past, the present and future, as highlighted in this rite of passage, is complex and cyclical. Each of these vantage points plays an important part in helping the young initiate cover ground she has never dared to negotiate before.

This complex understanding of time is an important part of the conceptual framework of this research project. This research positions itself as a call and response between a past historical legacy and the present moment that it was reaching for. This present moment that we find

¹⁰ Grandmother I am going!

¹¹ Go my child!

ourselves in calls back to the foundations of its past historical legacy, whilst simultaneously reaching towards a future of its own. This is a complex understanding of time that positions the telos of transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis on the continent as intermittent waves between the past, present and future that reach for each other from across times. Mbembe substantiates this complex re-imagining of the concept of 'African time':

[Time] of African existence is neither linear time nor a simple sequence in which each moment effaces, annuls, and replaces those that preceded it. To the point where a single age exists within society. This time is not a series but an interlocking of presents, pasts and futures that retain the depths of other presents, pasts and futures, each age bearing, altering and maintaining the previous one. (Mbembe, 2001, p. 16)

This study uses this intergenerational layering of time to choreograph its overall structure. It is conceptualised as a journey in transgressive decolonial pedagogical thought and praxis across times¹². The first part of this thesis seeks to acknowledge past impetuses towards emancipation in Africa, the diaspora and the global South by appreciating some of the transgressive decolonial thinking, practices and pedagogies that accompanied these prospects. It invites a discussion of the elements of the past that can re-invigorate our understanding of what was possible at the time, and what practices people employed in order to create a future worthy of their longing (Rushdie, 1999). It also asks us to consider how these efforts fared across times, and what lessons they offer us in the present moment. In turn, some of the elements of the present are put under scrutiny by questioning what we can learn from them, and the past in order to regenerate our emancipatory visions of the future. Simply put, this is an exercise in learning about the continued support that the past offers us, and how it can see us through the distance that we still need to travel in the present. The future is also given a role to play as it patiently and persistently calls us forward through the transgressive impulses

¹² This concept of time influences the way in which I engage with references in this study. Some academic writing references the sources they engage with as if they only belong to the past. As a result they refer to these sources in the past tense. I was aware that the range of sources I engage with in this study continue to share their questions and relevance in a charged way in the contemporary moment. Thus I have chosen to write this study as a 'present moment' engagement with the myriad works that have proved to be relevant.

You will notice that I do this mostly by using the present tense, because this study believes that relevant texts and sources do not stop talking over time; often their relevance is amplified as if the works continue to speak and mutate. This style of writing adheres to the use of the "literary present", a form of writing used primarily in literature and the arts that asks one to discuss artistic works or sources in the "perpetual present, meaning that it is always there, always present" <https://www.kibin.com/essay-writing-blog/literary-present-tense-need-know/>.

The study engages a wide range of sources that are better served within this convention of academic writing. I use this style of writing while being fully cognisant that in some cases the viewpoints of the authors might have changed over time. This style of writing seeks to acknowledge the thoughts of its collaborating authors in conversation with the present moment, whilst still signalling an openness to other ideas that the authors might have generated over time that are not accommodated within the scope of the research.

of South African Change Drivers. In doing so, it insists that we gather the strength to make our way towards it. More is said on the importance of decolonising our ideas around time in order to foster emancipatory futures:

We imagine our lives with other possibilities, moving beyond past, present and future, moving through past, present and future, traversing temporal linearity. This provides us with the possibility for moving beyond imaginative limitations – or in other words to decolonize time. To imagine is to think about the past, to ground oneself in the present while thinking about a possible future that might have come into being, or those futures which never were...

We suggest that when we write, share, or listen to narratives we become time travelers, traversing and rejecting temporal constraints imposed by the legacy of colonial order. Revisiting the open wounds of the past through this mode of time travelling evokes an inescapable responsibility towards those pasts, presents and futures which have ceased to exist or have *not yet* arrived. (Akbari-Dibavar & Emiljanowicz, 2017, pp. 9-10 [my emphasis])

The intention of the first part of this study is to do exactly this, to time travel by (re)membering a contemporary appreciation of the past, whilst putting these into dialogue or accompanying them with the present moment so as to address the concerns of a future yet to come¹³. Many cultures on the continent that I have experienced emphasise the importance of accompanying someone on a journey. In Luhya the word is *khuhelkesa*, in Sesotho the word used to accompany someone is *ho felehetsa*. Milusithando Bongela recently wrote an article that explained a similar concept of *ukukhapa* in isiXhosa. The article is called “We are not meant to be alone” and in it she explains why this concept is central to *isiNtu*:¹⁴

uKukhapha is the bedrock of *isiNtu*.¹⁵ This untranslatable notion of *uMntu ngumntu ngabantu*.¹⁶ *Awuhambi wedwa, ukhatshwa ngabanye abantu*,¹⁷ including this idea that one is always with their ancestors, whether you believe it or not...

The cornerstone of our societies, our communities as *abantu*,¹⁸ was to build and maintain communities. Strong communities, so that *unomntu wokukhapa*.¹⁹ In joy and in sorrow, one should not be alone. (Bongela, 2018, p. 1)

Bongela eloquently explores the concept of *uKukhapa* in contemporary times where loneliness and isolation have become a big part of modern day malaise. I believe the concept

¹⁴ *isiNtu* is translated as a traditional way of doing things. It encompasses a full cosmology of praxis that includes Xhosa people's way of life and their culture.

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ A person is a person through other people

¹⁷ You do not move alone, you are accompanied by other people

¹⁸ People

¹⁹ You have someone to accompany you

of *uKukhapa* is also relevant to the symbolic accompaniment and the relationship between the past, the present and the future illustrated through Napiadi's journey. As part of her initiation, she traversed a gauntlet that required the symbolic support and accompaniment of where she had come from, as well as an appeal for her arrival in the future. This concept is an important one to keep in mind throughout the first and second part of this thesis.

In order to present the past, the present and the future as aspects of time that accompany or '*khapa*'²⁰ each other, the first part of this study organises itself around the belief that "[re]membering] can be a highly generative space, reminding us of William Faulkner's observation that 'the past is never dead. It's not even past' (Mitchell, Strong-Wilson, Pithouse and Allnutt, 2011, p. 2). The central question that the first part of this study seeks to address is: "How can we bring the past and memory forward so as to inform the future?" (ibid., p. 2).

In order to bear witness to what the past has to offer us, the first part of this study will chart a (re)membered terrain of emancipatory impetuses on this continent and in this world by looking into transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis that demonstrated the desire to create emancipatory futures that could break with the dictates of a colonial past. The reviews found here look back to appreciate the previous transgressions of those that have come before us, and trajectories they tried to lay open through their work and everyday living. It highlights the emancipatory visions that lay behind the efforts of leaders and everyday peoples who in their own way faced the density of the past and dared to "invent the future" in different terms (Murrey, 2018). By doing so, the first part of this study seeks to bear witness to some of the "[activities] of those whose labours brought" the present "into being", whilst simultaneously appreciating some of the enduring constraints in the present that continue to produce a situation in which the 'not yet' still has a hold on our imaginations (Ingold, 2007, p. 24).

Taking the time to appreciate different kinds of historical artefacts that tell stories about the past impetuses for emancipation on the continent can help us better reorientate ourselves in this present moment. Popular historian Yuval Noah Harari shares why studying a diversity of historical clues is an important part of creating the future:

Studying history aims to loosen the grip of the past. It enables us to turn our head this way and that, and begin to notice possibilities that our ancestors could not imagine, or didn't want us to imagine. By observing the accidental chain of events that led us

²⁰ Commonly spoken slang that shortens the concept of *uKhukapa*

here, we realise how our very thoughts and dreams took shape – and we begin to think and dream differently. Studying history will not tell us what to choose, but at least it gives us more options. (Harari, 2017, p. 69).

This quote helps us to appreciate what we can gain from (re)membering history. The aspect of appreciating the “thoughts and dreams” that brought us to the present moment strongly correlates with the kind of experience that I wish to create in the first part of this study. It seeks to provide a multi-sensory experience that rummages through different historical artefacts that have influenced my imagination of transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis in Africa, the diaspora and the global south over time. It is a space in which I can begin to revisit and engage the emancipatory trajectories that have influenced my thinking over time, whilst simultaneously assessing the set of options they enable or strategically forego in the present moment.

As part of paying attention to the pedagogical shifts and insights that have influenced my trajectories over time it is important that we expand our understanding of what it means to *read* the world in this way. The intention here is to free this research project from appreciating only a certain type of ‘text’ or ‘source’ as valuable. In particular, it endeavours to go beyond only appreciating peer reviewed academic journals and academic texts as the *only* source of valuable knowledge. Instead, it seeks to represent a reading of the world as encountered through different types of texts and sources that appeal to the many ways that we naturally come to appreciate our worlds. Engaging with the ‘text’ or the ‘source’ in diverse ways entails a “search for appropriate form and technique, which will enable [us] to grasp complexity and render it understandable” (Ndebele in Enwezor, 2002, p. 421). Our meaning making in the world is instinctively informed by diverse sensory inputs, the reading of academic texts being simply one source. This research insists that we habitually interact with multiple forms of knowledge that are metaphorically coded in diverse ways – like Napiadi’s story. It seeks to share a variation of texts and sources based on the enduring impact that these sources have had on the collective African imaginary.

Reading into significant and diverse offerings made across time gives us the opportunity to appreciate the layered ways in which we have come to make sense of this place. Here, the visceral impact of fictional novels, biographies, reviews, media, images, poetry, song, political analysis and peer reviewed articles are an interrelated part of the weaving of a journey in transgressive decolonial pedagogical thought and praxis. In each instance the gift

of retrospect and further reading will be used to fill in some gaps in praxis that demand our attention in the present. In doing so, this chapter asks us to consider some of the vital threads in praxis that are important to consider, while also appreciating additional strains of thought that need to ‘come in’ in order to help us face the unresolved questions that we hold as we move towards what is not yet (Okri, 1997, pp. 45-46).

In order to further orientate you as a reader, it is also important to foreground how ‘pedagogy’ is conceptualised as part of this study. Pedagogy can be defined as “the method and practice of teaching” (Oxford dictionaries online). This very basic definition of pedagogy could benefit from the appreciation of not only how one teaches, but also the concepts that underpin how we learn, and how we turn the knowledge gained into action. For the purposes of this research, I will be thinking about pedagogy as how we teach and how we learn, because both are important to consider. In addition to this, pedagogy will also be understood as something that can be *explicitly* foregrounded or additionally something that can be *inferred* through analysis. This way of thinking about pedagogy insists that if we look and listen closely to what is being relayed, we can gain an appreciation of the required roles and relationships that are underscored within certain principles and practices. By looking carefully into these roles and relationships we can begin to *infer* what teaching or learning means within that practice. The dynamics within certain practices thus reveal the pedagogical concepts that underpin it. For example, Napiadi’s initiation was intentionally created to teach her something about what it means to belong as a young maiden in her community. We can infer that the journey towards being a young maiden in her community requires undertaking a daunting journey into the unknown with the symbolic support and guidance of those who stand behind you and those who are awaiting your arrival. It is a journey undertaken with one’s ancestry in tow. As a young girl that journey was designed to help her learn something about her community and her place within it, and perhaps inscribe a methodology that could be of use to her in other travails she might face over time. Pedagogical explorations are thus inscribed within the principles and practices that have captured our imaginations over time.

In particular reference to the way this study plays out, pedagogical understandings are inscribed in the way in which emancipation has been conceptualised and practised on this continent. What was needed for an alternative and emancipatory future was intimately related to the roles, relationships and practices prescribed and willfully taken up by actors in that time. These practices and principles in turn relate to *pedagogical assumptions* around what it

means to teach and learn for an emancipatory future within that context, whether or not these initiatives ultimately succeeded. Understanding pedagogy as something implicitly or explicitly present in emancipatory principles and practices gives us a chance to look into a set of different intertextual resources, in each instance acknowledging the ways in which particular practices bring with them an inscribed boundary for pedagogical exploration. It is these pedagogical inscriptions that this study seeks to explore, bringing with it new insights from the present moment that can further stretch the assumptions of those times towards those that are calling from the future.

Finally, this study desires to create the space where I as a practitioner can do the reflexive work necessary in order to interrogate the premises that my own praxis has emerged from, and the questions that have journeyed with me along the way. It stems from the desire to “complicate my praxis”, an impulse gained from the growing recognition of what my work inadvertently legitimates or delegitimizes as outlined briefly in the prologue and positioning (Taylor, 2011, p. 118). The self-reflexive aspect of this work rises to the call for educators to think carefully about the implications of their praxis in a precarious and uncertain world. Lisa Taylor recounted some important cautions that educators in a changing world ought to consider:

Educators’ most urgent challenge... lies in inquiring into our own practices of learning and not-learning, into potentially transformative reading practices that might intervene in an increasingly polarised, inhumane world: “How do we learn to think about it? How do we teach others to do so?”(p. 172). Green suggests that before they can teach others to think about it, teachers must embark on their own journeys of thinking in new ways about social injustice and implication, confronting the ‘difficult knowledge’ (Britzman, 1998) that threatens attachments to, and defences of, a coherent, innocent self- image. Such journeys are inevitably recursive and circuitous, exceeding and eluding rationalist progressive educational agendas. (Boler, 1999, Britzman, 1998, Ellsworth, 2005, Felman, 1987 in Taylor, 2011, p. 116)

As a part of inquiring into my own practice as an educator, I will not only demonstrate what I have been drawn to on this journey, but also what I have been significantly challenged by in my pedagogical praxis. I also want to engage with the questions that I still hold, part of which have led me to explore this regenerative study. It is important to acknowledge that the intention here is not to “render romantic nor reify [my] practice” (Lavia and Sikes, 2010, p. 90). This is rather an injunction to “occupy a deconstructed mode where vulnerabilities and complexities foreground any attempts to marginalise or silence [my] choice to confront centre/ periphery issues” (Lavia and Sikes, 2010, p. 91). As part of this process I want to keep

“coming back to the epistemological, ontological and axiological tensions that [I] know [have been] inherent in [my] practice”, and to re-construct these tensions in the form of a (re)membered review (Lavia and Sikes, 2010, p. 91).

Lastly, as a way of further anchoring myself in these reviews, I wish to acknowledge that even though this study is grounded and aspires towards decolonial praxis, the questions that I have held while traversing this pedagogical expanse demand that I acknowledge the ways in which my praxis has fallen short of this, and how this has evolved over time. In doing so, I release myself from the dilemma of considering “what parts of [myself] to leave out” while I am in “pursuit of decolonising practice” and instead welcome the full complexity of the trajectories that have shaped me up to this moment (Lavia and Sikes, 2010, p. 93).

The first part of the study is divided into three sections. The first section consider the tensions that lay within African societies during the nascent stages of the colonial encounter. It asks questions about the emancipatory concerns lodged at this interface, and what insights these concerns might offer us in these times. Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* is used as a catalyst to engage an intergenerational exploration of the issues that present themselves at that intersection, and how these issues are coherent with the concerns that we still hold dear. An imaginative re-reading of this text gives us the space to appreciate the pedagogic concerns that can be inferred from the text, and the transgressive impulses that arrive when we appreciate this iconic resource.

The second section skips ahead to appreciate the way that African liberatory movements culminated in the waves of independence that played out in history. It looks at some endeavours in transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis that sought to reshape the future of the African state. In particular, the work of those that in one way or another sought to reconfigure and challenge the colonial matrix of power through their leadership, is traced in this chapter. It does so by following the ideological impulses and practical implementations of Julius Nyerere as a through line – whilst comparatively juxtaposing this with the efforts of other renegade leaders who tried to challenge and address coloniality in different ways. The history of these efforts are used to discern what it meant to confront empire at the time, and the pedagogical learnings that can be inferred from their practices.

The last section of the first part of this study seeks to recognise the voices omitted from a historical reading of the liberation movements and struggles towards independence in Africa and the diaspora. In particular this chapter seeks to surface the emancipatory concerns embedded in women and queer people's struggles over time by engaging in poetry written by women and queer people. It seeks to surface the regenerative knowledge that often defies description and analysis by giving us a sense of the pedagogical imprints that have fostered the survival of generations by honouring the insights that emerge from poetry that centres women and queer people's articulation of a transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis struggles on the continent, in the diaspora and in related experiences from the global south. What transgressing meant and means as part of a decolonial struggle that moves beyond patriarchal oppression is considered in ways that bring to light to the praxis embedded in navigating multiple dimensions of power. Intergenerational shifts in praxis are also considered as a way of surfacing the tensions that have evolved over time, and how these accede or challenge contemporary decolonial praxis.

These collective parts of the first section of this study give a re-imagined historical account of some of the transgressive decolonial efforts that precede the concerns that we hold in this moment. They give us a chance to watch and comment on phases of history in motion, all the while appreciating the ways in which varying actors conceptualised and put into motion counter-hegemonic response to coloniality. The gravity and consequences of these efforts are also allowed to sink in, giving us the chance to recognise what was possible at the time, and some of the situational constraints that worked to hamstring progress on those terms. It gives us the space to reassess the emancipatory terrain that faces us, and question what pedagogical insights we can gain from these efforts that are relevant to the struggles we face in these times. This is an intentional effort to evoke iterations of ancestral accompaniment as a foundation for this study in ways that can embrace the contemporary queries of Change Drivers in South Africa, Africa and the world.

Chapter 2: Re-reading the Complexity of the Historical Encounter: Intergenerational Reflections on Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

2.1 Introduction

Few texts in African literature have sustained as much response and curiosity as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958). This novel is celebrated as a pioneering text and “has sold over 8 million copies” (Gosling, 2017, p. 36). It is the “most translated of any African novel, and is a standard text in many literature courses” (Gosling, 2017, p 36). This book is seen as a ground-breaking literary exploration of the African imaginary. It transgressed the expressions of Africa found in the European ‘canon’ of works whilst successfully demonstrating what could make up an African canon of works. The responses that this text has inspired for over 60 years extol its ability to delve deep into a myriad of issues pertaining to the African context, its relationship to the world and the nature of the human condition.

Things Fall Apart is celebrated for its contrapuntal portrayal of African ontology and epistemology before the advent of colonialism (Okafor, 1988). Achebe does this by “re-constituting the black identity in a separate realm from colonial definitions”, therefore articulating what ‘Africanness’ meant outside of the constructs of the European gaze in the fictional village of Umuofia (Kalua, 2017, p. 32). Even in the last decade, proliferations of analysis continue to be generated from this text, highlighting in some cases, its portrayal of ‘Africanness’ and ‘African’ culture, its portrayal of ‘Africana males’, and a “symbolic perspective of the meaning of European colonisation of Africa” (Okafor, 1988; Beckmann, 2002; Wa Thiong’o & Sahle, 2004; Kalua, 2017).

Despite the novel’s thematic concerns, and its relevance to the African context, more can be said about the lasting impact this novel continues to make. In addition to being touted as an ‘African’ novel, its literary contributions extend beyond these borders. This is an important point to make; that great literature is not only concerned with the exploration of the particular culture or context it describes. The themes that it explores are universal, pertaining to concerns that enquire into our common humanity. This point is reminiscent of the sentiments

shared by Ta-Nehisi Coates when he began to understand that instead of only wanting to engage with texts that were emblematic of an “African tradition of writing”, he needed to appreciate the way in which any text written from any place could indeed be relevant to the African context. In his book *Between the World and Me* he comments that as part of his hunger for texts written from the African context he challenged himself to search for the “Tolstoy of the Zulus” (Coates, 2013, p. 56). In his later years he began to appreciate that Tolstoy’s work in itself could be relevant to AmaZulu²¹ in the same way that the writing of renowned African writers such as Eskia Mphahlele could be relevant to the Russians (Coates, 2013, p. 56). In this way, he echoed the words of Ralph Wiley by stating that “Tolstoy is the Tolstoy of the Zulus”, “unless you find profit in fencing off universal properties of mankind into exclusive tribal ownership” (Coates, 2013, p. 56). The universality that great literature inspires is underscored here, beyond the cultural contexts from which it emerges.

Things Fall Apart is such a book. Over decades this text has been used to stimulate our understanding of the way that literature can be used to explore the trickiest questions about humanity and the world. For example, in more recent times the book has been used to facilitate a discussion around what leadership means in an uncertain world. Jonathan Gosling shares the reasons why he chose to use this literary work of fiction to explore issues of identity, authority, masculinity, justice and leadership in a changing world:

... I am building my argument on a work of fiction, and my method is no more elaborate than that of the literary critic. This is emphatically not because of the lack of empirical evidence for economic, judicial and governmental disruption in the world, nor are we short of historical examples of failed states and cultural extinctions. Rather, I am working with fiction because it exercises a kind of truth-seeking and *hermeneutic imagination* that is crucial if we are to appreciate the challenges of leadership in this context. (Gosling, 2017, p. 37 [my emphasis])

The emphasis put on the “hermeneutic imagination” or an “interpretive imagination” that working with fiction elicits is a useful notion for this study (Mautner, 2000, p.248). It provides us with another way of drawing out our understandings and responses to the world. The aspect of drawing from our internal imaginative resources in this way is further substantiated by Parker Palmer who states that good metaphors such as stories, a poem or a piece of music have the power to intersect with our own lives and “evoke our own

²¹ The Zulu people or nation

experience” (Palmer, 2004, pp. 92-94). Quoting T.S. Eliot, he takes this point further by stating that good metaphors of this nature:

... may make us ... a little more aware of the deeper, unnamed feelings which form the substratum of our being, to which we rarely penetrate; for our lives are mostly a constant evasion of ourselves. (Palmer, 2004, p. 94)

In this way, metaphors of this kind give us an alternative source of evidence to those found in purely empirical data. The power of harnessing one’s interpretive perspective of the world can thus be accessed through the use of fictional texts such as Achebe’s book. The intuitive reading of the world through well-crafted fiction gives us an indelible resource to access one’s deepest questions and concerns pertaining to the issues under investigation.

Another example of the way this celebrated novel has been used to deepen our understanding of the world is illustrated by Hartman. Coming from a completely different field of study, she used the same book *Things Fall Apart* to supplement her teaching in an undergraduate sociology class. The reasons that compelled her to introduce this text as part of the sociology 100 curriculum are shared below. She chronicles her research on the correlation between literature and sociological concepts:

... the sociology of literature has long recognised that literature reflects society (p.227) ... Lewis Closer (1972) writes that “literature is... social evidence and testimony”. It is a continuous commentary on manners and morals...[It] preserves for us the precious record of modes of response to peculiar social and cultural conditions... It provides the social scientist with a wealth of sociologically relevant material, with manifold clues and points of departure for sociological theory and research. (Hartman, 2005, p. 317)

The commentary and clues embedded in this text thus gives us an opportunity for deep immersion into the questions and testimonies that coloured Achebe’s imagination of Africa’s past and future. By re-reading the contours of his commentary, we can access for ourselves the questions that we hold that intersect with what he shared in the book. Through the use of this book we are given the unique opportunity to revisit the cultural conditions that existed in a fictional African village and how their way of being collided brutally with the colonial outlook of European administrators and missionaries. The novel strategically focuses on the changes occurring in the village of Umuofia, through the story of Okwonkwo and his family. It gives us the extraordinary privilege of witnessing how their traditional way of life slowly began to be challenged by colonial missionaries and administrators that were determined to reshape the world that they found there according to their own hegemonic beliefs and

practices. But the book does more than chronicle this encounter. It additionally gives us an in-depth look into the rites, traditions and practices that formed part of Umuofia's history. It gives us an account of the attributes of those traditions as witnessed through the assertions of Okwonkwo, its main character.

Of particular relevance to this research are the emancipatory concerns that are at the heart of this text, and the decolonial pedagogical questions and considerations that can be inferred from the collision of worlds chronicled there. Achebe deftly achieves simultaneous explorations of the various ethnic and onto-epistemic cultures that intersect in this novel. The story that we find here is thus a useful place to begin to re-imagine and re-trace an understanding of Africa's interactions with itself and the world from its precolonial foundation through to its emanations in modern history. The intersection between the past and the future as relayed by Achebe provides a rich opportunity for us to reach across time and look again at the emancipatory concerns that are embedded in various iconic moments.

An intergenerational re-reading of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is explored in the next sub-section. An intergenerational understanding of this text acknowledges (like in Napiadi's initiation) that we need the help, assistance and accompaniment of those that have come before us to help us make sense of the questions that we continue to hold about the common place that we occupy to date. This intergenerational re-reading of history also recognises that it would be arrogant to assume that I as a product of Africa's history in the world would be able to comprehensively appreciate the range and complexity of issues that are part of her history. It recognises that I have only directly observed a fraction of these emancipatory concerns in my living years. Any analysis undertaken around these subjects would greatly benefit from the perspective of those who have come before me; those who have directly been at the interface of the encounters that are retold through the voices of history. Sound research has always challenged us to develop a layered understanding of the phenomenon being explored by insisting that we reference and voice the concerns of other academics in our field. An intergenerational exploration of African history in the modern world builds on this practice by additionally eliciting the emotional and intellectual life worlds of those to whom we are connected, who have lived through and experienced the phenomenon under study. It is not simply the knowledge that they hold that is important, it is the testimonial veracity and emotional embeddedness of their experience that brings elements of the past to life, releasing it from the boundaries of a written text. Through their memories

and experience we can get a sense of the lived impact of what they have experienced over time, how this produced them and what they continue to be unsatisfied with in the present. They give us vital clues that help shape our understanding of what happened then and what is needed right now. In addition to this, thinking *with* your community gives one an incredible vantage point from which one can begin to respond to the world around. More is said on the benefits of the vantage point:

Where you stand when you philosophize and theorize determines who benefits from your thinking. The point is to stand at the crossroads, at the centre within the community. There the world of your horizon – family, friends, community, and people (nation) and the vertical climb and descent where spirit links you through time to those preceeding you (ancestors) and those to follow you (the not yet born) intersect. Stand at the centre, within your community, and you will see the four corners of the world. (James, 1993, in Generate & Welch, 2017, p. 2)

It is the intention of this chapter to find ways to generate the sense of grounding, accompaniment and ‘far seeing’ shared in this quote. In this next sub-section, I look back at the course of modern African history in the company of my mother Dr. Florence Ilamwenya Khamati Kulundu. She will *khapa*²² me on this journey. Chinua Achebe’s prolific text will be used as a catalyst in this exploration. We will re-look at the life worlds that created our initial readings of the text and juxtapose this with a contemporary re-reading of *Things Fall Apart*. Our intergenerational re-reading acknowledges our completely disparate generational perspectives when we first read this book as well as the new understandings evoked in our contemporary re-reading of the text. Our interactions with this text chronicle the way that both of us have been produced by the thinking of our times – especially when it comes to our understanding of Africa’s interactions with itself and its encounters with European colonialism. These embedded perspectives will then be juxtaposed with the concerns that are evoked when we looked at this text from a contemporary perspective. As a part of this, we foreground the issues that surprised us when we re-read the text, and what we are still curious about going forward.

The first edition of Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* was written in 1958, at a time when the struggles for independence in sub-saharan Africa had already begun. It has been suggested that this book signals a growing wave of change in the cultural wake of the continent, one that sought to define Africa’s modern history and Africans in a different way

²² Accompany

to those that had been habitually explored in canonical European literature (Robertson, 1980, p. 106). A mere ten years after its publication in 1968 (which incidentally was four years after Kenya's independence from British colonialism), Florence Ilamwenya Khamati Kulundu first encountered this text when she was 18 in her fourth form at Mukumu Girls High School in Kakamega County in western Kenya. This was a Catholic missionary school and most of her teachers were European nuns or American members of the Peace Corp who were enlisted to teach in local schools. She read the book as part of her English literature class.

It is important to mention that Florence was amongst the first of her generation of young people in her community to go to a 'high ranking' high school such as Mukumu Girls. Her parents, like many of her peers, were part of a generation where the livelihoods of their families depended on working the land for sustenance as peasant farmers. By 1964 there was also an emerging class of Kenyans who were employed doing clerical and civil work through the colonial governments that were established in Kenya, as well as the newly independent governance structures that were emerging at the time of independence. Augustine Khamati, my maternal grandfather was such a man, and his changing perspectives on 'civilisation', education and progress had an indelible impact on my mother's world view at the time.

I, on the other hand, first read the same book in the year 2000, 32 years after my mother did. Interestingly enough I was also 18 years old when I read the text. I read the book by myself, outside of the classroom towards the end of my high schooling at Machabeng International School in Lesotho. My parents were both educators at the time. My mother held a doctorate in education at the time whilst also teaching history, community service and theory of knowledge at the same school I attended. My father was a Professor of Law at the National University of Lesotho. I was a young Kenyan girl trying to understand Africa's intellectual legacy for myself, whilst being in Lesotho, a context that I felt did not easily appreciate or engage with its connection to the rest of the continent. Despite the wealth of having deep friendships in Lesotho and learning Sesotho, being a Kenyan in Lesotho meant I often felt like an 'outsider' or *kwerekwere*²³ in some way, as if there were other cultural aspects of myself I couldn't access there. I read *Things Fall Apart* to tap into African voices across the continent to hear what they had to say about our history and who we are.

²³ Sesotho slang for African foreign nationals in their country. This onomatopoeic nature of this term seeks to mimic an incomprehensible and fast moving unknown language that these foreigners spoke.

Below are excerpts of the conversation between my mother and me in January 2018 after we spent a week individually revisiting this legendary text. This conversation reflects the impressions the text made on us when we first read it, and the questions and insights that a contemporary re-reading of it evoked for us in the present. It dives straight into what we felt was important to share.

2.2 Meditations on History Past and Present accompanied by my Mother

Florence: As a Form Four I never saw anything serious in that text. I looked at it shallowly; Okwonkwo in a particular village is wrestler, a tough man, terrorising everybody. The depth of that terrorisation... the only thing that I remember was his beating of his wife because she went to braid her hair and did not make his afternoon meal. And I just remember saying *aka mu chapa!*²⁴... and I did not think enough about these acts ... and when he was busy doing that these people arrive.²⁵ And when they arrive he doesn't have that power anymore. They usurp his power. And so he is lamenting that.. oh! It was better when these guys²⁶ were not here! That was how I was looking at it...

But I did not read much into the coming of these people.²⁷ I don't know what made me think that they were coming to make us ... better. Is it because they were bringing light?

Injairu: And by light what do you mean?

Florence: They were bringing better things... like reading, writing and arithmetic. The three R's... They were in quotes "civilising" us, teaching us how to be like them.

Injairu: And at that time that was something that you recognised as important? Can you say more about that...? I mean you must have had some kind of impression of the value of the three Rs ...

Florence: In the family that I came from my dad emphasised that so much! They came to give us something which was not there earlier. If it was there it was in a different form, which I didn't know because I was still young. So, my dad emphasised education.

Injairu: And who was your dad?

Florence: He was an administrative clerk for the missionaries and not only for the missionaries, for the African District Council, the (ADC) that is, the road builders and all that...

Injairu: So, he was also a part of the colonial governmental apparatus?

Florence: Yes. When there was famine in the area he would be given maize that he would tie in his big *kanzo*²⁸ then he would come home and open his *kanzo* so all the maize would pour out and he would divide this amongst the people of the village. He was a *munyabara*,²⁹ the overseer of the government, a road builder.

²⁴ He beat her! In Swahili

²⁵ By these people she is referring to the arrival of missionaries and European colonialists.

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ A man's long shirt/dress wide and long enough to be tied at the bottom.

²⁹ An overseer

He always had committees; I think that's where the name Khamati³⁰ came from. He was the white man's messenger, they used to tell him go and tell people this; we shall come on such and such day and do this and that. So, it was the duty of my dad to do that...

Injairu: And therefore is that part of what influenced your reading of Chinua Achebe's text at that time?

Florence: Yes, it was the thinking that these people were coming to bring us brightness, life and the three Rs. And of course religion! Not going under a tree and praying, I did not even understand that when I was younger ... I was a missionary educated child.

My dad! When you went to my dad you had to know what to ask him, and you had to ask him in English. So to me ... it meant that if you asked him in English he would give you what you want.

My dad! And then there was report cards, they were very important to him. Imagine I get 98% for a subject, he will ask me why didn't you get 100%, that type of thing. And one by one, you know he was a polygamist, so all the kids were there lining up to hand in their report cards...

He was the link between the people and the white man. He had to deliver those messages in the villages. And everyone was just following him, and people thought that he was great.

Injairu: I was around 18 years old, I read *Things Fall Apart* for the first time in Machabeng in Lesotho, just when I was finishing high school. I read it on my own, I did not read it as a classroom text, I took it on my own because I knew it was an important African text. I loved literature; it was my favourite subject at school but in higher level English lit we didn't do *Things Fall Apart*. I was very disappointed that that class didn't have any contemporary African books for me to read. I remember being angry that I had to read some obscure European texts when I didn't even have a foundational reading of African literature.

I read it with a longing... I had a longing to try and get a glimpse of what Africa was like before colonialism, and I think at the time I had a sense of nostalgia around what had been 'lost' in Africa.

When I read it for the first time that is what appealed to me most about it. That African world that was painted – I didn't not see as problematic at that time either. I saw it as mysterious and powerful, and I saw the coming of the white man as something that disrupted that and turned us into something inferior in our own eyes.

Florence: ...And yet, I was thinking then, that they were *empowering* us that they were making us know more, and indeed anybody at that time who was going to school – that was what empowerment meant *then*.

Injairu: So, what was the level of discussion that you had in your class around the book? As an English literature text that you were studying, what did you discuss or analyse when it came to the book?

³⁰ My mother's maiden name is Khamati. Here she is emphasising that this name emerged from my grandfather's involvement in many committees. According to her the English word for 'committee' was then turned into the name 'Khamati' a rendition of this English word that was changed into a dialect of the Luhya language.

Florence: I don't think the teacher went deep into it. The teacher was a Peace Corp, an American, the analysis was mostly descriptive. We were being asked to recount what was happening in the story rather than analyse the book on a deeper level.

I didn't see then what I am seeing now ...

Injairu: And what do you see now?

Florence: *Now...* that this is a very serious book at different levels! I had only seen the guys from the north coming, and spoiling things. And it was actually laughable because we were just busy laughing at the khaki shorts of the colonisers "kotma of the ash buttocks".³¹ So, it was fun for us, and we were even calling each other – "hey kotma! Where are you?!" Without actually realising that is something more serious than that.

Now I look at it... I see... to start off with Umuofia itself... I see it as an Umuofia which... everybody thought was going on well, until these fellows came. However, Umuofia had its own problems its own intricacies which did not come up then, although it is the same book.

We didn't delve into what was happening in that society. Things like... even the idea of Okwonkwo beating up his wife, to us it was fun, it was something to be amused about. *Now* I know that that was not something to be amused about at all.

Okwonkwo even looking at one of his daughters and saying, 'I wish Ezinma was a boy!' He could have just taken her the way she was. You don't have to be a boy to do what she was doing. Okwonkwo even looked at Nwoye his son saying that: *Huyu*³²! "This one is not even a man!" That was also detrimental to Nwoye...

At some other time Ikemefuna was exiled from his village, something happened³³ in the nearest village and that's how they eventually inherited Ikemefuna. That was not OK. You don't just pay the price of killing one person by forcibly taking another. At first it was OK, what happened was bad, but then Ikemefuna was brought up as part and parcel of Okwonkwo's family. But they were just grooming him and growing him up to go and eventually kill him.

Injairu: Yes! And Okwonkwo didn't have to have a hand in that. He was advised not to in fact by Obierieka, but he still insisted on being a part of that...

Florence: I didn't even remember that Ikemefuna was killed in those other days... And what else in society was not so good... society... this Chinua Achebe did not bring out the role of the women, I didn't see them coming together and saying their own things. So, we just know of what the men are doing and thinking in that story. So, there were already cracks there, but they were not seen as cracks to them because they were used to it. Now, these cracks maybe would have continued as if nothing bad was happening if the outsiders had not come in and used these same cracks to get into society and grab those people who were kind of marginalised. Nwoye, Okwonkwo's son was one of them and there were many others...

Injairu: There were the spiritual outcasts, there was the woman who gave birth to twins...

Florence: The twins! Look at the twin throwing! We laughed at it in 1968. But that was not something to laugh at... that was a very delicate thing, a very *bad* thing and

³¹ This was the joke that was enjoyed in the fictional village of Umuofia when they first encountered one of the colonial Administrators. The 'ash buttocks' referred to the fact that they wore khaki trousers, that gave them the appearance of having ashy buttocks.

³² This one!

³³ In a conflict in a nearby village, a young woman from Umuofia was killed. A peace treaty between those who killed her from elsewhere and the people of Umuofia resulted in Okwonkwo inheriting Ikemefuna a young boy offered under duress by the nearby village to appease Umuofia.

yet they believed in it. There was nothing wrong with it in that society. Now from hindsight that was terrible because the women did not choose to have twins...

Injairu: And the way that Achebe decided to write that the woman who was always giving birth to the twins was amongst the first to convert to Christianity... it was an incredible insight, the way he wrote it ...

Florence: Yes! And that bit we missed, at my schooling level. They didn't even talk about it or even if they did – maybe I was not listening...

I didn't even remember that Okwonkwo committed suicide! Okwonkwo could not have committed suicide! That tough man! I was so shocked now I even wondered if they had added that part later on. And then of course the way the administrators behaved, again that did not come out well in my early days.

Injairu: But what did you see this time in terms of the administrators?

Florence: They brought their own laws, the way it is supposed to be done. They did not actually think about how they could incorporate these other people's way of being into theirs. So, there was a *total* misunderstanding between the two and those ones³⁴ had the club, they had the gun, and then they also met people from Umuofia who were willing to be assimilated, to be taken over.

So... I don't know what things fell apart. It was not just one thing that fell apart. Society in Umuofia had things that were waiting to fall apart. And the Europeans used those loop holes to make things fall apart...

...Who made those things fall apart? And were those things that fell apart supposed to fall apart or not? In other words... is Umuofia lamenting about the things that fell apart? Were those things to be maintained? Could they be sustained?

Injairu: Could they be sustained? ...That's a big question because the way it looked, it didn't seem like Umuofia or Okwonkwo's family in particular was built on a foundation that could sustain itself in that way. Because they were creating more and more of an outer circle of people who did not belong and that fragmented it.

Florence: They did not fall apart because the kiboko³⁵ came and forced them to make things fall apart. They fell apart willingly, well...willingly also means there was consent... they fell apart because some people in Umuofia saw some solace, they saw that here in Umuofia we are like this, maybe let's go to this other side... so we can be something else. And indeed they became something else, there was a guy who became an officer ...

Injairu: Yes, a guy who was 'nothing' before...

Florence: In fact Okwonkwo himself was the one who *totally* fell apart, who could not *withstand* it, who could not *stand* it, who could not *exist* anymore. And why? Maybe because what he was existing on was hollow. For someone who thought he was so tough...

But of course someone could say that rather than see his whole life go through the window, he killed himself so as not to see it. And is that heroism?

And nobody followed him remember? At that meeting ... he was hoping that his people would follow. That broke him. People did not follow him...why didn't people follow him? ...

The character of Obierieka, I think maybe that was one man who understood what was happening. He didn't even go to face the Europeans, maybe he understood more...

³⁴ The Europeans

³⁵ A stick used for beating. This refers to the thought that thing did not fall apart because of the force of the Europeans.

Injairu: So, you are saying you saw a different kind of leadership or different responses that other men had that were different from Okwonkwo's? And those people seemingly survived... Well... "survived" by the mere fact that they lived. We don't know what happened afterwards...

Florence: ...We don't know what happened afterwards...

...What did Chinua Achebe want us to learn from this book? Was he simply telling us what happened in Umuofia? Or ... what lesson did he want us to learn from it?

Injairu: I think the power of the text like Chinua Achebe's and why I am interested in using it in research is that they give that responsibility to you.

Florence: OK...

Injairu: There are some people who write and they write didactically, they write so they can say '*this is what it is*' but because Achebe chose to use this form he is calling upon our own imagination, he is calling upon our own meaning making of the themes that we find there in the text. I guess the question is; what did *you* learn from it?

Florence: *Then*, the first time I read it, I learnt that things were O.K. these people came and did this. And these people as they came they were doing it to make us go a step ahead from where we were.

Now... I see he is showing us that even what was, was not as homogeneous as we would've liked it to be, and therefore, yes these guys that came were strong and brutal however *we* contributed towards being taken over.

Injairu: For me, *then* when I reflect back on myself what I was thinking was that he was saying we had life, we had culture, we had sophistication, we had rituals we had all of this, we were not nothing, and then they came and then they killed us.

Now, when I read about it I think he was saying we had culture we had some really interesting and beautiful things, we also had some devastatingly horrible things lurking that were a part of it. And this culture was predicated on the abuse and marginalisation of some especially in the life world of Okwonkwo. We had a culture that allowed us to live but it was unbearably hard on some people. So, it's a mix of things that for me as a young woman I thought that some of it was very beautiful, it made me nostalgic for something I never had when I read it for the first time.

But when I think of it *now*, I am thinking that it is good to know the extent of what we had, but we also have to confront some of the dark issues that came with that. The hard stuff, the role of women, the way twins were treated, the exiled. That is a whole other world to explore. Our lack of unity...

I think that what Achebe was also saying is that when the colonialists came, they came brutally, that much I knew already, they came brutally and with whole set of assumptions about us being completely nothing no matter the stature of the man and what he represented traditionally. And some of these constructions continue today. But it is this mixture between who we were and who they were that created the perfect implosion, that caused things to fall apart. That's what I think that he is saying, that there is nobody without blame, that there were different sets of demons that were facing each other.

I also feel that the book asks us to consider what it means to go forward. To consider if going forward means assimilation into that world that had been so brutally put into place. Or... it can't also mean going backwards – its somewhere else!

That the project of the future lies somewhere else not within what was imposed, and not in going back to that life that existed. That is his biggest contribution to me right now. Because he gives us a good conversation that explores the past while acknowledging what came towards us at that time.

But he leaves the African voice on the future hanging. Instead, we hear about the book that will be written by the commissioner after his experience in ‘pacifying’ the village of Umofia. In a sense, it is this narrative that takes over the book in the end. But we have no final words from anyone in Umuofia about what their future requires...

Florence: And in fact that is where you want to go with this research...

Injairu: Yes!

2.3 Reconciling Intergenerational Inquiries of the Past with our Concerns of the Present

My conversation with my mother called up many questions around how we make sense of Africa’s historical encounters with itself and the world, and the value of revisiting our previous understandings . On recounting our initial interactions with the novel, I am challenged to witness our very different understandings of who we were as Africans in precolonial times and how we made sense of the colonial encounters in the book. For my mother, her reflections on precolonial Umofia when she first read the book included a very light and surface level appreciation of the conditions that were found in there. The amusement that her and her friends gained from recounting some of the incidences in the book when they were in high school denotes a very playful and superficial engagement that did not seem at all triggered by a political reading of the events therein. The violence of Okwonkwo beating his wife as well as the jokes that came out of recounting how the people of Umofia saw the coming missionaries and clerks i.e. “kotma of the ashy buttocks” gave her and her peers something to laugh at in their English class. The precolonial world there did not resonate strongly with her, and the encounters with colonialists that the novel represents did not directly register as a threat to other ways of being in her world at the time. Immersed in a changing world and influenced by the trajectories of her family, the colonial encounter was understood for what it was contributing to her community. As a missionary educated child, the value of knowledge was pressed upon her in ways that overshadowed the cultural life world that her family emerged from. She (in ways that I could never comprehend) lived through the cold face of this historical transition; a world in which some of cultural norms of her people would become taboo. Where the cultural and spiritual practices that were part of her community were usurped by a Christian moral code that outlawed such practices.

My understanding of the relevance of these precolonial practices was different for me as young woman. The socio-cultural world that the novel conjured gave me a sense of nostalgia

for the community and traditional practices that I found there. I looked at the ceremonial practices and particularly the connection that the people had with the earth as something beautiful but did not focus on the negative aspects that I found there as negating that beauty. It is interesting to mark the sense of generational loss around cultural rites that were wilfully and violently uprooted in my mother's past and longed for in mine. There is a generational tension between these different world views. My mother's growing 18-year-old self and my growing 18-year-old self would definitely disagree about who we were as precolonial Africans and the impact of colonialism on us. Ironically, as a second generation educated young woman, I truly cannot appreciate what a world without western education would look like, and therefore could not perceive the sense of 'empowerment' and 'development' that she was taught to value from her family's perspective. I appreciate our different understandings of the world when we were 18 years old; it demonstrates how the changes in our worlds deeply affected our reading of it.

In our second reading of the book, the Achebe's intricacies of village life were equally rousing for my mother and me. We both instinctively highlighted the way in which Okwonkwo's life and that of his family's was far from perfect. His harsh treatment of his wives and the children in his family, revealed a world in which people did not exist in peace. Instead, hierarchical demands meted themselves out in a distinctly patriarchal way that marginalised the roles of women, men and other outcasts who did not conform to his particularly rigid standards or form a respectable part of his life world. The role of culture and superstition created another layer of exiles whose presence was taboo. The marginalisation of those that were considered taboo was often justified through unspeakable violence. Within these conditions the fragmentation of the people of Umuofia at the hands of the colonisers seemed inevitable, or rather, the presence of the missionaries was seemingly unchallenged by those already exiled by the current state of affairs.

An important member of Okwonkwo's family— his only son, Nwoye — chooses to be something else in the face of the pressure of his society. He chooses to serve as part of the missionaries, because his worth within his own family and community was so derided. Nwoye could not reconcile himself with the dark elements of his community that he could not comprehend. When Okwonkwo killed Ikemefuna, the adopted child that had become a brother to him, something shifted irreversibly in him.

The emancipatory concerns highlighted in this text asks us to consider the issues on both sides that contributed to “things falling apart”. It asks us to bear witness to the precolonial issues therein, as well as the decolonial assertions that come out of these. In a sense, it asks us to consider whether Okwonkwo’s style of leadership in his family and community at large was sustainable, and if indeed the colonial encounter would have been a different one (in the short or long term) had he not chosen to treat himself and his family in the way that he did. One wonders if a more generous and open way of being that could appreciate the difference of others both within the family and in society might have created a different collective response to the coming of the missionaries and administrators. It raises questions about those that did not belong within that community, and how the brutality of colonial rule signaled a chance to escape some entrenched aspects of the traditional society, that kept some members of society tethered. It invokes a self-reflexive analysis of the roles and relationships that one finds chronicled in the book, and the way in which one set of hierarchies and relations was usurped by other alien rules that functioned through a different set of principles and practices. For both of us, the book highlighted two worlds overshadowing each other with their disparate demands. Ultimately, one world (the colonial world) began to eclipse the other through the depth of its violence and ontological assumptions that became ingrained over time.

There are additional aspects of the narrative that we did not reflect on deeply in the conversation with my mother that are also useful in this analysis. When Okwonkwo was exiled from his village and had to go back into his maternal village for seven years, we get a glimpse of another cultural context at play, one which reveres the maternal line and the role of women in society. This juxtaposition cleverly inserted into the narrative points to alternative ways of being, alternative value systems that were also present during that time. It shows us that African culture within that context was not homogeneous as my mother intimated. Achebe further complicates this by mentioning how other surrounding villages, with even more diverse cultural norms, were also overpowered in their encounter with the colonialists. In response to this impending doom, the bravado of Okwonkwo becomes even more agitated as he calls on the warrior spirit of those brave enough to fight in Umuofia. The fate that befell other neighbouring villages is one that also befell them. Achebe thus layered this story by aluding to the inevitable ruptures in Umuofia and surrounding villages. But in doing so, he also shows different ways of responding to this rising tide. Obierieka, the man my mother mentioned in passing, showed a different response, almost a counterpoint to the

warrior spirit of Okwonkwo. In the text he did not even go to face the Europeans as they arrived. This chosen response to the coming tide leaves something lingering in the text, as if there were other ways of being that perhaps foresaw what was happening and chose to respond differently. But regardless of this, the narrative of the novel intonates that regardless of who faced the colonialists, the demise of their way of life was imminent and inevitable in the face of the strength of the gun, administrative prowess, and most importantly, the religious paradigm they introduced to these contexts.

What endures, however, is a nuanced reading that also implores us to understand that without the ability to recognise some of the precolonial issues that were at play in Umofia, we can easily retell the story in a way that *only* emphasises the colonial circumstances that befell them. The truth however is more complex than this and requires deeper consideration. Embedded in the analysis shared by both my mother and I is a desire for us not to exonerate Umofia through the character of Okwonkwo from the events that we found there. Additionally, the novel compels us to consider what lessons we need to learn in the service of an emancipatory future that spans not only a vision of a *decolonial* vision (conceptualised as reflecting *only* on the impact of colonialism), but also a robust interrogation of precolonial cultural precepts that are embedded in quintessential patriarchal and hierarchical African traditional norms as part of decolonial work in the present.

2.4 Precolonial and Colonial Assertions of Ourselves that Need Attending to in Achebe's Things Fall Apart

Chinua Achebe gives us the gift of thinking about whether the conditions we find in Okwonkwo's life world are sustainable, or more poignantly, if this way of life could willfully regenerate itself. By focusing on the choices and perspectives of those who decided to move away from the traditions and values embedded in their experience, towards the uncharted promise of the missionary world view, we are compelled to confront such questions. More broadly, these narratives bring up questions around the stagnation or evolution of culture as a whole. The book asks us to read into what persists within cultures, especially those elements that could inevitably lead to the greater fragmentation of that society in the future – especially in the face of external foreign coercion that would further compromise the autonomy and thriving of such communities.

When my mother and I first read the texts, both our readings had the veneer of a one-dimensional outlook on the narrative, whether it was one that was understood as the Europeans bringing ‘light’ to the uncivilised or one that emphasised an idyllic precolonial world disrupted violently by European invasion. These readings adhered to an oversimplified reading of that world, and they were both viewpoints that perhaps simply confirmed the biases that we already held socially and individually at the time. We did not read in ways that complicated our views: there was no integration of a critical analysis outside of what we appreciated in the text. Njabulo Ndebele (1984) talks about something similar to this in his seminal paper on ‘rediscovering the ordinary’. He comments specifically about a way of looking at the world that only appreciates sketchy caricatures of the action one finds there. He describes the ‘spectacular’ as a way of writing that does not challenge our assumptions but rather confirms them:

The spectacular documents; it indicts implicitly; it is demonstrative. Preferring exteriority to interiority; it keeps the larger issues of society in our minds, obliterating the details; it provokes identification through recognition and feeling rather than through observation and analytical thought; it calls for emotion rather than conviction; it confirms without necessarily offering a challenge... (Ndebele, 1984, p. 41)

Ndebele wrote this paper to challenge South African writers to not replicate ‘spectacular’ forms of writing that do not challenge the reader in the ways mentioned above. However, when viewed beside an intergenerational re-reading of *Things Fall Apart* its premises find other perceptive implications. Ndebele’s paper commented on the act of writing; however, as a part of this analysis the tendency to *read* in ‘spectacular’ ways can also be challenged. Our second reading of this text revealed a complex world at play, one in which no easy answers could be found, and many examples of what ‘fell apart’ came to the fore. This second reading in some way proves that it was not the writing that replicated our caricatured viewpoints but rather our reading of it at the time. One wonders what it was in the space of those decades that evoked a nuanced understanding of the very same text. Ben Okri writes about how the act of understanding any piece of work relies on the extent to which we have established a fundamental understanding of ourselves first:

All the looking into the works of masters that we do before we have become ourselves is not true seeing, or it is missed seeing...

To see the true art or the truth in a work requires a solid foundation in oneself. (Okri, 2011, p. 24)

What does a solid foundation in oneself entail? Perhaps the act of seeing, which can never be fixed or static, relies on the willful endeavour to meet ourselves in our full complexity across times. Perhaps we only read or write into what we are willing to admit to ourselves. What my mother and I appreciated from our experience together was how time could be revelatory. This has important implications for transgressive decolonial work that can appreciate both precolonial and colonial pitfalls and beyond. It surely must provide the space for us to re-encounter ourselves in this way over time. Ndebele goes on to explain the implications of a society that cannot write or in our case *read* itself with greater subtlety:

... we have a society of posturing and sloganeering; one that frowns upon subtlety of thought and feeling, and never permits the sobering power of contemplation, of close analysis, and the mature acceptance of failure, weaknesses and limitations... We are confronted here with the honesty of the self in confrontation with itself. Literature cannot give us the lessons, but it can only provide a very compelling context to examine an infinite number of ethical issues which have a bearing on the sensitisation of people towards the development of the entire range of culture. (Ndebele, 1984, pp. 42-49)

This is a significant offering that asks us to consider the compounded value of reading and re-reading iconic African and world literature as part of the generation of emancipatory futures. It makes the case that an emancipatory future demands more from us; it requires that we study our own limitations and betrayals as part of history, as intricately as we study the external elements that continue to benefit from our lack of unity in diversity. It asks us to consider the difficult question: how if at all do we contribute to the very thing we complain about, or want to change? (Block, 2008) Ignoring this will result in a superficial appreciation of the world and our role in it which will stupefy any regenerative efforts that we attempt. This is not an injunction to take responsibility for the whole of colonial logic that produced modernity. It is rather a mature stance that invites the space for us to accept the complexity of the issues at play as a whole, precolonial, colonial and into the neo-liberal order that we are also currently complicit in. It is an invitation to simultaneously keep our eyes on these interplaying dynamics that persist through the times as we seek an emancipatory future worthy of our longing.

An intergenerational re-reading of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* evokes a powerful inquiry into those who are marginalised and ostracised within the traditional African society portrayed in Umofia. Further reading into the world that Achebe painted and the truths that this work might mirror within precolonial Nigeria led me to research some of the ancient

demarcations between people and outcasts found within Igbo society. It got me inquiring about why some of these demarcations were drawn up in the first place. I believe this could help shed additional factual light on the circumstances around the outcasts as we find them in *Things Fall Apart*. This is an injunction to not oversimplify what we encounter there, but to lend some historical weight into similar practices so as to appreciate the complexities that surface when we are challenged to understand cosmological world views that operate from paradigms very different to what we understand. Bayo Akomolafe writes in detail about the demarcations that were present in precolonial Igbo culture:

One can either be born of the soil, to the Nwadiana, or to the ‘accursed’ Osu people. The Osu are considered untouchable, unclean and abominably alien to their communities ... There aren’t many written histories of the Osu that one might refer to, but there are some oral histories that have been passed around. It is believed by some Igbo historians that the Osu caste system came into existence six centuries ago. The ones referred to as Osu emerged as a priestly class to administer and perform – on behalf of the community– a series of rituals to appease the gods of the Igbo indigenous cosmology...

In short, the Osus were sacred precolonial Igbo communities; they were not touched, and only to be approached with reverence. They were a people apart. Untouchable only in terms of the power they wielded on behalf of the community...

However, when the British, made their way inland, they disrupted the order of things. Intent on gaining political and economic control over the Igbos, but lacking the manpower to effect this radical transformation, they adopted a system of rule by proxy, indirectly stirring the pot of local life through the familiar visage of sympathetic chiefs and rulers. With missionary outposts and newly built schools, they began supplanting indigenous wisdoms and values with Christian faith and with the promise of a better life if they learned the one-tongue...

Buried deep within the symbolism of the cross, which now dotted the new landscape, was a deep antagonism that rejected the now pagan claim of the Osus. In one fell swoop, a people apart became a people *in part* – their ontological inadequacy now arising from an abhorrence and deep-seated hatred for the animism and lecherous materiality of the Osus. There was no room for their practices of care. (Akomolafe, 2017, pp.141-143)

This information is useful in providing a context for the otherworldly place of the outcasts that is evoked in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* as well other novels by the author, such as *No Longer At Ease* in 1987. It is also useful for providing a context for the cosmological worldviews that in part created some of the demarcations in society that separated those outsiders or outcasts that were seen to perform a sacred spiritual role in society, and those that were considered ‘of the soil’. It is interesting to hear within Akomolafe’s explanation, a sense that he is mourning the demise of the ‘practices of care’ that the Osu provided for the community as whole. His writing further speaks of the demise of the important role that the

Osu played within society and how this is linked to the spiritual and material existential crisis that many Africans experience:

The changing conditions of respectability required new frames of seeing and new motivations to forget one's connections to the nonhuman world ... The Osus had, like Okwonkwo, suddenly become unwitting subjects of a new power and of a new Future; their eyes become vestigial, no longer serving their visual negotiations with thick places. Their memories? The fabrications of superstitious minds needing the 'benevolent doses of the real' only white people could provide. (Akomolafe, 2017, pp. 141-143)

This viewpoint is especially thought-provoking when juxtaposed with our (my mother and I) irreconcilable concern for the outcasts of society which was nourished by the insight provided in the text that they were amongst the first to convert to Christianity. This aspect of the story was read as a chosen escape and not simply a coerced manoeuvre. The different motivations that our (Akomolafe's, my mother's and mine) disparate understandings evoke are a useful reminder to embrace Ndebele's treatise on the spectacle and reading in ways that lack nuance and do not complicate the issues at hand. Ndebele is useful because he invites us to consider and appreciate that all these elements (and even more those that we have not entertained) may have been present. That the conversion to Christianity by the outcasts and other members of society who were 'of the soil' who felt the recriminations that were launched at their masculinity (Nwoye) or the burden of their offspring (the woman who gave birth to twins) could have been all of these things, something chosen as a better life and/or something coerced that stifled and drew to an end the paradigms that they revered.

There are two issues that present themselves on further researching aspects of precolonial Nigeria that echo the narrative of the outcasts in *Things Fall Apart*. The first is a complex conversation about whether the cohesion of society as a whole ought to be created through the indefinite marginalisation of any members of that society. The second follows closely asking about the existential loss of spiritual grounding that is demonstrated through the coming of Christianity and its effects in modern day Africa. Within this second line of questioning I understand that my cosmological world view cannot appreciate things in the way the precolonial world highlighted in the text (and clarified in some ways by Akomolafe's research) can. I can value the emphasis on 'valuing' the 'non-human' precisely because within lies regenerative potential of the earth and all sentient beings which are grave issues that we currently face. I am however compelled to wonder whether the way my mother and I understand "marginalisation" and the spiritual function of the outcasts ("who were

Untouchable only in terms of the power they wielded on behalf of the community”... according to Akomolafe) correspond to each other or completely miss each other by virtue of the foundational precepts they are built upon (Akomolafe, 2017, pp. 141-143). For example, does the concept of free choice (which is underpinned in liberal concepts of justice) play a role here? What would those grounded in these traditions say to this? How would others who are governed by different organisational principles respond? I am curious. The gap between cosmological and ethical worldviews may limit the parameters of a conversation between different worlds. Additionally, only those who are contemporarily well-versed in the sacred traditions of the Igbo can earnestly enter that conversation in order to reconcile the historical events found there with the present continental and world issues that we face today.

Whilst acknowledging these limitations, I will however persist in entering the conversation around the marginalisation of members of society by focusing on those that were not primarily tasked with performing this sacred role of the outcasts. Yes, besides the formal spiritual outcasts mysteriously portrayed in the text, I *can* speak with greater gravitas about the experience of those who “were of the soil” that were amongst the first to convert into Christianity. Going back again to Nwoye and the woman who gave birth to twins, the recriminations of a certain type of hypermasculinity (which I believe Okwonkwo somehow embodies) as well as the gender-based struggles that a woman would face, are issues that are not far from some of the patriarchal trappings that we continue to witness today. If we can acknowledge the corroding effect of some customs, practices and beliefs that marginalise and oppress some members of society in Achebe’s book, then it is fitting that we question the impact of this in contemporary times and how they scupper the emancipatory aims that we hold in the present.

A contemporary re-reading of the themes at play calls us to question who might be marginalised in contemporary African society and how this in turn affects the relative cohesion, well-being and resilience of communities. This is a powerful injunction inspired by the book: it asks us how we can begin to conceive of a strategic and more humane cultural evolution as an important forebearer of an emancipatory future. It in fact calls to question if we can dare to have such a vision for the world, especially considering the ongoing oppressions from precolonial through to colonial times and beyond, towards the dreams of the decolonial. As patriarchal, classist, heteronormative and aggressive Christian and Islamist fundamentalism continue to predicate the terms of belonging in contemporary African

societies, one continues to see the relevance of the conversation that Achebe sparks through his novel.

If we continue this line of thought into contemporary writings, the questions Achebe raises are joined by the concerns of certain Pan Africanist leaders such as Robert Sobukwe, who in his lifetime asked the continent to be wary of the ways in which it continues to entrap itself, by dedicating itself to practices that continue to ‘pull it apart’ even whilst they create an homogenous unity of sorts. In a written speech delivered at the anniversary of Sobukwe’s death, Pumla Gqola recounted her understanding of Sobukwe’s offerings to a vision for a free Africa. She added a contemporary spin to the issue under question by citing elements of the present moment that threaten the future:

Sobukwe spoke, even as a student, of the principle of a single Africa: that this interconnectedness could easily translate into untold possibilities for harm. As attentive as we are to possibilities for unity, renaissance, renewal and restoration of Africa to itself, Sobukwe’s invitation is to keep our eye on patterns that pull us in the opposite direction; that seek to enslave us again.

The closing down of routes to full African human expression that I have outlined through militia, state and other fundamentalist expression on our continent are not a part of Sobukwe’s united Africa.

... I am sure if Sobukwe were physically alive today he would also insist that we question what ‘African’ is used to mean when it leads to the obliteration of African life, the trivialisation of African joy, the bombing of African affectation. Africa has to mean a present and future home for those who strive for a freedom linked to the freedom of those like – and unlike – us. (Gqola, 2017, pp. 197, 199)

Here we find a contemporary appraisal of the issues that were evoked in the reading of Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*: the idea that the generation of an emancipatory future requires that the conditions of the full expressions of people’s humanity be safeguarded in the present moment, especially when these exist outside of the norms of the dominant culture.

These insights have had a profound effect on my thinking as an educator. In my career, I have written many courses on African leadership and development for different institutions and platforms. These courses always gave a layered representation of Africa’s struggle from multiple perspectives. The pedagogical impulse at the time was to expose young people in Africa to the depth of historical ingenuity and revolutionary audacity that is a part of their heritage. Never once did I consider troubling this perspective of history by inviting the space where we can interrogate some of the limitations and weaknesses we can find there. A

motivational rhetoric around Africa's predicament often took the lead, one that failed to adequately challenge young leaders around the ethical issues we need to confront in the present moment as part of this process. As such, the work that I have done before may have inadvertently confirmed the logic of the 'spectacle' that Ndebele writes about. This is a situation in which the complexity of the issues at play are easily compressed into ways of seeing that are predicated on binaries: on who is the oppressor and the plight of the underdog that tries to surmount these issues. I can imagine that the many young people who have come into contact with this work may have an idea of some of the contributions that Africa has made to history. However, when I think about these courses now, I am concerned about how its content could reinforce an adversarial relationship with hegemonic power structures without doing the additional work of helping young leaders to critically think through the issues embedded in precolonial history through to colonialism that emerge as pervasive fractures on our part in contemporary times. What emerges as missing in my previous work is a critical appraisal of what we need to be learning and evolving towards as we charge the future with the possibilities that we still have reason to value. The questions raised by re-encountering Achebe's writing in this time and considering the views of other members of my community as well as thinkers on the continent as an accompaniment include: How ready are we to look into the mirror of history and to carefully analyse the complexity that we find there? Better still, how ready are we to respond especially when that complexity asks difficult questions about us such as, who do we think we need to be in order to create an emancipatory future? And by this I mean, what hierarchical ways of being are replicated in our quest towards emancipation, and if we consider what the wide expanse of history has to teach us, what could this ultimately reap?

Ndebele 1984 ends his paper on a hopeful note. In it he describes the coming of a new generation of writers who are willing to take up this challenge. These closing remarks capture the heart of what is being elicited here, not only on the part of those blessed with the gift of writing a new narrative for Africa, but equally for those who dare or are challenged to read into what exists in ways that can fundamentally push us to reconceptualise and revitalise the socio-cultural, ethical and moral terms within which the future can emerge:

Young writers appear to have taken up the challenge, albeit unwittingly. They seem prepared to confront the human tragedy together with the immense challenging responsibility to create a new society. This demands an uncompromisingly tough minded creative will to build a new civilisation. And no civilisation worth the name

will emerge without the payment of disciplined and rigorous attention to detail.
(Ndebele, 1984, p. 53)

The challenge to create a new society in this quote is significant and requires that we appreciate the trappings that re-create themselves in the present. This is an interesting challenge for transgressive decolonial pedagogies because it requires that we appreciate how our way of reading and writing and being in the present may inadvertently contain the seeds of our further fragmentation as we reach to a future worthy of our longing (Rushdie, 1999). It challenges us to create a future distinct from our past, one predicated on an intensely detailed appreciation of values that sufficiently challenges us all to live up to alternative ways of being that can forge different trajectories towards the kind of society and world we want to be part of. Like Gqola reminded us, in her appreciation of Sobukwe's thinking, we need to begin to conceptualise Africa as a place that belongs to us all, regardless of how disparate the identity and socio-cultural precepts that engender normative culture may be. Avowing the sacredness of a rich diversity beyond the desire for a homogenous society blesses us with varying threads that weave a greater vision for interconnectedness, solidarity and hopefully a survival and thriving that can resist the impact of our fragmentation and vulnerability in the face of elements that threaten the regenerative potential of the earth and all sentient beings.

Pedagogical openings

An intergenerational reading of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* gave us a chance to gather ourselves and reflect earnestly on the histories that have produced us and some of the questions that still linger as a part of this. This is the power of the cultural artefacts embedded in literature. Achebe's text asks us to consider how our knowledge of ourselves evolves over time, and how engaging in rich texts such as this one can invite learning that gives us the opportunity to re-encounter ourselves. Being intergenerationally accompanied whilst doing this work, challenges one to appreciate a wider understanding of the issue being discussed. Here one cannot simply focus on what one chooses to confront on one's own. The complexity of many issues come into play challenging one to welcome and consider especially that which does not confirm one's own biases. This is an accelerated form of learning that requires one appreciates the ruminations of one's community and not only one's particular perspectives on things. This kind of study makes the desire to transgress something that is weighted reflexively in the choices that we dare to make in the present in the service of a future that is 'not yet' here.

Our reflections on the text also troubled our parameters of a decolonial vision for the world. It challenged us to consider the interrelated layers of hierarchical and oppressive ways of being that are echoed throughout history. Precolonial history cannot not be exempt from this analysis and careful reading. This includes trying to appreciate those elements that we do not understand, those that are valuable and missing in our current experience, as well as those that continue to trouble us and remain somehow irreconcilable with where we are now. By bringing this kind of nuanced analysis to the fore we accentuate the need to curate our cultural evolution as part of decolonial conversations. An appraisal of the precolonial factors within those societies that impinge upon the full humanity of those present needs to be considered, in conjunction with the laminations of colonial oppression and the trappings of a neo-liberal order we are also complicit in. It requires that we interrogate the ethical and moral foundations that different ways of being across time are founded on. We need to discern the foundations that produce onto-epistemological performances of ourselves with sensitivity and care. These emerging thoughts provide useful ground for experimentation towards a vision for transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis.

It has been interesting to see how a novel that was written on the eve of the independence of many states in sub-Saharan Africa holds critical lessons that still ring true in these times. This review moves on to take a deeper look at some of the struggles for independence in Africa, and the leadership strategies at the helm of this. In the next section we move forward in time, to appreciate the way in which African states struggled towards independence, how they defined this independence, and the characteristic difficulties they faced in those times, as they endeavoured to re-create the states they had inherited from 400 years of colonial expansion and rule. The emancipatory concerns that can be found at the crossroads of independence are highlighted in the next section, giving us insight into the kind of thinking praxis that attempted to challenge the deeply entrenched nature of colonial power.

Chapter 3: Looking for a Transgressive History of Praxis in Africa's Liberation Movements



Figure 3.1: *The new seekers*, 1969 (by Erhabor Ogieva Emokpae in Ewenzor, 2001, p. 83)

3.1 The Long Arc of Modern History in Africa and the 'Logical' Subjugation of the Other

Building on what we can learn from Africa's encounters with itself in the period before and during nascent colonial encounters, it feels fitting to observe some of the emancipatory concerns embedded at another critical time in its history. The long history of European expansion and colonisation in Africa and the time spans in which the relationship between colonised territories and European protectorates were concretised is considerable to recount. By the 15th century European activities along the coastline of Africa were already established by the Portuguese, the English, the French and the Dutch. By 1418 the Portuguese had established contact in north and west Africa. They later established contact with central Africa by 1482 and Angola by the 1580s. The Dutch struggled against the Portuguese for the strongholds they had gained in West Africa and established a port at the Cape of Good Hope by 1647. The French in turn became interested in the Guinea Coast trade by the 1530s and expanded their influence to Senegal, Gabon, Mauritania, Benin and later Algeria. The British

increased their trading activities in West Africa and later exerted their influence in East Africa and in South Africa by the 18th century (Sifuna, Ngome and Kulundu , 1994, p. 188).

Considering the time periods of European expansion and colonialism in Africa highlights how long it took to establish relationships that were based on centuries of illicit and transactional trade, that later culminated in the domination of local contexts. The lucrative trade that paved the way for this domination sought to gain access to precious raw materials and potential merchandise such as gold, pepper, animal skins, ivory and stolen humans that could be used as slaves (Sifuna, Ngome and Kulundu, 1994, p. 188). Apart from establishing the control of resource flows, the extraction of natural resources, and the human beings that were siphoned off during European expansion and trade, this period in history was significant in that it marked the beginning of a different kind of relationship that European states created amongst each other and the colonised territories they occupied. This new arrangement was underpinned by a logic that justified the enterprise of empire and its ambitions. This was in fact the birth of the ‘modern world-system’ as we know it, a system that ratified the project of empire and in doing so gave ‘birth’ to an ‘international order of empires’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, p. 336). The logic that underpinned this international order of empires is surmised below, highlighting how this system was distinctly different to those that preceded it:

The Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch empires as well as the later British and French empires that dominated Africa were underpinned and driven by a different logic than the Roman and Ottoman-Turkish empires that existed prior to 1492. The empires that existed prior to 1492 were driven by the logic of assimilation. The post-1492 empires were driven by the logic of race and racial discrimination. (Burbank and Cooper, 2010; Mamdani, 2013, in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 336)

The logic of racial discrimination marked the development of a very specific kind of relationship between colonisers and the colonised, one premised on the supposed inferiority of the subjects of those lands, which ultimately served as a basis from which extractivism and colonial wealth seeking could be satiated whilst disregarding the native populace. Race in this instance served as a smoke screen for their intersecting demands for domination that would gain them territory, natural resources, labour and power. It is important to understand that from the onset of this relationship ‘assimilation’ as we have come to understand it was not considered a strategic imperative. This meant that mechanisms that could ensure direct and indefinite rule that protected the control of resources flows were a strategic part of the administrative instruments put in place in these colonies. The colonisers in this case assumed a “confident tranquility” of their standing that was based on “the tranquil assumption of the

long-term character of colonial rule” (Hargreaves, 1990, p. 10). This was a form of rule that in retrospect was designed to keep colonial hegemony as the central organising principle of governance. In centuries to come, the systematic configurations that would reinforce colonial hegemony would be intensified.

The treaty of Westphalia that was signed in 1648 can be seen as one such moment that marked the intensification of the colonial logic. This treaty is thought of as the birthplace of the modern nation state as we know it. Here we see European states acknowledging each other’s power and prowess as growing empires. They extended their awareness of each other at this particular point by agreeing “to recognise and respect each other’s territorial sovereignty” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 337). A key element of this treaty was that it took place whilst European states continued to intensify their expansion beyond their own borders. Paradoxically, the acknowledgement of each other’s sovereignty was put into effect at the same time that they exercised an indomitable appetite for violating the sovereignty of the non-European peoples they encountered in their expansive conquests (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 337). The imperial attitude that allowed them to disregard the humanity of the non-European people they dominated is described by Maldonado-Torres as a “Manichean misanthropic skepticism”, which he describes as “the radical questioning or permanent suspicion regarding the humanity of the person in question” (Maldonado-Torres 2008, p. 245). The operationalisation of Manichean misanthropic skepticism cemented the dual nature of coloniality refusing to grant to ‘others’ the vestiges of humanity that it ascribed to itself. More is said on this cunning aspect of coloniality, as it escalated into the audacity witnessed in the Berlin conference of 1884-1885, a moment that further secured the interests of the European empire in Africa:

African people were not considered to be part of humanity that was expected to enjoy national sovereignty. The Berlin conference of 1884-1885 was the culmination of a long process in which the African people were written out of the ‘zone of being’ into a ‘zone of non-being’ where they were available not only for enslavement but also for colonization. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 338)

This ‘zone of non-being’ legitimated the violation and forced labour of the colonised subject and monopoly over their lands in ways that the European countries had thus far not explored. Enwenzor (2001) describes the Berlin conference as a point in history that:

illustrates the willingness of the fifteen European nations attending the conference to betray, for profit, the juridical principles at the foundations of their own civil societies...

It cannot be repeated enough that the territorial violations and the abject violence that followed the annexation of most of Africa sprang from a deeply held belief that simple issues of human decency and legal protection do not and cannot apply to subject peoples. Especially those deemed in need of civilising. (Enwezor, 2002, p.10)

This is a key moment in history because it traces some of the profit-based origins of the fault lines in which ‘non-being’ and ‘being’ were demarcated. It shows the nascent stages of the ideological frameworks that were used to construct a divided world, in which the laws that apply to those deemed worthy on one side of the world do not apply to those constructed as inferior and separate on the other side. Maldonado-Torres substantiates this view by stating that:

Due to the modern and racial imperial enterprise the world takes the form of a divide between black and white, between good and evil, and between master and slave among similar Manichean hierarchies.

... As I use it here, colonialism does not refer so much to the presence of imperialism, or colonial administrations, but to a modality of being as well as to power relations that sustain a fundamental social and geopolitical divide between masters and slaves. (Maldonado-Torres, 2008, p.100, p.239)

De Sousa Santos refers to the creation of these fault lines as the operationalisation of “abyssal thinking”, a state in which an ‘abyssal line’ is drawn that separates the human from the sub-human, the metropolitan mother lands from the colonial territories, each governed by very separate ethical imperatives and organising principles (De Sousa Santos, 2007, p. 1). As part of this arrangement, one side of the line is governed by laws that regulate due process and permit emancipatory ends. The other side of the line however is predicated on the inhibition of the ethics of emancipation and instead gross “appropriation and violence” are unrelentingly discharged to sustain a form of ‘order’ fashioned to dominate colonised subjects in ways that benefit hegemony, while additionally rendering it impenetrable (ibid.).

The grim details of what happens on the other side of the line are rendered invisible; they “comprise of a vast set of discarded experiences, made invisible both as agencies and agents” (De Sousa Santos, 2007, p. 3). Instead, the popular maxim “beyond the equator there are no sins” takes precedence, legitimising the subjugating practices that are found there (ibid.). Frantz Fanon witnessed the workings of this dividing line in Martinique and Algeria. He provides a compelling description about how this dividing line is enforced, through a language predicated on violence:

The colonial world is a world cut into two. The dividing line, the frontiers are shown by barracks and police stations. In the colonies it is the policemen and the soldiers

who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression... the policemen and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle-butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; he shows them up and puts them into practice with the clear conscience of an upholder of the peace; yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native. (Fanon, 1963, p.29)

Mahmood Mamdani adds to the ideas around the parallel worlds that colonialism created by bringing into focus the institutional frameworks created *within* African states, and how these also reflect the operationalisation of abyssal thinking. These frameworks institutionalised mechanisms that went far beyond the physical and mental violence described by Fanon. The difference between “subjective, objective, symbolic and systemic violence” is highlighted here, showing the institutional means through which this dividing line was forged (Zizek, 2009, p. 1). In this perspective, subjective violence “is the most visible form of violence” but the other forms of violence mentioned constitute the ways in which objective violence can take place (Zizek, 2009, p. 1). Symbolic and systemic violence, on the other hand, exist within “economic and political systems” and provide a covert yet thoroughly instrumental institutional binding through which the logic of discrimination and social exclusion can be entrenched in ways that maintain the economic benefits of those that wield it. Mamdani brings into focus the systemic apparatus that managed African states, and how this instituted the operationalisation of two different legal universes:

The colonial state divided the population into two: races and ethnicities. Each lived in a different legal universe. Races were governed through civil law. They were considered as members, actually or potentially, of civil society. Civil society excluded ethnicities. If we understand civil society not as an idealised prescription but as historical construct, we will recognise that the original sin of civil society under colonialism was racism.

Ethnicities were governed through customary laws. While civil law spoke the language of rights, customary law spoke the language of tradition, of authenticity. These were different languages with different effects, even opposite effects. The language of rights bounded law. It claimed to set limits to power. For civic power was to be exercised within the rule of law and had to observe the sanctity of the domain of rights. The language of custom, in contrast, did not circumscribe power, for custom was *enforced*. The language of custom *enabled* power instead of checking it by drawing boundaries around it. In such an arrangement, no rule of law was possible. (Mamdani, 2001, p. 654)

This description of the different legal universes that colonialism created within African states helps us to see how the logic of ‘abyssal thinking’ further demarcated the parameters through which perceived ‘subjects’ and ‘citizens’ would be taught to relate to the state. It also shows how colonial governments strategically maintained control of the centre of ‘civil society’ whilst also empowering traditional leaders to maintain power in their own domains, the kind of power that often was used at the bidding of the colonial authorities. What is useful about this is that it gives us a history of how these contradictions played out within the African state, whilst revealing the historical origins of the rights-based discourse we have inherited. It helps us pay attention to the institutional frameworks put into place at the time and the historical trajectories they stem from. It also calls into question the foundations of the kind of democracy that contemporary African states are undoubtedly built on, and whether some of these historical fault lines continue to persist within them. Mamdani eloquently surmises this point by putting the foundations of this past in conversation with the present moment that he is trying to understand:

Democracy is not about who governs and how they are chosen. More important, it is about how they govern, the institutions through which they organise different categories of citizen. Colonialism was not just about the identity of governors, that they were white or European; it was even more so about the institutions they created to enable a minority to rule over a majority. During indirect rule, these institutions unified the minority as rights-bearing citizens and fragmented the majority as so many custom-driven ethnicities. (Mamdani, 2001, p. 663)

Understanding the construction of racial and ethnic fault lines as layers of discourse that laminated the colonial project allows us to appreciate the great expanse of time under which the systems of colonialism gradually grafted themselves onto the colonies they dominated. It also helps us understand, at a later stage, why the systems that underpinned the colonial enterprise would prove to be incredibly recalcitrant and resilient in their imperatives. At the beginning of the paper that shares these insights, Mamdani gives us the extraordinary privilege of hearing him reflect out loud on the work that his generation of thinkers and writers contributed to our understanding of colonialism, and what insights surpassed their analysis at the time:

My starting point is the generation that inherited Africa’s colonial legacy. Our generation followed on the heels of nationalists. We went to school in the generational period and to university after independence. We were Africa’s first generation of post-colonial intellectuals. Our political consciousness was shaped by a central assumption: we were convinced that the impact of colonialism on our societies was mainly economic. In the decade that followed African political independence, militant nationalist intellectuals focused on the expropriation of the native as the great crime

of colonialism. Walter Rodney wrote *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. But no one wrote how Europe *ruled* Africa.

... it strikes me that none of us – neither nationalists nor Marxists – historicised the political legacy of colonialism, of the colonial state as a legal/institutionalised complex that reproduced particular political identities ...

Neither Marxists nor nationalists tried to historicise race and ethnicity as political identities undergirded and reproduced by colonial institutions – perhaps because neither had yet managed sufficient analytical distance from that legacy. (Mamdani, 2001, pp. 651-652)

This reflection as well as his analysis on ethnicity and race in the African state give us the benefit of learning intergenerationally from those that have been shaping emancipatory discourses before us. It is a gentle injunction to make sure that the reviews that we participate in during these times benefit from this perspective as part of our learning. It gives us the analytical tools from which we can begin to take an alternative look at the established sites from which the struggles for independence were waged upon. Through these insights we can begin to bear witness to the struggle for political independence in Africa. We can acknowledge how these goals were entwined with the desire for economic expropriation whilst still appreciating the challenge of engendering a new kind of citizen, one that could try to recover from the institutionalisation of the racial and ethical faultlines entrenched during colonialism.

This chapter seeks to answer the question: What did transgressive efforts towards an alternative future look like in newly ‘post- independent’ African states? In order to answer this question, the chapter looks into the life work of African leaders that intentionally placed themselves at the helm of a decolonial vision for the future. By exploring some of the work that past leaders endeavoured to create, I hope to understand the theoretical formulations and discursive moves that characterised the efforts they chose to spearhead at particular moments in African history. We will also consider how different leaders strategically worked towards the concerns that were at the heart of the freedom they sought, and how their efforts fared in the long run. Through this, we can begin to discern the extent to which the governments that were the result of struggles for independence were able to achieve their aims, and what questions remain in the wake of the transgressive efforts launched over seven decades ago.

The range of themes that are explored in this chapter are intentionally set out to surface the links between theory and praxis in the work of African leaders that consciously sought to

transgress and regenerate an emancipatory future for the continent. The perspectives of various leaders will be explored in a comparative review that will collate similar and diverging theoretical and praxis-based strategies of leaders who sought to steer a new course for the continent. This comparative review follows the ambit of Africana critical theory which is:

... a style of critical theorizing, inextricably linked to progressive political practice(s), that highlights and accents black radicals' and black revolutionaries' answers to the key questions posed by the major forms and forces of domination and discrimination that have historically and continue currently to shape and hold our modern/Postmodern and/or neocolonial/postcolonial world. (Rabaka, 2010, p.16)

In this sense Africana critical theory allows us to reflect deeply on the work of those that have gone before us, and to gain a sense of what it is we can learn from the theoretical and practical ambitions they put into action in their lifetimes. This way of reflecting seeks to appreciate “the thoughts, texts” and situated practices of:

Africana intellectual-activist ancestors as *critical theoretical paradigms* and points of departure because so much of their thought [and action] is not simply *problem-posing* but *solution-providing* where the specific life-struggles of persons of African descent (or “black people”) are concerned... (Rabaka, 2010, p.18 [my emphasis])

I purposefully added the importance of looking at the actions of leaders into this quote (in [brackets]) because this comparative review seeks to be grounded in ways that go beyond a purely theoretical perspective of the world. By grappling with the complexity of the work of African leaders in action we gain a visceral understanding of the efforts behind their work. It is the energy and exertion of putting theoretical outlooks and practical strategies into action in real time that this review seeks to acknowledge, giving us as much of a real picture as possible about what it meant to intentionally transgress the status quo at that time.

Appreciating the manifested works of intellectual-activists and seeing their contributions as critical theoretical paradigms in their own right means taking the time to bear witness to the contours of their analysis and praxis. The archival trails of their philosophical questions and practices in action are meaningful repositories of knowledge that were born out of a particular historical context. These archival trails continue to speak to us in the present. By tracing the course of their thoughts and actions we can gain a multilayered analysis of the conditions and struggles that brought us into the world as we understand it now. Through this we can, in effect, make useful correlations between the most pertinent questions they asked themselves at that time, and how these concerns echo the hallmarks of our present experiences. In line

with looking into the past for clues about how to move more deftly in the present, Africana critical theory is:

... preoccupied with promoting social activism and political practice geared towards radical/revolutionary social transformation and the development of ethical and egalitarian anti-imperial society by pointing to: What transformative efforts; what strategies and tactics might be most useful in the transformative efforts; and, which agents and agencies could potentially carry out the radical/revolutionary social transformation. (Rabaka, 2010, p. 24)

It is equally important to add to this focus that Africana critical theory can also gain insight from revolutionary ambitions that did not manage to sustain or conclusively produce the vision for society they hoped to achieve. If we can acknowledge the ways in which forces of domination continue to affect and shape our world, then it is fitting that we learn from what did not happen (and why this was so) as much as we learn from what did. Tracing the transgressive efforts of African leaders through the periods of independence gives us the space to harness some semblance of wisdom from their strategic efforts, a gift that hopefully challenges us to appreciate the current situations that contemporary Change Drivers find themselves in with greater historical insight and gravity.

As an opening note into this comparative review it is also important to address some longstanding critiques that have significantly impacted the way we have come to perceive African independence in the world. When one looks at the current state of Africa today we might be pressed to conclude that there were little or no transgressive moves towards freedom embedded in the struggles for independence, or that perhaps if they did exist, they have little to teach us because of the protracted ways in which coloniality continues to have a hold on the African reality and imaginary. Renown historian Basil Davidson somewhat substantiates this view by critiquing the foundations upon which the struggles for independence were waged and how its beginnings held within it the seeds of its own demise:

We have to be concerned here with the nationalism which produced the nation-states of newly independent Africa after the colonial period: with the nationalism that became nation-statism. This nation statism looked like a liberation, and it really began as one, but it did not continue as liberation. In practice, it was not the restoration of Africa to Africa's own history, but the onset of a new period of indirect subjugation to the history of Europe. The fifty or so states of the colonial partition, each formed and governed as though their people possessed no history of their own, became fifty or so nation states formed and governed on European models, chiefly the models of Britain or France. Liberation thus produced its own denial. Liberation led to alienation (Davidson, 1973, p10).

Indeed, there are many, many examples of independent African states founded on the precepts of the colonial project. The wholesale adoption of the territorial demarcations of each African state left an indelible mark on the character and functioning of newly independent nation states. Colonialism undoubtedly cast a large shadow on the prospects of African independence. However, despite this overarching domination there exists a trail of discernible ways in which some African leaders, when confronted with the crossroads between the past and the future, chose to confront the colonial matrix and dared to enter African history on their own terms. This review seeks to bear witness to the efforts of African leaders that did in some way assert the desire to transition from one paradigm into another, through the audacity of their actions. These leaders, despite the limitations of their times, and the limitations of their leadership, made some kind of effort to demonstrate the value of an alternative way for their nations to go forward, ways that did challenge the rational and ontological foundations advanced through colonialism. This is what this chapter seeks to explore.

3.2 Marking the Beginnings of the Assertion of an Alternative Future Beyond Colonialism

As early as the 1930s physical insurrections against the colonial order mounted as more and more Africans on the continent began to contest the logics of domination and their allocated roles within its system. John Hargreaves links the growth of forces of change in Africa to the great depression of 1929:

The first great shows to colonial tranquility originated in the economic depression which began to affect the international economy from about 1929. The financial crisis, which led to cuts in investment, large-scale unemployment and impoverishment in industrial countries, drastically reduced demand for the mineral and agricultural produce on which the export trade of every colony depended. (Hargreaves, 1990, p. 32)

The particular way in which this influenced colonial states is specific to each country in question and the nature of locally generated mineral and agricultural produce. Some of the impacts observed include the knock-on effects that a reduced demand for trade had on “entrepreneurs in the expanding domestic economy”; this in turn created “increased labour migration” and those who subsisted on cash crops saw wage labour as a “preferable alternative to growing cash crops at lower prices” (Hargreaves, 1990, p. 33). In addition to

this, it is said that the great depression also impacted colonial governments in significant ways:

Colonial governments were in their own way as badly hit as any of their subjects. The political representatives of metropolitan tax-payers almost invariably insisted that the costs of administration and development in the colonies (and to some extent those of their defence) should be met out of local revenues, derived in varying proportions from the taxes or unpaid labour services of their subjects, and from indirect duties on trade.

... Colonial governments also had heavy commitments, difficult to reduce for the salaries and pensions of their own officials, the highest of course being payable to expatriates. When falling prices slashed the value of customs revenue ... governors had little choice but to penalize African subjects: by reducing expenditure on schools, roads, and medical services, by cutting the public pay-roll at the expense chiefly of junior African staff or by increasing direct taxation. None of these courses was adopted willingly ... and some provoked ominous new forms of African resistance. (Hargreaves, 1990, p. 34)

In the face of these challenges the burden of living in the colonial state were acutely felt by those whose status as colonial subjects left little leeway for sustainable livelihoods or political representation. These pressures would intensify in later years when the pressures of the Second World War would further exacerbate socio-economic issues in the colonies:



Figure 3.2: Soldier ascending stairs with gear on his back (Photographer unknown, in Enwenzor, 2001, p.183)



Figure 3.3: Group of soldiers in India, 1944 (Photographer unknown, in Enwenzor, 2001, p.181)

While Africans were sent abroad in thousands as soldiers and labourers ... those who remained came under increasing duress to work harder, whether on their own farms, on those of foreigners, in mines, or in direct employment of the colonial state...

wherever there seemed opportunities to assist the white man's war, colonial states assumed unprecedented powers to ensure that they were taken. (Hargreaves, 1990, p. 34)

Whether one's livelihood depended on wage labour that was poorly recompensed, forced labour, or the fatal demands of conscription (which required that soldiers from the colonies stand at the front lines of the second world war), or even if one was a member of a growing elite of educated Africans trying to claim more space for themselves in a market and civil society dominated by Europeans, by 1945 the contradictions of the colonial state were becoming hopelessly blatant. Colonies in sub-saharan Africa began to get restless enough to begin to assert a vision for themselves that purposefully desired to breach the terms underpinned by colonial rule.

At the end of the Second World War "the liberation struggles for Africa's decolonisation from European rule gathered revolutionary momentum" (Badru, 2012, p. 271). What distinguished these revolts from those that previously existed within African colonies was that did not only raise concerns about the quality of life of ordinary citizens, they began to question the 'legitimacy of colonial rule "in significant ways" (Badru, 2012, p. 271). By 1945 these demands escalated towards the organisation of the very first Pan-African Conference in Manchester. Some of the proposals launched at this conference included:

... condemning colonialism, calling for a just end to the war in Algeria, for the granting of independence to all trusteeship territories, for an end to racism in South Africa, Kenya, the central African federation and so on... (Hirson, 1990, p. 66)

Amongst those present for this meeting were some of the founding fathers of Africa's liberation: "Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya" and "they all left the conference with the hope that one day their countries would be freed from European domination"(Badru, 2012, p. 271).



Figure 3.4: Heads of state conference in Kampala, Uganda, including President Gregoire Kayibanda of Rwanda, Jean-Bedel Bokassa of the Central African Republic, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Ishmael el- Azhari of Sudan, Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, Milton Obote of Uganda, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Kenneth Kaunda of Uganda, and Prime Minister Mohamed Egal of Somalia, December 1967. (Photo Marion Kaplan, in Enwezor, 2002, p.188)

Eventually, in successive years these leaders managed to witness and lead their countries towards independence spurred on by what seemed to be “a powerful psychological and ideological force” that was unleashed across the African political spectrum (Enwezor, 2002, p. 11). From the 1960s onwards, it is said that “a loud canon-shot was fired across the bow of the political spectrum” (Enwezor, 2001, p. 11).



Figure 3.5: Jomo Kenyatta, with Tom Mboya and Mwai Kibaki.celebrating KANU's (Kenya African National Union) victory in the independence election, 1963 (Drum staff photographer, in Enwezor, 2002, p.194)

The result of this huge release was that “seventeen African countries gained independence in that year, through many years of struggle and organization” (Enwenzor, 2001, p.11). A distinguishing feature of the growing leadership on the continent at the time was its propensity to envision the liberation of Africa in terms that gleaned on a ‘socialist’ ideology. More can be said on the roots of socialist discourse in Africa and why this ideology captured the minds of Africa’s burgeoning leadership:

During the post-war period, socialism attained an extraordinary degree of popularity in sub-Saharan Africa. Paradoxically, the immediate motive which led many Black African nations to adopt the idea of socialism which had arisen in Europe was their wish to demonstrate African originality. Socialism, they argued, was in truth a quintessentially African idea, for pre-colonial African society, characterised by collective economic activity and grass roots democratic decision making, had been a precursor of socialism. So even if the term had never been applied to it, the substance of the matter was that socialism was inherently African, and it was only the name, not the idea that they were borrowing from Europe. (Dieter, 1990, p. 300)

Even within this broad affirmation that socialism formed part of African society, it is important to appreciate that the adoption of socialist discourse must have also been influenced by the shift in global power catalysed by the Russian revolution and Marxism and Leninism that followed in its wake. The assertion of a different political ideology that was not predicated on the logic of capitalism must have influenced the audacity to willfully reconfigure the ideologies that underpinned colonial hegemony. It is interesting to note the ways in which a localised understanding of ‘socialism’ was articulated by different African leaders at the time. Anti-colonial intellectual discourse found very different expressions for its appreciation of socialism (Otunnu, 2015, p. 19). Some of the emerging variations of socialism included:

Kwame Nkrumah’s promotion of ‘Scientific Socialism’ which has its progeny in Marxist-Leninism (see Metz, 1982; Nkrumah, 1965, 1970); Kenneth Kaunda’s humanism, which derived its saliency from an amalgam of Judeo-Christian ethics and precepts of African communitarian sensibilities and ideals, with the valorization of work as ‘part of the process to improving man’s inherent qualities’ (Kaunda, 1967, p. 1); Kenya’s African socialism, as expressed in the government’s *Session Paper Number 10*, postulated a formal and legalistic system of equality that had little to do with socialism per se; Milton Obote’s move to the left, encapsulated in the ‘Common Man’s Charter’, rejected exploitation for the benefit of a few but was, in its essential features, an expression of formal equality similar to Kenya’s African socialism (Obote, 1969) ... Nyerere’s philosophy of African socialism ... that was grounded in African values and principles of communalism, collective production, egalitarian distribution and universal obligation to work; and Patrice Lumumba, whose ‘affirmation of African personality’ and rejection of external ideologies mirrors Nyerere’s ideological grounding in traditional African culture (Lumumba reproduced in Cartey and Kilson, 1970). (Cited in Otunnu, 2015, p. 19)

These variations demonstrate the diverse applications of ‘socialism’ in sub-saharan Africa, few of which could *actually* be lauded as promoting a socialist ethic in the long run, and fewer still amongst them that lived to provide a useful example of an alternative manifestation of African socialism. Here I am questioning whether these visions managed to demonstrate a marked change in the way the state and its proceedings were conceptualised in Africa after direct colonialism. To put it in another way, this is a question about whether African nationalism at the time created the revival of ‘African pre-colonial formulations’ that were built on going forward or whether these states were “more a product of modernity” that mirrored and reproduced the tenets of “western bourgeois struggles” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 342).

It is this important question that the following sub-sections seek to interrogate, whilst additionally delving into the complexity of the times by tracing the ideological impulses of a few African leaders that did indeed set out to practically challenge the state of affairs. We will explore the efforts of those invested in creating a different future for Africa, one that hoped to transgress the logics of colonial domination. By looking into leadership that endeavoured to shape a different destiny for themselves and the continent, we can begin to get an interesting view of the challenges that newly independent African states faced, as well as the implications of these on the project of emancipation. Whether the experiences that we find here can be attributed to the leadership of the time, or to extenuating circumstances will be appreciated bringing into focus what can be learnt (the hard way) from the daunting task of trying to create a different template for African futures. We will explore what we can glean from these transgressive efforts, and how in turn they ought to affect our understandings of the decolonial pedagogical questions embedded in contemporary struggles.

It is important from the onset to appreciate (as mentioned in the prologue and positioning) that it is not so much the success of these initiatives that we seek to evaluate in this sub-section, but rather the audacity of the ambition of these projects that we seek to appreciate (Tuck and Yang, 2014, p. 91). This will be done in order to ascertain the emancipatory ends that were envisioned at that time, and the challenges in their practical implementation that were met at this crossroads in African history.



Figure 3.6: Julius Nyerere (Shivji, 2009, p.1 in Pambazuka News³⁶)

The following section is structurally organised as a comparative look into the transgressive impulses and legacy of some of the founding fathers of African independence. The legacy of Julius Kamberage Nyerere forms the foundation of this section because his legacy is by far the longest experienced in the African context. The impression of his efforts in Tanzania provide us with a compelling account of the struggle towards creating an alternative vision for Africa. The extent to which his dispensation sought to re-imagine what this could be is explored in this section, and juxtaposed with the efforts of others such as Kwame Nkrumah, Thomas Sankara, Nelson Mandela, amongst others, who in different contexts also endeavoured to create an emancipatory vision for their countries and this continent.

All the leadership figures in the next section have been chosen because of how they sought to challenge the colonial hegemony and how the practical implications of their efforts formed part of incredibly pivotal times in African history. Through their work we are in a sense witnessing the challenge of confronting centuries of domination in slow motion within the limited space of less than decades of work (for some). These encounters help us understand the residual hallmarks of colonialism in Africa and the extent to which those under this tutelage were able to reconceptualise themselves and their societies as part of the project of independence. It highlights a period in which the entrenched nature of colonialism could showcase itself against the nascent ambitions for an independent Africa.

By bearing witness to these struggles we can begin to see the power of the old order demonstrating itself against the audacity of new emancipatory projects. We can begin to see

³⁶ <https://www.pambazuka.org/pan-africanism/pan-africanism-mwalimu-nyerere's-thought>

where the tenets of colonialism persisted within the ensuing challenges witnessed at the time, and where new and important issues emerged within the creation of the independent African state. This is a useful vantage point from which we can assess the nature of the ‘colonial hangover’ and what aspects of its configurations were exposed during the process after political independence. It also gives us a chance to see what African societies looked like towards the beginnings of the desire for political sovereignty, and the complex issues playing out in those contexts that can be analysed as signs of those times.

The next section highlights the ideological framing from which these leaders operated, as well as the transgressive impulses each demonstrated at the time. Illustrations of their particular strain of leadership in action are shared, as well as some of the contradictions, challenges and critiques that have been lodged against their life’s work. Lastly, this comparative analysis also seeks to appreciate contextual considerations that need to be acknowledged and appreciated in order to understand the relevance and limitations of the efforts they pioneered at that particular time.

3.3 Nyerere’s Struggle to Create an Independent and Free Africa

Within the firmament of African leadership there exists the legacy of a leader who is characterised as being patient enough to think carefully about how colonialism manifested over centuries, and to consider how an emancipatory response towards an alternative future might look. In Tanzania the legacy of Julius Nyerere endures as an alternative narrative for the ways in which African independence often failed to name and operationalise a departure from the terms that formed the basis of colonisation. But Julius Nyerere was not a lone example; he was accompanied in his lifetime (and the times succeeding it) by many leaders who also dared to reconfigure the colonial matrix. Different thematic and strategic articulations of what this should entail persist amongst these leaders, highlighting the different fronts from which statesmen across Africa asserted an alternative vision for the future. For the purposes of this review, Julius Nyerere’s legacy is used as a descriptive baseline from which we can compare and contrast the transgressive efforts of several African statesmen. Nyerere’s legacy is a useful baseline for this comparative review because the themes that characterise his efforts in Tanzania consistently provide a useful juxtaposition with those of many others. There are discernible waves of transgressive thinking in action across African history, and Julius Nyerere’s tenure as a leader gives us the chance to consider

these strategic imperatives in the course of one lifetime. His life's work provides an amalgam of themes that can be witnessed elsewhere, strewn across African history. Using his legacy as a baseline gives us the space to gain an in-depth appreciation of the embedded issues and to compare these with the similar or disparate efforts of others. By considering the themes that underpin Nyerere's tenure as a leader and key strategist in Tanzania, we can open up a conversation about the manifestations of similar imperatives in other spaces across the continent and how they fared in the long run. This provides a useful place to demonstrate the challenges and learnings embedded in fostering an emancipatory vision for Africa across time, without having to delve into great depth into each leader's context and specific historical journey. Thus, this comparative review merely dips into *thematic* juxtapositions that seem relevant. We will thus consider different manifestations of transgressive decolonial impulses in Africa on the move, shifting swiftly from considering the ideological and practical orientations of one leader to another. In each instance, this review will hold the thematic thread of the issue in question and explore how it was approached similarly or differently in varying contexts. It is these historical undertakings that the review seeks to analyse, highlighting variances and correlations between what transgressive impulses towards an African future consisted of in those times and what this offers us in contemporary times.

3.4 Brave Beginnings? Reviewing the Status of Socio-Economic Rights in Burgeoning African States

The persistence and evolution of Julius Nyerere's vision from 1964 to 1985 marks a longstanding undertaking towards recasting the terms under which Tanzanian society and African society as a whole could function within the international system. The trajectories undertaken during his tenure were markedly transgressive in many ways. To begin with, it is important to consider the ways in which Tanzanian society sought to shift how the state would function going forward and what priorities it would set for itself. The transition period towards an independent Tanzania highlights specific choices that set out to challenge the way in which the discourse on human rights had traditionally played out within newly independent African states (Read, 1995, p. 129). The adoption of a Constitutional Bill of Rights was a feature of independent African states that was strongly endorsed by former colonial governments. In many cases, the implementation of a constitutional bill of rights was an unchallenged component of newly independent African states, as illustrated in the quote below:

When Tanganyika attained independence on December 9, 1961, British colonial policy, in a notable reversal of the traditional British attitude, had recently embraced the practice of enacting constitutional Bills of Rights for the dependencies, modelled on the European convention on Human Rights (1950). Moreover, this new policy was first applied in Africa, in Nigeria in 1959... Similar Bills of Rights were included in the constitutions of all African dependencies which attained independence within the Commonwealth after Tanganyika, for example, Uganda (1962), Kenya (1963) and Zambia (1964). (Read, 1995, p. 128)

Challenging this norm, Nyerere thought it was “hypocritical for a colonial power to entrench guarantees of human rights on the eve of decolonisation” because “colonialism was itself a basic denial of human rights” (Read, 1995, p.129). He questioned why it was that as colonial governments left their former colonies, they saw fit to make sure that the rights of all citizens were protected through a constitutional bill of rights. How, after a legacy predicated on the denigration of human rights and civil liberties, could the colonial governments be the forebears of the terms for emancipation and equality in former colonies? These questions speak back to the concerns that Mamdani (2001) raised about the way colonial governments ruled the protectorate states cited previously, whilst additionally showcasing the way in which the newly independent Tanzanian states sought to define their vision for the future on their own terms. In an effort to problematise the issues embedded in the adoption of a Constitutional Bill of Rights, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) gave a “reasoned rejection for a Bill of Rights” on the basis that such an arrangement would possibly “obstruct TANU’s plan for social and economic change and might provoke conflict between the Government and the judiciary” (Read, 1995, p.127).

Traditionally, some of the reasons why the protection of the Bill of Rights is thought of as indispensable has to do with its powers in preventing “the deliberate abuse of power by civilian or military rulers” (Read, 1995, p. 128). The individual, in this perspective, needs to be protected from undue coercion by the state. Legislative measures that are designed to protect the individual from undue coercion are critical parts of a society built on the mutual respect and autonomy of its citizens. History has proved the necessity of these protective clauses through many many incidences in which the rights of individuals have been forcibly stripped away, creating the grounds for the exploitation of some members of society, for the benefit, power or profit of others. Whilst acknowledging the importance of this, TANU tabled some contextual questions that further interrogated the foundations of this ideal. These questions dealt with the ideals of human rights, especially in the context of an inherited and

imbalanced social structure that urgently needs to be revised in order to create an alternative emancipatory future for all members of society. In short, TANU asked questions about how they could better define individual rights when restructuring society on more egalitarian grounds was a necessary part of the state's work. What would the creation of a more just society require of individuals, and how could the issues embedded in rebalancing an unequal society be considered?

As these questions coincided with the creation of Tanzania's one-party state, TANU publicly debated questions about whether the traditional protection of civil rights ought to outweigh the pursuit of the socio-economic rights for all members of society, and what this would mean for society. They asked themselves whether the struggle for human dignity in Tanzania could be attained without upholding values of socio-economic rights as the pillar of their vision for decolonial reform. TANU did not want to get into a position where the protection of civil liberties would prevent the reshaping of society on a more egalitarian basis. This would be an ideological stalemate that would fail to manifest the promise of socio-economic freedom in Tanzania. The potential conflict between different but essential aspects of freedom was considered. Lack of governmental strategy towards socio-economic reform could easily result in the creation of a state predicated on the civil liberties of the individual, without the institutional will or mechanisms to enforce much-needed socio-economic freedoms. The word 'enforce' here is used purposely, because it questions the extent to which the power of the state should be used (over and above the rights of the individual) to champion causes that are beneficial for the common good, that could arguably only be put into action through this kind of backing. It is complex to consider: when power over others can be legitimised for the common good, and the incoming government in Tanzania challenged itself to clarify its intentions for the nation's future.

In an effort to balance the desire for socio-economic freedom with the protection of the civil liberties of citizens, Nyerere strategised around how government could reconfigure the rights-based discourse in Tanzania in ways that could attend to and operationalise the realisation of both these imperatives. Maintaining a good balance between the civil rights of the individual, and the welfare of society comes up strongly at this point in Tanzania's history (as it did throughout his tenure); his leadership sought to respond to difficult questions in ways that deviated from the norm. Below we are assailed with some of the questions that Nyerere publicly debated and was pressed to respond to in his dispensation:

What restrictions of political liberty are justifiable in order to advance national unity? How is freedom of expression to be weighed against protection from racist propaganda which denies freedom from discrimination? When must the private property rights of the few give way to ensure the subsistence of the many? And especially, must personal freedom of the individual be denied in order to protect the security of the nation? (Nyerere in Read, 1995, p. 126)

These questions sought to problematise and question the civil rights of the individual within a predominantly poor society that had a very long way to go in unequivocally securing the well-being of all. They show a level of discernment about how the rights of the individual, in this respect, could inadvertently result in the over protection of different class interests across the board, when there was still important work that needed to be done in order to foster a more egalitarian society. They also highlight questions about whether the individual should be compelled to sacrifice some of their rights in order to create better conditions in society as a whole. Nyerere intuited that without strongly protecting the priority of socio-economic justice in his dispensation, inequality could easily be perpetuated within a system strongly predicated on the civil liberties and rights of the individual. A sense of personal sacrifice towards the common good is undoubtably something that Nyerere hoped to instill amongst the Tanzanian populace, something that he hoped would come naturally for those that could keep in mind the collective gains they urgently needed to make as a society. It is no surprise then, that as part of galvanising the population towards these ideals, he boldly stated that “those without the heart to build the nation have no place in Tanzania” (Nyerere in Brown, 1995, p. 12).

TANU’s stance towards this dilemma is demonstrated in the way they framed rights-based discourse in Tanzania following these debates. They undertook to set in motion the following understanding and ranking of the rights that needed to be protected in order to create an emancipatory future:

First there is national freedom; that is, the ability of the citizen of Tanzania to determine their own future ... Second, there is freedom from hunger, disease and poverty. And third, there is personal freedom for the individual; that is, his right to live in dignity and equality with all others, his right to freedom of speech, freedom to participate in the making of all designs which affect his life, and freedom from arbitrary arrest because he happens to annoy someone in authority – and so on. All these are aspects of freedom, and the citizens of Tanzania cannot be said to be truly free until all of them are assured. (Read, 1995, p.127)

By numerically categorising these essential rights, it could be said that TANU set out a mandate that signified a determination to claim Tanzania's independence with a markedly strong attitude towards socio-economic justice and dignity. Third in this list comes the affirmation of personal freedom as intimated by the acknowledgement that individuals should be protected from undue authoritative coercion. These imperatives signal a move towards bolstering the power of government to restructure the socio-economic concerns of the state *as a function of* the rights an individual should be granted and guaranteed. We do not have many examples of African nations that, from the onset of their independence, sought to prioritise the welfare of the poor in the way that Nyerere's government pointedly hoped to do so. Moreover, TANU's foresight is showcased in the openness involved in publicly debating what a Constitutional Bill of Rights would create in society, without a robust commitment to socio-economic reform. It also demonstrates its audacity in challenging the pitfalls of only championing individual rights in 'post-colonial' African society. This is no doubt an aspect of TANU's leadership that created ripples of concern within and without Tanzanian society, the region, the continent and the world. It was a rogue move to publicly consider where the efforts of decolonisation ought to be concentrated, and what approaches would yield the results of a desirable future. When we think about the power and influence of the human rights discourse to date, it is daring that TANU's dispensation sought to challenge its foundations, by putting into place a risky balance that could protect the authority of the state in restructuring society in egalitarian ways. It is important to consider the effects of this legislation in the course of this review by looking at what happened in Tanzanian society as a result of these reforms. Before we continue to see how this ideological stance affected the character of Tanzanian independence as a whole, it is important to acknowledge the role that clearly specified beginnings had on the character of newly independent African states in other contexts.

We have noted in the last section some of the decisions that TANU made around the Constitutional Bill of Rights as they began the process of independence. Let us pause briefly to contrast these strategic imperatives with other examples of the way other African countries began their journey towards independence. There is an old adage that says that "the beginning is where the end gets born" (Valente, 2019). How other burgeoning African states struggled to rebalance society in the face of the inequality entrenched by colonialism is explored briefly in the next section, signaling the transitional tussles at the end of direct minority European rule. To begin with, let us consider the legacy of the adoption of a

Constitutional Bill of Rights in South Africa, and what this progressively legitimated and perhaps delegitimated in her recent history. The question of how to adequately attain socio-economic justice becomes very interesting when seen in the light of the ‘post-Apartheid’ situation in South Africa.



*Figure 3.7: ‘Vote for Mandela’ billboards, Soweto 1994
(Photo Leonard Freed in Enwezor, 2002, p. 217)*

Over decades there has been a growing sentiment that the long struggle to freedom in South Africa was betrayed at its beginning in part through the leadership of one of the most renowned leaders of our time, Nelson Mandela.

This reading of Mandela as a failure is pronounced amongst black constituencies that have not seen a qualitative change in their socio-economic life since the transition from apartheid to democracy... It is a charge that is levelled at Mandela mainly by the unemployed youth who are deeply disappointed by the transition from apartheid to democracy. Mandela is said to have failed to deliver economic freedom. He is said to have presided over profoundly compromised CODESA negotiations that produced ‘an intra-elite economic deal of neo-colonialism. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016, p. 30)

South Africa’s transition into a democratic dispensation is a useful contrast to the vision that Nyerere sought to instill in Tanzania from the onset of his tenure. From the beginning of Tanzania’s independence, Nyerere endeavoured to create the conditions through which a relapse into the hierarchical ordering of society that privileged an elite few would be problematised legislatively. By instituting a mechanism through which socio-economic rights took precedence, it seemed that Nyerere hoped to challenge the pitfalls of a hollow political freedom. In contrast to this, the failure to systematically address the socio-economic

injustices in post-Apartheid South Africa can be added to the conversation. In particular, it is useful to interrogate and critique the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC), what it tabled as part of South Africa's transition to democracy, and what it obscured:

The TRC... never put apartheid as a colonial system on trial, with a view not to prosecute and punish but to mark a paradigmatic shift from historical wrongs into an era of social transformation and political reform that was emerging from CODESA. Instead, it seemed to decriminalise apartheid as a system, a system that authorised what Mamdani (2010, p. 9) termed 'extra economic coercion, including dispossession, forced removals, and displacements'. The agenda of economic and social justice was consequently not put on the agenda as a necessary socio- economic project. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016, p. 111)

In his own words, Mamdani extends the logic of his thinking, mentioning in detail what was missing from the terms of reconciliation that were brokered by the TRC:

Had the TRC acknowledged pass laws and forced removals as constituting the core social violence of Apartheid, as the stuff of extra economic coercion and primitive accumulation, it would have been in a position to imagine a socio-economic order beyond liberalised post-apartheid society. It would have been able to highlight the question of justice in its fullness, as not only criminal and political, but also as social. The step that the TRC failed to take is the challenge South Africa faces today. (Mamdani, 2010, in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016, p. 111)

By omitting the social aspects of violence instituted by Apartheid, the TRC limited its imagination for redress in South Africa. It is interesting to consider what remains un-operationalised within its constitution in this regard, a constitution one may add that is heralded as one of the best in the world. What, then stands in the way of this progressive constitution championing of socio-economic rights for the poor in South Africa? Madlingozi joins Nyerere with an in-depth critique on the limits of the use of the constitution in addressing issues of socio-economic justice in a liberal democracy such as South Africa. His treatise which is quoted at length, highlights different strains of thought that have been levelled against the effectiveness of constitutions around the world:

The critique against the human rights discourse – not against 'human rights' per se – can be grouped into three categories. First, there are Marxists and neo-Marxist critiques who claim that ultimately the legal system is an instrument of the ruling class and can never be used in service of counter-hegemonic goals... A second set of critiques is directed more at tactical and organisational levels. Briefly, the argument here is that, in liberal democracy, human rights discourse has so much currency as the only legible script of emancipation that, once deployed, it inevitably overshadows other radical discourses that speak to problems of political economy, structural racism, heteronormativity etc.... A final critique is that in historically white supremacist societies, Euro-American modern constitutionalism like that found in South Africa simply perpetuates whiteness as a system of privilege that makes

invisible and delegitimises race-conscious strategies and movements... Or as Magobe Ramose (2014) puts it, in the case of South Africa the settlement that sired this constitutionalism legitimised historical injustice on questions of land and thus racial inequality furthermore, its Euro-American nature further marginalised traditional African conceptions of justice. (Madlingozi, 2017, pp. 159-160)

Juxtaposing these concerns with those Nyerere articulated at the onset of his tenure is useful for many reasons, namely the concern that human rights discourse might limit the other radical discourses for reform, as well as the championing of a specifically decolonial perspective of justice. Whilst Tanzania did not experience the effects of a prominent white settler population to the extent that South Africa did, it is notable that the concerns they had with rights-based discourse in this regard echo some elements of what South Africa is currently grappling with. As a last addition to this line of thinking, Madlingozi gives us a contemporary perspective of what a decolonial constitution in South Africa ought to entail:

A [decolonial] constitution is one that is permeated by the spirit of restitutive justice and reparative justice to enable restitution and compensation for the damage done in the application of the right to conquest. A constitution that is not motored by these two forms of justice, but merely enriches affirmative action measures and guarantees socio-economic rights under the banner of recognition-incorporation-distribution would fail to make it clear that questions of material justice and structural impoverishment are questions of historical justice, and are thus deeply constitutional issues. (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 141)

This point of view highlights possible reasons for the levels of socio-economic inequality that are currently playing out in contemporary South Africa, and the questions around restitutive redress that continue to follow hot on its heels. The recognition of past socio-economic injustices is what a decolonial constitution would seek to address. It would not simply seek to incorporate, through affirmative action, beneficiaries from a particular demographic into an already hierarchical social order predicated on the further exploitation of disfranchised masses. It is not a seat at the table of power that should be sought out within a decolonial vision, but rather the reconfiguration of the matrix of power that has been upheld. It is no wonder that the current parliamentary motion to expropriate land without compensation in South Africa seeks to begin this venture by constitutional reform that can mandate this action. It is as if the tenets of restitutive freedom and redress in South Africa are trying to find ways to open up the terms that are enshrined in one of “the best constitutions in the world” so that they can begin to more radically address the socio-economic rights of all in earnest ways.

Questions around socio-economic reform leave the hallmarks of Mandela's legacy wanting for good reason. However, it is also necessary to consider these critical appraisals carefully. It is important that we flag the way in which some decolonial scholars understand Mandela's transgressive contributions to decoloniality even as we acknowledge its limits. Mandela's decision to define and represent a "decolonial civilisational project" that goes beyond the institutionalisation of a "narrow political economy" is touted as being his specific contribution to the future of South Africa, the continent and the world (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 31). These decolonial scholars posit his transgressive influence in history as being one that:

... speaks to the challenges of shifting from the paradigm of difference and war that created the conflictual 'us' and 'them' ways of relationality to the new decolonial politics of re-creating and reinventing human relations around the politics of the common... Mandela worked hard to escape what Fanon termed the law of repetition that reproduced the paradigm of war and politics of alterity rather than a paradigm of peace, new humanism and pluriversality. (Ndlovu- Gatsheni, 2013, p. 142)

The appraisal that Mandela transcended the politics of alterity by dissolving binary thinking around who belongs, and who does not, is acknowledged as an important contribution to a future that is different from the past. In addition to these assertions about Mandela's legacy, more insight is shared about the situational context in which Mandela's responses to hegemony emerged from. This information is shared at length, because it highlights the delicate balance that beset South Africa on the eve of its democracy:

The current book reveals the complexities of the South African struggle and the enormity of the issues and dangers that had to be navigated and negotiated to avoid the country falling into further bloodshed and chaos. It takes into account the changing post-Cold War global order and the pressures that were put on the ANC and Mandela from the representatives of local and global capital that wanted post-apartheid South Africa to emerge as a part of the neo-liberal dispensation. The unrepentant racists were threatening to plunge the nation into bloodshed so as to derail the transition... A so called black-on-black violence was being fomented and sponsored as part of the broader agenda of derailing negotiations...

If the Mandela decolonial civilisational project has failed, it is not because it was wrong, but because it lacked the genuine buy-in of ex colonisers who took advantage of his decolonial magnanimity to reproduce the status quo of domination, racism and inequality. Further to this, such a broad decolonial civilisational struggle cannot be expected to be a mere epochal one; it is more than a lifetime's struggle as it is meant to reverse over five hundred years of Euro-North American-centric modernity/imperiality/coloniality architecture and configuration of power...(Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 32)

The details of the transitional space that South Africa occupied at the time can explain why Mandela's leadership took as its priority the need to foster the guidelines and values that could bring about a decolonial civilisational project. More detail about this civilisational struggle is shared. It entailed reconstituting the idea of what it meant to be 'human' in a society that had historically forsaken its own humanity, by dehumanising the humanity of others. The depth of Mandela's meditations around this are shared below:

Mandela meditated deeply about why some human beings purposefully dehumanised others. The outcome of this meditation it would seem, was a Mandela who was dedicated to save humanity from dehumanisation. To him, it would seem the architects of apartheid were fallen human beings who needed to be rescued and liberated from the politics of racism and hate. This is why we find Mandela working actively as the first black president of South Africa to invite erstwhile racists back into humanity ...All these were symbolic acts of demonstrating love, rather than hate in the true spirit of decolonial humanism. (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016, p. 91)

The values that underpinned this decolonial project are admirable, especially in a society that had to confront and work with a population of white settlers that by far exceeded what Nyerere experienced in Tanzania. However, despite this, questions still linger about the feasibility of a decolonial civilisational project predicated on the kind of magnanimity that Mandela showcased, without the correlating legislative reform to rebalance 500 years of forceful domination. Mandela's was a contribution of a lifetime, but where was the foresight to deepen the spirit of decolonial humanism through mechanisms that would systematically uplift and restore the humanity that was stripped from the majority of black people who bore the brunt of systemic disenfranchisement? The move from the Reconstructive and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994 to the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy in 1996 signals the struggle in the more redistributive approach championed by the ANC. Amongst the challenges that led to this transition, it is said that:

RDP ignored the gathering of new taxes, rather focusing, far too narrowly on fiscal prudence and the reallocation of existing revenues. In addition, the government suffered from lack of sufficiently skilled managers, while policy co-ordination and implementation methods used were not proven successful. (South African History online)

It seems a lack of organisation, preparation and skill to bolster the state in substantially and materially significant redistributive ways literally cost the government too much, making it have to consider growing the economy in order to provide the services it hoped to redistribute. This ushered in the neo-liberal GEAR framework that continues to this day. Some would argue that instituting Africa's largest and only welfare state through state grants

for the poor might still constitute important measures for redress, but welfare however extensive can be understood as ameliorating an already precarious situation for South Africa's poor whilst not *systematically* addressing ways in which the generational poverty trap they inherited could be dismantled as the quintessential starting point for a poor black majority. Beyond Mandela's specific transitional legacy and how this starting point evolved into the future, it is also interesting to consider the alternative emancipatory outlooks of other political parties regarding brave beginnings and potential futures for South Africa. It is particularly useful at this point to consider what Nyerere's dispensation might have had in common with the Pan African Congress (PAC).

The PAC were members of the liberation struggle that did not get to assert their socialist terms for freedom because the transitional politics of the time seemed to favour the middle-class interests represented by the African National Congress. In direct opposition to the ANC, the PAC fostered concerns around the unequivocal rejection of an "economy of recognition-incorporation and distribution" and hoped instead to bring about a "future society based on anti-racism, Africanism, socialism, restored sovereignties and return of dispossessed lands" (Madlingozi, 2017, p.133). This is certainly a list of requirements that is compatible with Nyerere's ideas on emancipation. This gives another perspective on the transitional imperatives of the ANC in comparison to the PAC endeavours.

Thematically, if we bring all this back to a comparative understanding of the strategic configurations and the transgressive impulses undertaken during the transition to independent African states, there seems to be something significant about the premises from which negotiations began towards independence and how this influenced the future configurations of the state.



Figure 3.8: The first minutes in the life of Ghana at Accra's Old Polo Ground. Prime Minister Nkrumah and his cabinet speak to a crowd from the podium, March 6, 1957 (Photo: James Barnor and Deh, Long Live Ghana, in Enwezor, 2002, p. 191)

Let us conclude by considering one more example: the starting point occupied by Kwame Nkrumah and his party on the eve of Ghana's long journey to independence. As the leader of the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve independence, Nkrumah's presence looms large over the history of African independence as a transgressive thinker determined to work towards liberation of the continent as a whole. Within the grand historical narratives that he popularised, few contemporary Pan Africanists speak about the serious challenges towards Ghanaian independence he faced, and the contradictions that persisted within the state that frustrated trajectories for African unity that he longed for.

Before Ghana attained its full independence, a transitional period of leadership was negotiated between the British government and the members of the Conventions People's Party (CPP), the incumbent leadership in the Gold Coast poised to lead Ghana to liberation. When one looks back at the journey of the CPP towards freedom, at no time were the reforms that Nkrumah sought handed over without resistance. Instead, we have the extraordinary opportunity to see the nature of colonial power at play. As the CPP tried to wrestle power from the British, their efforts were systematically tempered to match the strategic imperatives of hegemony. What we are provided with even at that time is a historical account of an anti-climax of sorts, in which the power of the people is jettisoned by the weight of the colonial machinery. The provisional transitional government that the CPP was granted was presented

as the only road towards the independence that they sought. Basil Davidson's writings about this transitional government are provocative in that they stimulate an understanding of the stakes at play at the time, and how difficult and nearly impossible it was to shake off centuries of domination within the five years of CPP work. His assessment of the deal that was handed to the CPP reveals very clearly the nature of the reform that they were bound to:

The dish that they were handed in 1951, and again 1957, was old and cracked and little fit for any further use. Worse than that, it was not an empty dish. For it carried the junk and jumble of a century of colonial muddle and 'make do', and this the CPP ministers had to accept along with the dish itself. What shone upon its supposedly golden surface was not the reflection of new ideas and ways of liberation, but the shadow of old ideas and ways of servitude. (Davidson, 1973, p. 94)

It is clear from the narrative and historical accounts that Nkrumah's leadership was aware of these cracks. They were however compelled by circumstances to bend their visions of the future by being resilient enough to lend themselves faithfully to the contradictions of the present moment. These contradictions are thoroughly described at length, illustrating the tension and strain:

Nkrumah stood at the whirlwind of expectation. His eyes were on the future, but his feet were still on the ground. He knew what was expected of his government, but he also knew how narrow were its present limits of action. The great need was to expand these limits and achieve the reality of power. Only this would justify the compromise of 1951. But to achieve this he had to ride two horses at the same time. No political leader can find that easy; for Nkrumah it was doubly difficult. The two horses he had to ride were trained to different styles and speeds. Often enough, they were not even going in the same direction.

The first horse was the fiery steed of popular demand for change and progress, a creature best ridden at a gallop, ill-suited to a trot, and hopeless at a walk. The second horse was the comfortable beast of everyday negotiation with the British authorities... a gentle amble was its only reliable pace, while its head was turned most usually towards its stable and stack of oats. If the first horse was held back too much it would lose interest in disgust; if the second was spurred it was likely to stop dead in its tracks. Managing this part became a daily trial of skill. (Davidson, 1973, p. 98)

What I appreciate about this extract are the descriptions of the complexity of those transitional times, something no doubt experienced in varying degrees amongst those who dared to steer the African agenda forward at independence. Navigating this liminal space between what was calling in the future and the weight of the present is an important part of Africa's history and its present configurations. It demonstrates how hard it was to find the footing from which one could begin to assert emancipatory visions for African independence, especially in terms of socio-economic reform and the creation of an egalitarian society.

It is interesting to think through the transgressive learning that can be surfaced between these three countries: Ghana, which was the first in sub-Saharan Africa to go through transitional strain between the demands of colonialism and the only path on offer towards liberation; Tanzania, which tried to redefine itself through constitutional reform that made a stance from the start around socio-economic rights; and the awkward compromise that South Africa made almost three decades later, that is still contested today. What emerges as an important 'through-line' is not only the familiar ways that African leaders landed in the contradictions of compromise at this time, but equally important, the ways in which coloniality performed its power; even as it shed one guise publicly, it continued to calcify its capabilities and privileges. This 'shifting of the game' is important: it gives a layer of critical perspectives around what it meant at the time to confront colonial boundaries whilst trying to redefine and live into an African future. These tensions continue today.

Through these different perspectives we are encouraged to appreciate the uniqueness of each situation as well as what they hold in common. Emerging from these perspectives is a sensibility that is significantly tempered in its desire to agitate for great reforms at a fast pace. These desires are tempered by the knowledge of those that have endeavoured to walk this transitional journey before, those who know how difficult it was to manifest what they valued whether this was Nkrumah's vision of Pan African unity, Mandela's appeal for a decolonial humanism that did not adequately attend to socio-economic reform, or Nyerere's ambitions for a socialist vision of human rights in Tanzania.

These perspectives challenge us to think about some of the hesitations that we might have around Africa's brave beginnings. It questions our knowledge of what we think happened at the time, the promises that emerged at the eve of independence, and the predicament(s) that we find ourselves in now. It asks uncomfortable questions about what was never begun, and perhaps what needs to be begun again or continued in these times in different ways and what transgressive pedagogical experiments can help us explore the heart of these dilemmas. From the assertions for a social justice orientated view of an emancipatory future, through to the limits and merits of fostering a humanist civilisational project, and to beginning transitional projects with terms laid out by those who have unjustly benefitted before, there is much to be gleaned from these experiences and the reality and compromise embedded in flashpoints in the history of many African states. The experiences compared here serve as markers for the audacity of what was stood for at the time, what is not yet and what remains unfulfilled.

We continue the story of Tanzania in the next sections by progressing from how Nyerere's dispensation crafted its constitutional reform towards a discussion of the other ways that Nyerere's tenure sought to recast the social order of Tanzania. Through this we can continue to assess what learning can be harvested from similar and diverging attempts towards decolonial futures in burgeoning African states.

3.5 Generating New Visions for Self-Reliance and Consciousness Through Contextually Relevant Transformative Education

The desire for an emancipatory future in Tanzania emerged from an historical context burdened by the implications of being a poor and inferior partner in global relations. Like most African states that seriously considered changing the dynamics they inherited at independence, unequal power relations and how this created systemic poverty were concerns that had to be faced squarely. The socio-economic context in which Tanzania began to assert its ideals around independence is described below:

At independence in 1961 Tanganyika inherited a typical Third World political economy, highly dependent on external linkages and considerably handicapped by the constraints of colonial under-development. Its colonial incorporation into the international economy was based on what theorists of under-development describe as an unequal exchange between the colonial power and the colonial territory, in which the latter was developed essentially as a producer of cheap raw materials that were traded for the expensive manufactured goods of the colonial power. Thus Tanganyika and after it merged with Zanzibar, Tanzania, came to its independence as a subordinate state in the international system. (Msabaha, 1995, p. 163)

Inheriting the leadership of Tanzania in a time where this country was playing a subordinate role in the international system raised many questions for Nyerere. Foremost amongst these were concerns about what it would take to recast the social order in ways that could begin to address the huge gaps in the development and welfare of those most marginalised within society. Spurred forward by the audacity of an alternative vision for Tanzanian society and its place within the world, Nyerere asked questions about how ordinary Tanzanians could take responsibility for bringing about an alternative vision for the country. These were philosophical concerns that questioned how to rethink the role of humans within society, in a way that could reconstitute the foundations of the colonial order. It entailed thinking about who Tanzanians would have to be in order to create a society that could be centred around

collective care for the dignity and welfare of each person. Nyerere documents his deliberations around reconstituting the connection between society and the individual:

Man's existence in society involves an inevitable and inescapable conflict – a conflict of his own desires. For every individual really wants two things: freedom to pursue his own interests and his own inclinations. At the same time, he wants the freedoms which can be obtained only through life in society... freedom to gain rewards from nature for which his own unaided strength is insufficient. Yet as soon as an individual becomes a member of society he must sacrifice, in the interests of society, certain aspects of the private freedoms which he possesses outside society... to benefit from the co-operative endeavour he must at times co-operate with others regardless of his own particular wishes... this means that neither the good of the individual as such, nor, the group as such can always be the determining factor in society's decisions. Yet underlying everything must be a consciousness that the very purpose of society – its reason for existence – is and must be the individual man, his growth, his health, his security, his dignity and, therefore, his happiness ... it's not any particular man who is the justification for society and all its problems. It is every man, equally with every man ... the ideal society is based on human equality and on a combination of the freedom and unity of its members. (Nyerere, 1966, in Huddleson, 1995, p. 2)

Here Nyerere questions the relationship one must have with society in order for each person to possess a modicum of dignity in their lives. His thinking asks critical questions about how we can reconcile the relationship that humans have with society in ways that provide for the equal thriving of every individual. These questions and the emphasis put on the growth, security and dignity of *all* men (and presumably women too!) challenges and turns on its head a colonial logic that protects and upholds the rights of an elite class or group. Instead, we are drawn into a philosophical treatise whose questions could potentially form the foundation of an alternative world order. For Nyerere, the answers to these questions needed to interrogate the way in which development and modernisation have historically necessitated a form of asymmetrical sacrifice that has been felt more acutely by some than others. Deep commitment to decoupling *inequality* as the basis for *development* is sought in this perspective. What such a vision for the world appeals for is clearly articulated, challenging the premises on which 'progress' has thus far justified itself:

We owe it to ourselves and to posterity to demonstrate that modern development is possible without sacrifice in equality and humanity which has everywhere accomplished 'development' of the present industrialised states. (Temu in Komba, 1995, p. 36)

This line of reasoning and the alternative world order it sought to create are the grounds from which the social experiments that characterised post-independent Tanzania were generated. Komba shares more about how this philosophical outlook shaped the interventions that sought to bring Tanzania into world history on its own terms:

[Nyerere] believed that no formula had yet been found regarding just how much freedom the individual should sacrifice for the sake of gaining the advantages of belonging to a larger society, including safety and faster progress. He went out of his way to explain how in traditional African societies man was socialised to put the common good above individual good. According to him, Africans by tradition had been socialists in the sense that their lives in extended-family settings were governed by three fundamental principles: living together, working together and sharing equitably the fruits of their work...In Nyerere's view the trend that was initiated by colonialism was 'away from extended family production and towards the development of a class system in rural areas'. (Komba, 1995, p. 36)

The system in question was predicated on the creation of a large rural peasant class positioned to bear the brunt of the production of agricultural goods that would be traded on unequal terms for the benefit of market-driven values in society. Concurrently, an urban elite and educated class in society would be incentivised to perform other tasks within society predicated on the superiority of their labour as opposed to that of their rural counterparts. The fragmented nature of the split between rural livelihoods and those of an urban educated elite had long been part of the formula that modernity had thus far produced as a template for many developing countries. Viewing modernity's responses to inequality and development as 'inadequate' in this regard opened up the possibility of experimenting for the future in alternative ways. It enabled Nyerere to experiment with the socialist principles embedded in African ontologies in a revitalised way. More can be said on the specific nature of the kind of equality that was sought after:

... it must be an equality of human dignity, to be achieved not by Government enforcement or by reliance on international aid programmes. It must come from the commitment of individuals in society to the building of a just society in which all gifts and talents, all skills and abilities are used to the full. (Huddleson, 1995, p. 6)

Ujamaa was the name that encapsulated Nyerere's ideas around African socialism. *Ujamaa* was a version of social organisation that had "at its core a constant striving after equality" (Huddleson, 1995, p. 6). The clarion call behind this idea was for Tanzanians to collectively mobilise in a form of 'family communalism' that prioritised the organisation of the rural areas in Tanzania as the basis of the organisation of society as a whole (Brown, 1995, p.16). The logic was that "because most people lived in the countryside... it is therefore the villages which must be made into places where people live a good life"(Brown, 1995, p. 16). This was a marked departure from the tenets of urbanisation and industrialisation that continued to dominate ideas of progress in Africa and the world. *Ujamaa* villages sought to reorganise village life in a way that maximised the scattered potential of separate homesteads into larger

spaces that would be maintained through the efforts of a collective. At the centre of this organisation was a desire for the 'self-reliance' of rural populations who were by far the most marginalised and potentially most vulnerable members of the newly independent Tanzanian society. The Arusha Declaration of 1967 clarified policies that would accompany the objective of self-reliance. These included:

- a) The need to build a society where no person exploits another, everybody works and reaps a fair return for his labour; all major means of production and exchange in the nation are controlled and owned wholly or in part by the peasants through their democratically elected Government and co-operatives.
- b) The need to de-emphasise the importance of money and industries as starting points of development.
- c) The need to de-emphasise the urban development and focus on rural development (Komba, 1995, p. 37)

Again, it is important to note the audacity of these actions in a global climate where “modernisation was conventionally understood to entail the elimination of traditional African values” (Komba, 1995, p. 44). It marks the reinforcement of an alternative logic for development, one in which Nyerere sought to prioritise the evolution of African values into the future. The details of this imperative are shared:

We are not importing foreign ideology into Tanzania and trying to smother our distinct social patterns with it. We have deliberately decided to grow, as a society, out of our own roots... We are doing this by emphasising certain characteristics of our traditional organisation, and extending them so that they can embrace the possibilities of modern technology and enable us to meet the challenge of life in the twentieth century world. (Nyerere in Komba, 1995, p. 37)

What we see here is an assertive drive to follow the historical and contextual values that are distinct to Tanzania and take them forward. This way of thinking challenges Basil Davidson's assertion that most post-independent African societies had no reverence for their own historical or cultural grounding. What was emphasised from the onset of Nyerere's tenure was the need to work towards and realise a more humane and egalitarian form of development. This kind of development would make the welfare and dignity of the common person its priority, as opposed to notorious perspectives of development that continue (to date) to bolster the economic health of the state and its competitiveness globally – before it directly champions the welfare of the most vulnerable members of society in regenerative ways. The inversion of the terms for development in Tanzania were asserted based on the following understanding:

... it was argued that the development of a country was brought about by people, and not by money. Money, which represented wealth, was the result and not the basis of

development. Hard, intelligent and co-operative work was therefore the root of development. In other words, self-reliance meant an emphasis on the people, their land, and agriculture as organised and used together under the guidance of the policies of *Ujamaa*, self-reliance and good democratic leadership. (Komba, 1995, p. 37)

Nyerere's government sought to find ways to appreciate the specific character of Tanzanian society as it was, and to begin the project of recasting the social order going forward from exactly those coordinates. The emphasis put on the people, the land and agriculture sought to reconfigure Tanzania's appreciation of these key resources, and to position rural peasants as the primary transformative agents in the creation of an alternative society. This strategy hoped to challenge the historical dynamics in which the peasantry characteristically bore the brunt of unequal exchanges between colonial powers and their protectorates. It hoped to elevate their status within society from members of society whose labour was dictated from above, to transformative agents that had the power to reground and reconfigure the values that underpinned Tanzanian society. The central role that the peasantry was to play is described below:

As a modern ideology of development [*ujamaa*] is man-centred in that genuine human progress is considered possible only if rooted in the consciousness of the people to transform themselves, accompanied by political mobilisation to make people politically conscious...

Ujamaa means liberation of man and woman from domination by others; freedom of individuals from fear and dependence. It is designed to build self-confident and capable individuals, and communities prepared to shape their destiny (Msabaha, 1995, p. 165)

I find the early sentences of this quote very telling in terms of the ambitions of the project of *Ujamaa*: it required the ability of people to *transform themselves* in the service of aims that would be for the betterment of society as a whole. This would require that the political leadership of Tanzania could inspire the kind of political mobilisation, and education that could galvanise the population to aspire towards their own development and evolution on these terms. Pedagogically speaking, TANU's ambitions were marked with the desire that the social order be recast at the behest of ordinary citizens willing to learn and transform themselves in order to create a more just future for all. Education for self-reliance had as its ambitions the following understanding of what was pedagogically needed:

The education provided must therefore encourage the development in each citizen of three things: an enquiring mind; an ability to learn from what others do, and reject and adapt it to his own needs; and a basic confidence in his own position as a free and

equal member of society, who values others and is valued by them for what he does and not for what he obtains. (Nyerere, 1968, p. 53)

The calibre of individuals that Tanzania's social experiments sought to create are the kind of members of society that could make a paradigmatic shift from being exploited and dependent members of society, to upstanding and confident participants able to understand and live into their power in order to reshape Tanzanian society. The poverty that characterised Tanzanian life was not effaced within this perspective; conversely, it is through the acknowledgement of their meagre situation that Nyerere hoped to inspire the populace to be active members of their own development. He boldly stated from the onset that:

The only way to defeat our present poverty is to accept the fact that it exists, to live as poor people, and to spend every cent that we have surplus to our basic needs on the things which will make us richer, healthier and more educated in the future. (Nyerere in Huddleson, 1995, p. 5)

Nyerere's legacy thus hoped to break the spell of the aspirational values and dependency syndrome that colonialism had entrenched within African societies. The strategic use of education as a tool towards this is greatly emphasised during his tenure. As its main proponent, Nyerere has often been described as an 'educator-politician' because of how he harmonised pedagogical praxis into the heart of his political agenda. The fact that he was affectionally called *Mwalimu* which means teacher in kiSwahili emphasises this point.

Mwalimu Nyerere: thinker, politician and ideologist, was first and foremost a teacher. Whichever of these roles he was in, he almost always performed them by creating a teaching-learning situation... Mwalimu's influence was achieved in a subtle way, as reflected in the manner of his public performance; his style of speech and articulation; his ideological clarity and linguistic creativity; his simplicity of expression; his guarantee of academic freedom; and his prowess of confidence-building; all which have had a deeply affective impact on his audiences. (Ishumi and Maliyamkono, 1995, p. 58)

In addition to the particular gifts that Nyerere possessed as a 'educator-politician', the far-reaching reforms in education he put into place in order to achieve the vision for self-reliance deserve mention. Reconceptualising what education ought to look like at each level (including adult education) in order to support the vision of self-reliance was a huge undertaking, especially because schools and institutions of higher education had to be rewired to perform a different function from the schools of colonial times. His practical understanding of the purpose and function of education is described here:

This is what our educational system has to encourage. It has to foster the social goals of living together, and working together, for the common good. It has to prepare our

young to play a dynamic and constructive part in the development of a society in which all members share fairly in the good and bad fortune of the group, and in which progress is measured in terms of human well-being, not prestigious buildings, cars, or other such things...

Our education must therefore inculcate a sense of commitment to the total community and help pupils to accept the values appropriate to our kind of future, not those appropriate to our colonial past. (Nyerere, 1968, p. 52)

The intention was not to create a society in which citizens would aspire to the cultural values of an urban elite far removed from the struggles and labour of the rural peasants. In fact, the reorientation of society that was proposed also included the reorientation of the urban and educated elite in ways that would make them of better service to the majority rural population. In this vein Nyerere is said to have:

... seldom lost an opportunity to remind those who like himself had been educated through the sweat and toil of peasants, that they were like people from a starving village who were given the little food reserve that remained in stock and sent to a far-off place to fetch fresh supplies. It would, he believed, be a great betrayal on the part of the emissaries to delay their return to their hunger-stricken village, or worse still not to return at all. It would similarly be a betrayal not to build an egalitarian society but one in which the few were rich and the masses desperately poor. (Komba, 1994, p. 33)

Nyerere thus hoped to reorganise society so that all the efforts of those within it could be harmonised so that men and women could offer their skills and talents in ways that served the most vulnerable members of society. Here the elite would be far pressed to align their allegiances accordingly with the presets of an egalitarian way of being. He challenged the desire for 'upward mobility' that some educated members of Tanzanian society demonstrated in the beginning years of independence. It was clear that the educated elite were eagerly awaiting the spoils of privilege that lingered as a promise with the coming of independence. They knew the role that an educated elite members could play in newly independent African societies and their aspirations were often set to emulate and take the place of the privilege of the colonial administration. In the face of these aspirations, Nyerere

admonished the educated salaried 'clique' who 'demand fat salaries for sheer pomp and show off while some people in the country do not have enough to eat, have no clothes, and have no proper place to live.... if we have to claim fat salaries merely because we are educated and therefore needed in the country', he went on 'we should then pause to ask ourselves where we are leading this nation'. It was, he said, 'the second scramble' repeating the imperialist scramble for Africa, and 'caused by a lust for position and easy life'. (Nyerere in Brown, 1995, p. 11)

Despite this public harshness, Nyerere was also sensitive about where these inculcated values stemmed from. He understood that the education the elite had received before independence “[alienated] its participants from the society it [was] supposed to prepare them for” (Nyerere, 1968, p. 55). He acknowledged the kind of alienation that they must have been experiencing stating that:

The new university graduate has spent the larger part of his life separated and apart from the masses of Tanzania; his parents may be poor, but he has never fully shared in that poverty... He will be more at home in the world of the educated than he is among his own parents. Only during vacations has he spent time at home, and even then, he will often find that his parents support his own conception of his difference... For the truth is that many of the people of Tanzania have come to regard education as meaning that a man is too precious for the rough and hard life which the masses of our people still live. (Nyerere, 1968, p. 56)

Disrupting the historically learnt behaviour of what education means was thus part of Nyerere’s strategy. Through this he hoped to find ways to reseed the gains that education provided within the most vulnerable spaces in society. The education gained at every level sought to bring value and much needed expertise to reinforce the efforts of the masses of rural peasants eking out a living on the land.

The emphasis on strengthening rural development through educational reform echoes the efforts of another leader in Africa’s history. Thomas Sankara renamed the country previously known as Upper Volta to ‘land of the upright man’ (or Burkina Faso) in a bid to reorientate members of society from a role of subservience and dependency toward a way of being that emphasised the role that each member of society could play in creating a more dignified life for all. Characteristically Sankara also fashioned his vision for development in similarly simple and Afrocentric terms: “Our economic ambition,” he explained, “is to use the strength of the people of Burkina Faso to provide, for all, two meals a day and drinking water” (Harsch, 2014, p. 88).



Figure 3.9: Thomas Sankara playing his guitar (Image sourced from the Socialist Alternative³⁷)

Sankara's short tenure as president of Burkina Faso from 1983-1987 was similarly driven by the desire for a self-reliant society. Burkina Faso's development strategy focused "on national resources both human and material, to build the new society" (Harsch, 2014, p. 91). In the same way as Nyerere, Sankara saw agricultural production as "the nerve and principle lever of our economic and social development" and so his administration sought to "raise farm yields" and "put under cultivation all land that could be developed" as well as "reorganise existing agricultural production channels" (Harsch, 2014, pp. 95-96). For Sankara, imperialism manifested itself most clearly on the plates of the dominated (Durmelat, 2015, p. 116). He encouraged his people to make the connection between the food that they consumed, where that food comes from, and who ultimately profits from its consumption. He suggested that "global and local issues [are] articulated on our plates, [and] this is also where economic exploitation and power relationships become tangible" (Durmelat, 2015, p. 116).

It is interesting to note within the comparison of Nyerere in the 1960s and Sankara in 1983 how the ethic of self-reliance and agricultural reform demonstrated itself as a cogent response to the entrenched nature of underdevelopment and poverty. These two different leaders sought to reorganise society in a way that bolstered agricultural productivity, self-reliance and well-being in rural areas – this is a significant divestment of the terms under which

³⁷ <https://www.socialistalternative.org/2018/04/18/thomas-sankara-revolutionary-west-africa/>

modern development has traditionally constituted itself and a re-prioritisation of the future face of the African state. Perhaps it is also important to mention that Sankara was not the first president of what was previously called Upper Volta. He ascended to power as the fourth president of a country that habitually demonstrated an unpredictable frequency of coups and depositions. The point here is that Sankara's vision for Burkina Faso came out of a learnt historical understanding of the pitfalls of independence, and the desire to reconstruct a state that consistently ran off its rails and failed to adequately attend to the developmental needs of its people. Sankara continues to be notorious in history for the audacity of his ambition to recast the social order of Burkina Faso. He publicly acknowledged his ambitions for the country and the continent as suitably mad. Sankara owned the sense of madness that his dispensation courted by publicly stating at meeting in Harlem in 1984 that:

You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness. In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future. Besides, it took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today. I want to be one of those madmen. (Sankara, 1984, in Biney, 2018, p.127)

Sankara certainly fulfilled this ambition by providing one of the few examples of counter-hegemonic praxis on the continent that many young people continue to recount in detail as they ask questions about how to grapple with their present conditions. Similar to Nyerere's desire that the people be guided to transform themselves and society, Sankara also launched an educative programme that sought to harness the potential of the Burkinabe people to be catalysts of their own change and progress.

Sankara committed the Burkinabe people – as active agents in their awareness of implementing a social, economic and political transformation both of society and themselves as human beings – in a quest for a different kind of world and society. He wanted the Burkinabe people to commit to 'nonconformity' and possess 'the courage to turn [their] back on old formulas'. (Biney, 2018, p. 127)

The role of education within this was clearly highlighted. For Sankara, in order to achieve these aims, necessary 'educational reform' needed to be instituted. This would be the kind of education that could: "promote a new orientation for education and culture" (Sankara in Biney, 2018, p. 134). Similar to Nyerere, the role of elites within society was debated, and how their aspirations could work to the detriment of the new social order he was trying to inspire. He characteristically saw the impediment to progress caused by the elite as an indication of a lack of consciousness on their part:

The transformation of our mentality is far from complete. There are still many amongst us who take foreign norms as their point of reference in judging the quality

of their social, economic and cultural lives. They live in Burkina Faso yet refuse to accept the concrete reality of our country. (Sankara, 1987, in Kabwato and Chiumbu, 2018, p. 290)

Sankara thus wished to reorientate elite members of society towards the task of concretely contributing to the welfare of Burkinabe society as a whole, a task that would require the willing submission towards alternative aspirations of progress that could better benefit the poor. This no doubt would require a sense of sacrifice on the part of the elite, a sacrifice that demanded they surrender the elevated life they had come to expect for themselves. The educational challenge set to orientate the elite to the new role in society is articulated below:

Sankara challenged Africa's intellectual elite to 'rise to the intellectual effort of conceiving new concepts equal to the murderous struggle that [lay] ahead of [them]'. (Sankara, 2007, p. 87).

His position embraces decolonial thinking, which insists on the necessity for a political and epistemic delinking in order to build democratic, just, and non-imperial/non-colonial societies. (Biney, 2018, p. 134)

What is similar between the life work of Nyerere and Sankara was not only their ambitions, but the way in which they emphasised the necessity of an educated and conscious populace (at all levels and class orientations) that was willing to simultaneously transform themselves and the society in ways that could create the conditions "for a dignity worthy of [their] ambitions" (Biney, 2018, p. 89). In line with the thematic concern for a conscious and self-reliant population, I cannot help but add the cogent thoughts of another intellectual-activist, leader and writer in African history that was inspired by the work Mwalimu Nyerere was doing in Tanzania.

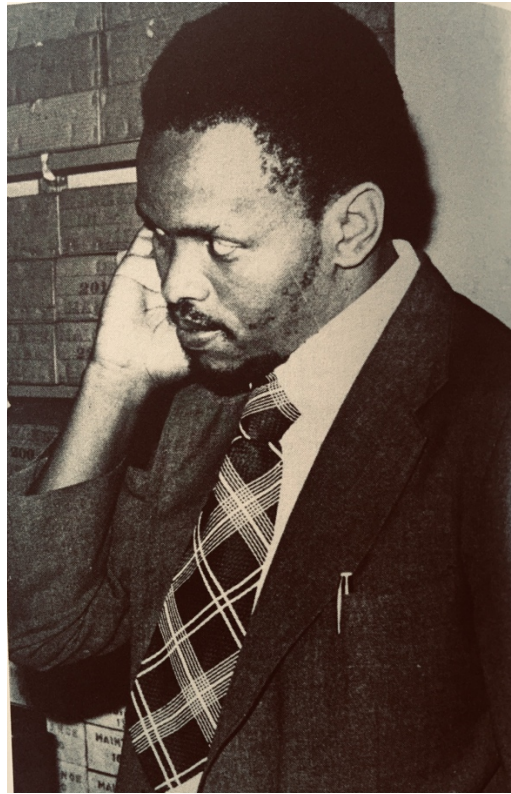


Figure 3.10: Steve Bantu Biko, Black Consciousness leader, political activist, and student leader 1970s (Drum staff photographer, Enwezor, 2002, p. 216)

The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), led by Steve Bantu Biko in South Africa in the late 1970s, is said to have gained some of the precepts of its thinking from the efforts around *Ujamaa* that Nyerere spearheaded in Tanzania. Some of the reasons why BCM found Nyerere's thinking valuable are recounted below:

The BCM was attracted to the 'person centred-ness of this approach'... Its emphasis on black self-reliance and self-help – which 'progressive' whites and the ANC criticised as an abandonment of inter-racial politics – thus emerged out of the context of African debates about development. At a general level, both *Ujamaa* and Black Consciousness aimed to remove black Africans from European control and influence. Self-reliance in both cases referred to the capacity of blacks to initiate, manage, and evaluate development efforts in light of their own perceived needs. (Manzo, 1995, p. 243)

Ways in which the ideas of self-reliance articulated in Tanzania were reshaped and built on by the BCM in ways that could address the systematic issues embedded within the South African context during Apartheid are shared below:

Despite the similarities, it is important to point out that concepts such as 'self-reliance' and 'dependency' acquired rather different meanings in South Africa. Whereas Nyerere was concerned about the dependence of the Tanzanian state on 'non-Tanzanians,' the BCM worried about the dependence of black South Africans on white charity organisations. Whereas dependency was a problem for Nyerere because

it precluded national autonomy and self-sustaining growth, it was a problem for the BCM because it 'wrought havoc on the self-image of black South Africans, who lost self-confidence as a people'. (Manzo, 1995, p. 243)

The ability of 'black' South Africans to create their own visions of the future was at stake in South Africa, as a dependency on the values of 'white' charity organisations began to be seen as the foremost legitimate assertions of what the future could look like. Biko wrote profusely about the delimiting influence of 'white' charity organisations, but he also went deeper to define what black consciousness entails. He conceptualised the lack of consciousness as something that not only demoralised 'black' South Africans; he also asserted that a decolonial future would require that the interests of the 'black' bourgeoisie equally needed to be disrupted:

To the BCM it was obvious that a system of domination associated with an 'external force' such as European colonialism had become internalised; the European colonist never left South Africa or ceased oppressing the African people. Yet domination was not only considered internal to South Africa and reproduced via the social practices of European settlers and their descendants. It was also internal to the black community, and sustained with the aid of collaborating 'non-whites.' Black consciousness was always concerned about the growing distance between the poor and the black middle class, who modelled themselves on white liberals and thus perpetuated the myth of 'white' as the norm and 'black' as the aberration in all spheres of social relations. (Ramphela, 1992, in Manzi, 1995, p. 245)

Calling out the dependence that Africans had on external and internal forms of European domination whilst also articulating the colluding effects of an African elite is a way of thinking that Nyerere, Sankara and Biko had in common. The tension between external and internal forces of European domination and the colluding influence of an African elite is undoubtedly something that transgressive African leaders during the periods preceding and after independence clearly articulated. To add to evidence of these interrelated concerns, it seems fitting to also weave into the conversation the assertions of Amilcar Cabral from Guinea-Bissau and Frantz Fanon from Martinique who deftly stated the need for the kind of self-reflexivity (read as consciousness) that could discern what exploitation looked like and to struggle against it, regardless of who was doing the exploiting. Cabral clearly stated that: "we do not confuse exploitation or exploiters with the colour of men's skins; we do not want any exploitation in our countries, not even by black people" (Cabral, in Rabaka, 2010, p. 236).



Figure 3.11: Amílcar Cabral (sourced from *Invent the Future*)³⁸

Rabaka went on to explain the roots of such a statement and the nature of the struggle that Cabral tried to engender in Guinea- Bissau:

Many have misread Cabral. His critical theory is certainly against colonial domination, but it is also, and at certain points perhaps more so, against racial oppression and capitalist exploitation. He was well aware that he and his comrades could spend the bulk of their lives fighting against one form of colonialism only to be re-inscribed and caught in the quagmires of another new form of colonialism. Hence, this is precisely the reason within the realm of Cabral's critical theory that 'world imperialism' is the ultimate enemy, not merely colonialism on the African continent, or capitalism in Europe or America. (Rabaka, 2010, p. 237)

In an effort to challenge the re-inscribing of patterns of domination in Guinea-Bissau, Cabral advocated for a vision of society that went beyond the terms dictated during colonialism. But even beyond this, he advocated for society to be recast beyond the pre-colonial traditions embedded in those societies. Cabral thus aligned himself with Fanon's thinking that "decolonisation is the veritable creation of "new men" who speak a "new language" to express their "new humanity" (Fanon, in Rabaka, 2010, p. 192).

³⁸ <https://www.invent-the-future.org/2014/09/amilcar-cabral/>

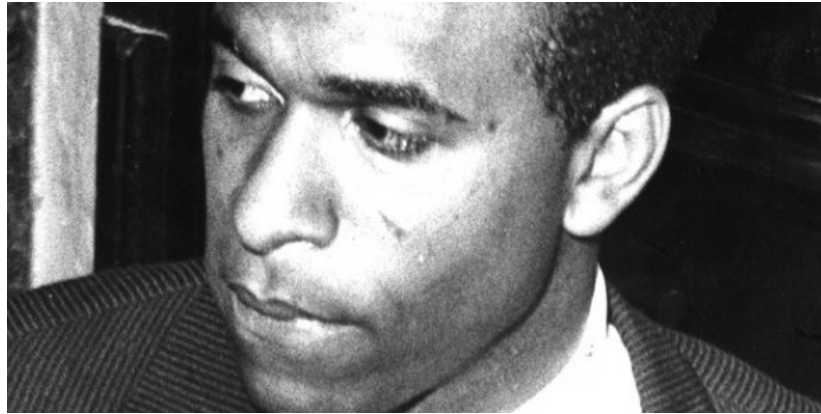


Figure 3.12: Frantz Fanon in Tunisia in 1960 (Studio Kahia/ JA³⁹)

The depth of the paradigmatic shift that was intended within a decolonial turn of this nature entailed (in Fanon's thinking) commitment to "the complete calling into question of the colonial situation" which "opens the colonised and the colonising people to the potential and possibilities that they – by and for themselves – have of re(creating) and re(constructing) selves and societies predicated on "total liberation" (Fanon, 1968, in Rabaka, 2010, p. 192). Again, we are inundated with transgressive thoughts that emphasise the renewal of the relationship between the self and society as an essential aspect of the decolonial turn. It is useful also to consider the ways in which Cabral and Fanon's understanding of this decolonial turn differed:

Cabral went one step further [than Fanon in this regard] and, as a revolutionary nationalist, he contended that not only do the colonised who actively participate in revolutionary decolonisation reclaim their long-denied humanity but – and this is one of the points that distinguishes Cabral's contributions from Fanon's – he argued that they also reclaim their Africanity and, even more, in the processes of revolutionary decolonisation the formerly colonised forge a new national identity, consciously breaching and going far beyond precolonial or traditional 'ethnic tribes' culture, politics, and social organisation. (Rabaka, 2010, p. 252)

This vision of the 'new African' that is evoked by Cabral's decolonial future highlights questions around what that identity could entail especially as it reaches beyond the constructs of a traditional understanding of pre-colonial Africa. These findings echo the sentiments gathered at the end of the intergenerational re-reading of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. This is an afro-futuristic vision that seeks to renegotiate the social organisations of what it means to be an evolving and learning African in the world. In similar ways, Nyerere's work

³⁹ accessed from <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/377864/politique/hommage-dix-citations-de-frantz-fanon-a-mediter/> June 2019)

also challenged Africans to renew their identity. He specifically emphasised seeing diversities as a strength, as a pre-emptive way of undoing the menace of tribalism in Tanzanian society (Omari, 1995, p. 27)

What is also interesting about bringing Cabral, Fanon and Biko into the conversations around the visions for recasting the social order in Africa is that their assertions were generated at different stages in the struggle towards decolonial freedom. The vantage point of their thinking and praxis about the future emerged in the period preceding the independence and democracy of Guinea- Bissau, Algeria (where Fanon relocated his revolutionary efforts) and South Africa. These three intellectual-activists gave us a sense of their praxis in motion before the highly anticipated fall of the direct leadership of the colonial order in their respective countries. The haunting and sometimes prophetic insights around creating the kind of freedom that would not reinscribe exploitative power relations in post-independent countries continue to serve as cautionary remarks perfectly poised in history. They show us the sum total of the ambitions garnered through evolving struggles. Their work challenges us in the present to complete the story around what was desired and what really transpired in history in the transition towards independence for many African states. The thinking of Cabral, Fanon and Biko is also an injunction to remember the struggle of many incredibly powerful decolonial thinkers towards freedom in Africa (including Patrice Lumumba, Chris Hani, Robert Sobukwe, Dedan Kimathi, Ken Saro Wiwa and countless more named and unnamed heroes).



Figure 3.13: Patrice Lumumba after the vote for the first Congolese government, with ministers Kasamuura and Fumu, 1960 (Enwezor, 2002, p. 194)

Most of these leaders did not live to see the independence that they fought for, but their thoughts serve as barometers for a kind of audacity of spirit that could not be co-opted because of their decolonial ambitions. Their thoughts constitute the practical thinking that guided their work up until the point that they were forcibly prevented from continuing their work whether through terminal illness and/or brutal murder at the hands of threatened oppositional forces.

Retrospectively speaking, it seems like their premonitions around how independence could be co-opted to be a false start manifested itself on the continent through numerous examples. It has been evident in history that the diverse liberation movements they were a part of failed to produce a liberation government that could uphold the principles and values they were so perceptive about. It is the depth of their analysis around the relationship that people should have with society within a decolonial future that remains an enduring feature of their contributions. These intellectual activists sought to begin the work through a deep and grounded understanding of the dynamics at play in each of the societies they served. The role of education in inculcating new values that would underpin a decolonial future is underscored in all their works, asking the Africans part of this vision to willfully turn their backs on old formulas that did not work whilst also being aware of reinscribing the substrate of old formulas in whatever they created going forward. Their work asks questions about what it means to transform ourselves as part of working towards a decolonial future both on the part of those who have been exploited as part of the colonial order and those of a burgeoning elite. The tenets of decolonial humanism are crafted within their assertions, asking unsatiated questions around how transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis can help rejuvenate our visions of ourselves as new people with a new language that collectively seek to foster a new humanity. The work lingers on in these parameters asking as much of us now as it did of them in those times.

In an attempt to honour the transitions in governance, leadership and education that did manage to operationalise their visions, we will return to the stories of Nyerere and Sankara to see how some efforts towards creating a national consciousness fared in the case of those who lived long enough to demonstrate how it could be done.

3.6 On Power, its Excesses and the Challenge of Learning in Ways that can Generate Democratic Reform

The uptake of the precepts of Nyerere's ideological thinking by other members of society is an important aspect of his legacy to digest. It is to this that we turn our attention to in the next section in order to understand what the laudable aims of self-reliance, autonomy, and consciousness yielded in the context of Tanzania. Here we will consider the effect that recasting the social order had on this society whilst appreciating many questions around the specific kind of leadership and political mobilisation that he spearheaded in order to encourage the populace to move into a new sense of themselves in society. This last section in this chapter delves into the outcomes of the social experiments launched in Tanzania as a way of bringing to a close the various insights that have been gathered here.

Nyerere's legacy is often thought of as one that dared to achieve the laudable aims of self-reliance with a level of force that was frowned upon as oppressive. In his case it is important to consider the stories around the abuse of human rights that emerged in Tanzanian history at the time. In particular, much is made of the dictatorial tendencies of Nyerere's tenure. Some have gone as far as describing him as a "dictator with a difference" highlighting the way in which he orchestrated a system for the common good that sanctioned the heavy rule of law (Ishumi and Maliyamkono, 1995, p. 55). Thematic concerns around the preventative detainment act used during Nyerere's tenure and how this particular clause was used against many detractors who were seen as threats to the state come to the fore in this discussion. The powers that this act gave the president are recounted below:

It empowers him [the president] to order the detention of any person if he is satisfied that the person 'is conducting himself so as to be dangerous to peace and good order'; or 'is acting in a manner prejudicial to the defence of Tanganyika or the security of the state'... (Read, 1995, p. 138).

In response to criticisms that this act was 'draconian' and 'illiberal' Nyerere again questioned the extent to which the provision of one human right should override other important rights. In his own words, he publicly acknowledged the tensions that his leadership was trying to straddle:

Freedom of speech, freedom of movement and association, are valuable things which we want to secure for all our people. But at the same time, we must secure, urgently, freedom from hunger, and from ignorance and disease, for everyone. Can we allow

the abuse of one freedom to sabotage our national search for another freedom (Nyerere in Read, 1995, p. 138)?

What is useful about this argument is that it gives us insight into the parameters through which freedom was pursued. At that time and in his estimation, freedom of speech movement and association could work to covertly suppress the gains made towards freedom from hunger, ignorance and disease. The situational constraints of the times reveal themselves in the priorities that Nyerere chose to protect. The logic in this way of working was that the people should entrust the state with the important work of trying to create a more equal and just society and this would require the willful submission of alternative ideological thinking towards this higher cause. Deep questions about the use of instrumental violence in the creation of an egalitarian state surface within this perspective, calling to question whether freedom at this scale can be forcibly instituted or whether this is an oxymoron in practice. What continues to haunt us within this conversation is whether, as part of the struggle, the undemocratic use of force to protect the interests of a decolonial state ought to be sanctioned, and how that resonates with us right now as the human rights-based discourse (as previously discussed) takes precedence in our imagination about what is just and necessary in creating a more equal society based on decolonial values.

We know that certain readings of Fanon speak of the necessity of violence; “anti colonial violence” is nothing more than the “long overdue answer to the conundrum that the primordial violence of racial conquest has and continues to present to the wretched of the earth” (Fanon, 1968, pp. 40-41). Sequeberhan (1994) spoke of this too: that “conflict and violence are not a choice” but he qualifies this within the period of the struggle towards liberation by stating that this violence “serves as a prelude to the humanisation of the colonised” (1994 in Rabaka, 2010, p. 199). What then of the nature of violence undertaken to forcibly constitute a decolonial world order after independence? Nyerere responded, in terms of the use of violence to solidify a decolonial future:

Take the question of detention without trial. This is a desperately serious matter. It means that you are imprisoning a man when he has not broken any written law, or when you cannot be sure of proving beyond reasonable doubt that he has done. You are restricting his liberty, and making him suffer spiritually and materially, for what you think he intends to do, or is trying to do ... Few things are more dangerous to the freedom of society than that ... Yet knowing these things, I have still supported the introduction of a law which gives the Government power to detain people without trial. I have myself signed Detention Orders. I have done these things as an inevitable part of my responsibilities as president of the republic. For even on so important and

fundamental an issue as this, other principles conflict. Our union has neither the long tradition of nationhood, nor the strong physical means of national security...while the vast mass of the people give full and active support to their country and its government, a handful of individuals can still put our nation into jeopardy, and reduce to ashes the efforts of millions. (Nyerere, 1966, in Read, 1995, pp. 138-139).

Nyerere justifies the use of violence in this extract on the basis of the mandate gained by a willful majority and against the minority who would threaten the work they need to do to solidify the recasting of the social order. Whilst some have seen the deliberations of Nyerere around the issue of preventative detainment as “extraordinarily honest”, others see this thinking as “pure intellectual quicksand” that can “easily conceal an oligarch’s determination to hold onto power” (Read, 1995, p. 139).

It is not only the force used through preventative detainment that comes into question during Nyerere’s tenure. The force that was used to relocate rural villagers into communes is also cited as an indication that the ethic of majority led voluntary action was breached at certain times, showing a level of authoritarianism and coercion that troubles the legacy of his work. James Read, taking us into the heart of this, showed how truly massive the operation was in Tanzania:

...the use of extra-legal coercive authority to complete the most far-reaching policy of the 1970s, the movement of nearly ten million people in the programme of villagisation (1973-76); the largest resettlement effort in the history of Africa. Aimed at facilitating the supply of basic services to the mass of the people, as well as administrative access to them, the programme became notorious for the use of compulsion to complete villagisation. This denial of freedom of movement (strictly of non- movement!) must be weighed in any assessment of the long term economic and social benefits of villagisation. (Read, 1995, p. 133)

Appreciating the scale at which these relocations were happening gives one the chance to think carefully about what it meant to uproot millions of people as part of a process of social reorganisation. I am aware that often when one thinks of the negative effects of social reform at this scale, the imagination around the levels of disorganisation that would need to precede recasting the social order often comes to mind in most instances as a deterrent to the possibility of the idea that things can indeed be different. Indeed, Fanon did say that “decolonisation, which sets out to change the order of the world, is obviously, a programme of complete disorder” (Fanon, 1963, p. 36). Here, during Nyerere’s tenure we get an inkling of the issues that would arise from such a reorganisation, and how they in turn could create aspects of the future that could be unstable in their own way. An alternative analysis of these

same events deduces the incidences around the abuse of power and the forced removals that occurred during the process of villagisation in a different way:

For almost ten years the ruling party had carefully explained the importance of villagisation; by 1976, thirteen million had settled in 7 650 villages, but one million had still not moved. A final effort was made to complete the programme. However, in a number of cases probably affecting 80 000 people, regional commissioners anxious to prove their diligence and coming under pressure from the Government used forceful methods to compel those reluctant to move to do so. As a result, the entire villagisation programme was widely criticised as having been the result of forceful measures. This ignored the reality that thirteen million people had, in fact moved voluntarily. Privately, Nyerere was unhappy with the use of force which went against his teaching; he was unwilling publicly to criticise the over-zealous commissioners though he knew this had happened; but he felt the point had been reached where the programme, having come so close to completion through voluntary action, needed to be completed. (Legum, 1995, p. 189)

These two perspectives on the forced removals are not placed here comparatively in order to prove that one point of view holds more truth than the other. Both perspectives give us the opportunity to see into the tensions in recasting the social order in this regard and the very human aspect of resistance to the proposed plans that occurred as a part of this. But it is important to go even further than this in our analysis. Opinions around the flagrant or relative use of force need to be met with a critical conversation around what was created as a result of these relocations. When it comes to the understandings of *Ujamaa* villages in Tanzania, it is also important to acknowledge how rural development fared under restructured village communes, and why for many today these villages were seen as a failure. It was not simply the way in which the population was kettled into the villages that was problematic, but the way in which the leadership of the time conducted its affairs within these villages that should also be put into question. Here not only the leadership of Nyerere is called to question, but that of other government officials that had an important role to play in this transition:

the failure of *Ujamaa* villages was largely due to lack of comprehensive and democratic planning. This largely valid critique was directed more at the implementers than at Nyerere himself. Their failure was a lack of understanding of the demands of *Ujamaa* policy as issued by Nyerere, or deliberately allowing class vested interests to prevail in some cases. The later point was admitted even by doctrinaire socialists critics ... when they pointed out that resistance to *Ujamaa* was greatest in areas where capitalism has been deeply entrenched, and that in those areas class struggle would be inevitable for it to succeed. (Komba, 1995, p. 42)

The question of what it means to learn for an alternative future, or to accede to the vision of becoming “new people” that can bring forth a different future for Africa rears its head here. The resistance or inability to act in accordance with the new vision of humanity that is

demonstrated in this instance asks us to consider and take seriously how difficult it is to thoroughly understand, and put into action, a system of governance and redistribution that is divergent to the class experience we are accustomed to. This is true even when there is a basic sense that this different way of being is for the common good. In other words, even though the ambitions of the project of social reorganisation demanded that people accede to forms of leadership that espoused very different values to what they had become accustomed, it remained a project that demonstrated how difficult it can be to change mindsets even when legislated political mobilisation paved the way for this. Key in the reform that Nyerere and his team tried to inculcate within the leadership of TANU is the emphasis on education and integrity in leadership. As part of the adoption of the Arusha Declaration of 1967, a very strict understanding of what leadership is was defined through five bold principles:

- 1) Every TANU and Government leader must be either a peasant or a worker and should in no way be associated with the practices of capitalism.
 - 2) No TANU or Government leader should hold shares in any company.
 - 3) No TANU or Government leader should hold directorships in any privately-owned enterprises.
 - 4) No TANU or Government leader should receive two or more salaries.
 - 5) No TANU or government leader should own houses which he rents to others.
- (Brown, 1995, p. 13)

This initiative sought to minimise diffractive class interests that could be embedded within the leadership. Characteristically, Nyerere practised what he preached as the head of state by taking cuts to his salary on two occasions and trying to generate the cultural consciousness that would lie behind this understanding of servant leadership. Despite these efforts, the ethic of leadership at the heart of the villagisation project subverted the aims of the project. The implementers or middlemen within villagisation often compromised the ideals that TANU sought to accomplish:

A valid critique of the *Ujamaa* rural development approach must be extended to the way farmer co-operatives, as socialist institutions, were mishandled by the creation of Government crop authorities that acted as middlemen. A situation was reached where even Nyerere admitted that farmers were being exploited by their own co-operative and their own state. (Komba, 1995, p. 42)

The leadership struggled to cultivate the consciousness needed amongst themselves to carry out these transgressive visions for freedom. Being aware of this helps us appreciate what a paradigmatic shift it was for them to work within their manifesto of an alternative social order. Even with careful articulation of the transgressive values needed to rebuild Tanzanian society, those who had to pave the way battled to journey from what they had experienced

and come to know historically, towards what was being asked of them in these new times. It seems that Nyerere was aware of this, and he tried to use it as an opportunity to deepen the learning required to carry out a different vision for the country. Kweka provides insight into Nyerere's reflections around leadership in Tanzania:

He observed that some leaders did not listen to people and did not reach decisions by discussion. They did not tolerate criticism from the people but intimidated them instead. They were slack, arrogant and incompetent. Nyerere called upon each one to examine his or her own behaviour and strive to do better. A leader was required to have the ability to think logically and the capacity to express himself or herself clearly. They should also understand the implications of their decisions and should be committed to implementing the philosophy of equality and human respect. He also wanted leaders to be like 'ordinary sort of fellows' and not to think they were masters of others ... However some of those around him did not want to be 'ordinary sort of fellows', and this worked against his policies and the one-party state. (Kweka, 1995, p. 74)

What can be appreciated from this account is how hard the work towards consciousness building and participatory democratic reform was in the interface between learnt and calcified ways of being. It highlights the role of each individual within the system – as well defined as that system may be – affects the character of the enterprise as a whole. Pedagogically speaking, the learning that needs to take place for each individual in order to reach the aspirations espoused in Nyerere's vision is not something that could be automated. The grappling that underlabours the potential of rewiring one's orientation to the world is considerable and cannot be instituted solely from above. This point is substantiated by the thinking that:

An incorporation process presupposes the existence of an enlightened leadership which is ready for, and good at, using discussion as a way of settling differences. (Omari, 1995, p. 29)

Tanzania did not have enlightened leadership aligned with the values of participatory leadership at the beginning of this process. Nyerere was appreciated as a leader who possessed these skills; he is described as having a "rare gift of associating himself with people of different backgrounds"(Omari, 1995, p. 30). However, the competencies of his colleagues demonstrated a need for further development in these areas. It seemed that they could only move as far together as they reached a sense of maturity in their leadership as individuals. These insights highlight the importance of process, time and development in establishing decolonial reform. No matter how well defined the goal may be, building the ethical, ontological and vocational muscle to bring forth its endeavours is a matter of great

concern. Admittedly, Nyerere was realising this at the same time as the massive project was under way. Reflections on how democracy in this vein is a habit that needs to be cultivated are shared by those who questioned Nyerere about these issues specifically:

I once asked Nyerere how he saw the growth of democracy. 'First,' he replied, 'it is necessary to see democracy as a habit; habits take time to develop, it requires patience. The task of leadership is to set an example by their own democratic practices. If they behave undemocratically, it will set back the growth of democracy.' (Legum, 1995, p. 186)

It is clear that he thought carefully about what needed to be learnt and he demonstrated it through his praxis. The example of Tanzania teaching and learning a new way shows us that this is hard. It takes time, dedication and patience to integrate and live into practices that can foster an alternative imagination of the way the world can work. The example of Nyerere's leadership shows us how far leadership can go in order to protect and cultivate these ideals. His deliberative and practice-led example shows a tenacious attempt to try and do this massive work, in the face of internal and external circumstances that continued to scupper the traction of the work. Let us share briefly a picture on some additional internal pressure that continued to exert pressure on Tanzania's development whilst all this learning was going on. Firstly, it is important to mention the challenges to agrarian reform:

New crops were often embarked on enthusiastically by the *Wajamaa* (the people of the villages) but sometimes they failed or fetched a disappointing price in remote world markets. Trucks and store houses were lacking, and crops were damaged irrevocably by rain and insects before they got to town. New methods were misunderstood; tractors were wrongly expected to make weeding unnecessary or were under-utilized. Too little fertilizer was used, and traditional methods applied intensively sometimes led to a widespread fall in the production per acre and threatened to destroy the land. Rain could still wash away the crop, and when there was no rain the crops died in the parched fields. The traditional obstacles to African productivity were not wiped out overnight. (Brown, 1995, p. 21)

This quote does well to illustrate the interrelated challenges faced when new learning (at human and technological levels) interacts with the power of the world markets and the unrelenting effects of the weather and environmental crises. It shows a complex system of interplay that no doubt leaves one gasping at the effects that this could have on the livelihoods of millions. When we juxtapose this with other notable external shocks between 1979 and 1981, the long-term perspectives on progress in Tanzania become even more serious:

Since 1977, Tanzania's economy has been battered by events over which she has had no control, namely, 1. 1977: Collapse of the East African Community – at least

US\$100million replacement required; 2. 1977/78: Collapse of coffee boom – losses up to US\$100million per year on export earnings; 3. 1978/81: Amin Invasion and support for new Uganda Government – US\$500 million on war expenditures, over US\$100million support to Uganda; 4. 1979/80: oil price doubling – US\$150 million a year by the second half of 1980; 5. 1979: flood damage to transport and crops of the order of US\$100 million; 6. 1979/80: drought – total crop loss of US\$ 100 million, 1980/81 added food import bill US\$50 million. The total cost of these events over the period 1979-81 comes to about US\$1 500 million, that is ... 200 percent of the annual export earnings. (Svendsen, 1995, p.115)

The combined effects of these economic shocks and the challenges to learning that were concurrently being experienced give us a sense of how the project as a whole fared in the long run and the insurmountable setbacks it faced. Whilst the *Ujamaa* villages are considered a failure based on these facts, their example and vision serve as an important marker for us to learn from. In line with this perspective, Msabaha surfaces what he thought we ought to take from the example of Nyerere's leadership in Tanzania:

the point is not that *Ujamaa* villages have not fully succeeded, what is important is that theory of *Ujamaa* has logically determined the key role to be played by the peasantry in Tanzania's socialist construction. The substance of *Ujamaa* is its stand against capitalism, imperialism and racism. It stands for the emancipation of the African people's from under development. In this sense Nyerere demonstrates that the theory of African revolution must spring from those who have had the historical experience of slavery, colonialism, deculturalisation, racism and gross exploitation. (Msabaha, 1995, p. 167)

In our current circumstances, it might seem easy to discredit the merits of an alternative vision for society based on socialist principles such as those espoused by Nyerere's leadership. This may be because our imaginations have been drained of the possibilities that could be engendered there. Despite this, on the African continent we continue to have few examples of a humanistic developmental strategy that seeks to anchor itself in the lived reality of the majority of the population whilst challenging each person to evolve towards alternative ideals around how society could function. Let us for the purposes of conclusion revisit the key questions opened up by this review, and how these themes relate strongly to the aspiration of transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis in these times.

Pedagogical Openings

The experiences that are charted within this review track the ambitions and challenges faced by those who sought to create a different destiny for African futures. What remains now, is a brief affirmation of what these efforts can offer us in the present; what succour can they give

us as we continue to navigate the questions embedded in contemporary struggles? Whether these efforts are seen as a failure, or as a success, the audacity of the varying efforts represented here are important lessons at the crossroads in African history.

The transitional gauntlets navigated by these leaders highlighted the difficult compromises that lay ahead as they, in their own ways, began to make space for the possibility of a decolonial future. Whilst many perspectives on African independence stress the quick coming of the tide of change, this review was drawn to a slower approach that sought to perceive the tensions at various impasses. The review sought to be a tempering reminder that surveys the strategic imperatives of those within it, whilst also noting the range of internal and external challenges they faced. We are met with the deliberative choices that were made, choices that form the substrate of the nature of the African state today. Whether the subject matter was the first move to independence by Nkrumah, Mandela's appeal for decolonial humanism or Nyerere's ambition for a socialist Tanzania, the review attempted to look past the broad slogans of their endeavours into the nuances of the strategic compromises, the strain and ultimately the trajectories that emerged from these efforts.

These pages bear witness to brave beginnings that were carved out of the footing that could be claimed by African leaders at the time. No perfect example exists amongst all the experiences shared, from the tension that led to the foundation of Ghana's independence, to the socialist project pioneered by Nyerere, to the four years of reform that Sankara instituted, all the way towards the dream of the rainbow nation birthed by Mandela's decolonial humanism in 1994. These 'flash points' in history help us consider important questions around what it means to create a decolonial future and how its foundations (that were often built upon colonial logic) sought to fulfill the vision of decolonial reform by focusing on only one aspect, without considering other essential aspects, or by redefining the system of thinking as a whole; whatever the means, they all struggled. From the false starts (often the only starts available) to half measures, to the attempted overhaul of the system as a whole – all these initiatives entailed a struggle that could not in and of themselves overturn the legacies of colonialism within the lifetimes of the leaders represented here.

We are granted a way of seeing into the long game of decolonial struggle through these experiences, and what emerges as important within this, is appreciating the kind of learning needed in order to work with emancipatory visions for the future. It is important to be aware

of the work needed to foster the integration and internal coherence of the values of a decolonial vision. The learning entailed in inculcating the values and ethics that form a part of this are an essential aspect of its development, maturation, resilience and regeneration. Rewiring alternative understandings of people's relationship with society through learning is a profound challenge. It requires that one perceives the waves and waves of resistance, processing, understanding and embodiment needed to integrate values that one may cognitively affirm as needed. It requires that we not only understand what oppression is; it requires that we also perceive the lay lines of oppression and the foundations that it is built upon. It asks whether we can willfully turn our back on these old formulas and their roots – especially in the ways they reinscribe themselves into new configurations. This process is undoubtedly a messy one, and we ought to expect that this kind of learning will happen at different times and in different ways for different peoples. To reiterate a point made earlier; it cannot be automated. This vision of radical democracy is a habit that can only gain traction over time through patient and steadfast learning environments that can generously cultivate the space to explore this. The work of transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis must thus continuously facilitate the conditions under which such sporadic and consistent learning can happen.

The review also asks important questions about how we perceive the uses and abuses of power as part of learning to accede to a decolonial vision of the future. The opening section of this comparative review challenged us to think carefully about the constitutional rights-based templates that we enact when pursuing socio-economic justice as a fundamental part of the vision for democracy in Africa. The challenge we are left with is how we can embrace the individual sacrifice entailed in creating a more just society for all, without the shadow of coercive measures. As part of this, it is also important to recall the violence that has always been part of state making, starting with the original violence that drew the demarcations that we acknowledge as sacrosanct African states in this day and age. How is it that we have come to understand this as normal and inviolable? And in the face of this history why is it that we expect harmonised perfection of transgressive efforts that try to challenge these crude foundations – whilst we never ask this of the reinscribed colonial hierarchies that continue to produce inequality? It is as if the messy aspects of change surfaced within this review trigger an anxiety around the maintenance of order as part of reform. That we will know something is working if only it demonstrates the façade of order to which we have become accustomed.

Do we expect that creating an alternative vision for society could happen without significant challenges? And aren't these challenges an expected part of any 'long walk to freedom'? Equally relevant is the question of power in decolonial reform which also challenges transgressive efforts towards emancipatory futures to acknowledge the pitfalls of nationalism. The caution waiting in the wings asks us to remember that specific forms of tribalism, nationalism and extreme fascist manifestations that can emanate from this, contain the roots and reasoning that colonialism itself stems from (Dipanshid, 2018, p. 3). This is a complex nuance that requires our discernment, especially as right-wing nationalisms resurface contemporarily across the globe (see Eatwell, 2010). Our visions for transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis have to interrogate these questions and ask ourselves what stances have been carefully chosen and what these choices create. Central to these dilemmas are (again) the ethical and ontological foundations that underpin our meaning-making. Finding ways to have the necessary conversations at this level will help uncover the futures that sit behind the choices we make to explore if indeed these serve the sum of our ambitions. This is why Cabral's injunction to undo all exploitations, in whatever forms it may take, retains such potency. It keeps us aware of the reinscriptions of domination that could be justified as part of an emancipatory project. Even whilst holding this firmly within our sight, we need to remember that in order to do this work, an overall stance needs to be taken, a stance that ultimately chooses the centrality of social-economic reform as part of the vision of the future. Choices such as these come with ethical values that need to be upheld within leadership in ways that will no doubt be contested, opposed and defied by anyone who feels their particular interests are threatened. This is an indelible part of the learning and perhaps why the surrender entailed in upholding a socialist learning perspective on decolonial futures is something that continues to challenge our modern imaginaries.

As a part of this, we dare not make excuses for the violence that we choose to be a part of whether this violence is represented through the challenge of reform or whether it emanates from our propensities to uphold the status quo which also has its effects for all of us. We also dare not judge too quickly the learning that is in process in both these cases, for only time and reflection can truly reveal to us the balance that is upheld or destroyed through our uncertainties, our actions and concessions. Reflective practice in this way gives us the chance to review the logics that sat behind our choices and perhaps to find new coordinates as part of our growing learning. This is hard and worthy work and it requires patience and care, as the cornerstone of decolonial reform. Only through this can we slowly work towards the ethic of

decolonial humanism that lay at the heart of the thoughts and actions of the many leaders including Nyerere who dared to make the contributions enlisted within these pages. Ultimately, their work asks questions about what it means to transform ourselves as part of working towards a decolonial future both on the part of those who have been exploited and have imbibed the dialectics of oppression, as well as those that have been a part of its machinery, including the ever-burgeoning elite. The tenets of decolonial humanism that are crafted within the assertions of transgressive leaders in Africa's history continue to ask unanswered questions around how transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis can help rejuvenate our visions of ourselves as new people, with a new language, that collectively seeks to foster a new humanity. The work lingers on through these parameters, asking as much of us now as it did of them in those times and these conversations are mirrored in other parts of the world.

Lastly, and as a way of moving on, it is critical that we appreciate that the content of this review has largely concentrated on the role of the state within the operationalisation of decolonial reform. These perspectives on the state as the vehicle for reform need to be understood as a critical aspect of ongoing struggle. However, it is useful to also be aware of how perspectives that only conceive of change through the vehicle of the state dominate our imagination of what is possible and what is worthy of mention. Neocosmos substantiates this point by reminding us that:

... the independence movements, born out of pan-Africanism, were also concerned to imagine an emancipatory politics beyond the simple fact of statehood; indeed, independence was seen as only the first step towards achieving such full emancipation. This was, however, a process that was conceived of as achievable only via the state. It was the state, its history and its subjectivities which lay at the core of intellectual endeavour in the early days of nationalism and independence, and I will argue that this has remained the case, though in a modified form and despite contestation, ever since... (Neocosmos, 2016, pp.2-3).

What suffers within this perspective is a deeper way of seeing into the alternative sites of agency that have been a core component of everyday emancipatory struggle:

Agency was then still thought of, ultimately, in statist terms, as parties were and are quite simply state organisations, central component parts of what is sometimes referred to as 'political society'; their function, after all, is the achievement of state power. 'From such a perspective, it was difficult even to glimpse the possibility of working people in Africa becoming a creative force capable of making history. Rather history was seen as something to be made outside of this force, in lieu of this force and ultimately to be imposed on it.' (Mamdani, 1994 in Neocosmos, 2016, p. 6).

We exit this review with an intention to gain a better ‘glimpse’ of alternative ‘creative forces’ beyond the state that have woven their labour into the history of struggle on this continent. The next chapter will trace the subversive work generated predominantly by woman and queer people to be valued as important sites of learning.

Chapter 4: And What of Our Mothers? This Woman's Work...⁴⁰

4.1 Introduction

Women of Courage

There will be a morning song
for those who clean the dust
from the children's bruises
the blood of the wounds from bullets
those who wipe the sleep
from the eyes of the weary
and whose labour shields
the frail bodies of the old
those whose pain is multiplied
by the pleas of their young
scarred by the precision
of their inquisitors
who refuse to retreat in battle
and who are dying with the sum of this knowledge
There will be a future.

(Iyamide Hazeley, 1992, p. 906)

It is not lost to me that in recounting the transgressive impulses embedded in the struggles towards African liberation that I have been rewriting a history that has foregrounded stories around liberation that centre the role of the state as a vehicle for emancipation. In retrospect, the stories gathered in the last chapter also inadvertently demonstrate transgressive moves towards freedom from a perspective that privileges the narratives and ideologies driven by male and particularly 'masculine' forms of leadership that were at the forefront of that struggle. The term 'masculine' is used here to signal forms of intervention that are characteristically extroverted in their orientation, and find their expression as part of a public political discourse. I am intentionally using the term 'masculine' to also signal the fact that this way of being though possessing a distinctly masculine response to struggle, can equally be championed by somebody who happens to be female or any other biological orientation

⁴⁰ This part of the title draws on the song by Kate Bush (1988) which was later redone by Maxwell in 1997. It is a song that is about a complicated birth experience. It has later been seen as an anthem for all mothers and fathers who have lost their children "to acts of injustice". See <https://www.economist.com/prospero/2016/10/05/how-a-1980s-song-about-childbirth-became-a-tribute-to-black-lives-matter> for more detail.

other than a heterosexual male. Thus, the deliberations charted in Chapter 3 were primarily concerned with defining the future purpose of the state in Africa through the leadership of a largely “masculine” orientated vanguard. What remains unseen and invisibilised through this perspective is an adequate narrative of the work and struggle that was launched at many other concurrent and co- existing levels. Chapter 3 specifically bypasses narrative expressions around subjective, interpersonal, relational and collective emancipatory efforts rooted in everyday existence. As a way of further demonstrating the significance of the gaps authored in Chapter 3, I invite the thinking of Michael Neocosmos to lead a discussion on what happens when our thinking about emancipation becomes solely centred around the work of the state. He writes profusely about how thinking and dreaming about emancipation in Africa has been stunted by an over reliance on the politics of the state as the central organising mechanism for emancipation. The crux of his thesis is succinctly shared below. For him...

Emancipation in Africa is not a matter of tinkering with institutions of power under ‘expert’ advice, assuming this would be possible, or for waiting for a philosopher-king to achieve power or, for that matter, of relying on supra-national state institutions, for these simply, reproduce the problem of state power, which is by its very nature antithetical to freedom, justice, dignity and equality. (Neocosmos, 2016, p. 14)

In his understanding, the state in Africa cannot produce the emancipatory aims that we keep believing it can. He goes as far as stating that the history of the state in Africa includes its ability to create social division, large scale stratification and inequality. In this way, Neocosmos joins the thinking of Mamdani when he asserted that we need to understand the foundations of the state in Africa, and the inequalities that it reproduces in contemporary times. Commenting further on the role of the state and how it is complicit in creating the inequalities experienced in the present, Neocosmos affirms that:

the state can no longer be considered the foundation of an emancipatory politics, that the emancipatory possibilities of state politics have been lost... that ‘the emancipatory potential once embodied in the nation state as a political community of citizens is no longer all that evident’. (De Alwis et al., 2009 in Neocosmos, 2016, p. 364)

Instead of a worn-out focus on the state and what it has failed to achieve in history and to date, he urges us to consider the presence and power of other ‘subjective’ emancipatory impulses that have asserted themselves over time. In this way, Neocosmos asks us to consider the importance of reading into “emancipatory subjectivities in the present, and how they relate dialectically with the social” (Neocosmos, 2016, p. 290). His treatise is an invitation to (re)present and think about transgressive impulses towards emancipation in Africa in another

way, one that gives credence to the often overlooked ‘subjective’ articulations of struggle launched at the heart of colonial and neo-liberal impasses. The introductory pages of his work engage the thinking of Arundhati Roy to give shape to the oeuvre of his thesis. In it she intonates that:

... the tenacity, the wisdom and the courage of those who have been fighting for years, for decades, to bring change, or even the whisper of justice to their lives, is something extraordinary... There is something very disturbing about... [the] inability to credit ordinary people with being capable of weighing the odds and making their own decisions. (Roy, 2010, in Neocosmos, 2016, p. 1)

Looking into the ‘ordinary’ expressions of people struggling for emancipation is a different way of thinking and feeling into what transgressive impulses towards emancipation have looked like on the continent. This could be a way of seeing and listening that seeks to acknowledge the labours and efforts of some of those members of society whose voices and struggles have easily been ‘invisibilised’ through far-reaching literature reviews such as the one in Chapter 3. At this juncture, I am admitting the limitations of *that* kind of review being the *only* kind of appraisal of the transgressive struggles of Africans over time.

The current chapter seeks to create another layer of understanding around what transgressive impulses towards emancipation have looked like on the continent. It seeks to expand what was explored earlier by intentionally responding to questions around how women and queer⁴¹ bodies in particular transgress the present and imagine emancipatory possibilities for the future. It seeks to examine the pedagogical choices embedded in their praxis over time by giving precedence to alternative sensibilities that intentionally seek to give shape to the contours of ‘feminine’ organization and leadership within the struggles for African emancipation. I have chosen the word ‘feminine’ deliberately to denote something beyond the particular gender of those that have thus far been foregrounded. I do not believe that

⁴¹ Repeated note: The term ‘queer’ is used to denote humans that do not conform strictly to heterosexual, cisgendered and patriarchal identities. Cisgendered refers to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex. ‘Queer’ can include members who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Asexual, Queer or Questioning plus those other orientations not specifically labelled. Chapter Four of the study is cognisant that a significant number of the contributions of poetry that are shared are written by women who question and query heterosexual, cisgendered, patriarchal norms. I wish to signal that some of the poets included are ‘queer’ because this is how they identify themselves. I wish to do this whilst also acknowledging that the chapter does not delve in depth into Queer Theory, which is a large body of theoretical work. The chapter seeks to signal in passing that the meaning made in it derives some of its articulations from a queer perspective, therefore rendering the insight gained there outside the specific bounds of compulsory heterosexual, cisgendered and patriarchal norms. I hope that this can be appreciated as a useful layering on the poetry shared as part of this chapter.

masculine approaches to leadership are only championed by males and feminine approaches by women only. I am however particularly interested in the ways in which a very masculine approach to transgressive leadership often dominates our imagination of what is relevant and worthy of our attention. In the wake of representations that foreground and replicate this way of being in the world, what ‘feminine’ ways of organising and leading offer into the conversation could be a useful way of seeing what is potentially missing in this outlook. The intention here is not to play out a binary that is preoccupied with fixed notions of how men and women lead or transgress, the intention is to acknowledge that in the wake of what has been surfaced in this study thus far, it is important to find a way to highlight other expressions and sensibilities around solidarity and transgression that exist within our history. This is an endeavour to resource this study with ‘pluriversal’ ways of seeing into the matter at hand, and to demonstrate there are many ways to look at this subject, each of which have varying implications for the understanding of the world that is taken forward (Santos, 2014).

In considering how to bring out an alternative expression of the themes under exploration, I needed to find alternative resources or sources which would help me find appropriately divergent articulations to the mode of political and philosophical analysis that speaks chiefly in the language of ideology, political repose and analysis. I am not suggesting that the emancipatory desires of women and queer bodies on the continent and in the diaspora do not successfully articulate themselves in this way. I am rather interested to meet the articulation of emancipatory desires of women and queer folk through other epistemological languages of their own choosing. I am also interested in centring another narrative that serves as a useful counterpoint to the state-based political response that featured in Chapter 3. As such, this current chapter seeks to open up the space for other forms of expressions that nurture an understanding of a more personal, relational and spiritual articulation of struggle, transgression and longing.

Working with an alternative expression of women and queer people’s transgressive impulses is an attempt to ground the conversation in ways that can help me understand the knowledge and pedagogical resources embedded in my grandmothers’ and mothers’ struggles over time. I want to do this openly, without limiting the discussion to overarching expressions of feminism(s), or the differently articulated branches of womanism(s). This is precisely because my grandmothers and mothers do not strictly identify as this (even though I know some of their experiences are coherent with women’s and queer people’s struggles over

time). Maureen Ikeotuonye has articulated some critical questions about what is legitimised or delegitimised when one *only* uses the parameters of feminist discourse(s) to speak for generations of African women's struggles:

In Africa, colonialism did not only intervene and transform the social arrangement in Africa, but also disrupted the women's traditional autonomous spheres and their positions in the society. To be able to make the claim that these women were simply a vehicle for the unfolding of the current 'African feminists' some historical content had to be buried, concealed, for the modern narrative of 'proto-feminism' in Africa to gain ascendancy. In other words, what is the current inquisition of the *orbis universalis feminus* concealing in order to rewrite the history of the world as the history of a western binary conception of personhood/ womanhood? (Ikeotuonye, 2016, p. 303)

Ikeotuonye has asked us to consider what happens when we apply the binaries present in some understandings of feminism(s) to struggles of our grandmothers. Is it appropriate to conceive of our grandmothers' and mothers' struggles in ways that can at worst posit a very individualistic (often liberal) thinking about the struggles of women within a context? To take the often-touted example, some iterations of feminism(s) do not prioritise engaging with men as part of their discourse. bell hooks admonishes the logics that are perpetuated within such discourses:

Women were never encouraged in contemporary feminist movements to point out to men their responsibility. Some feminist rhetoric 'put down' women who related to men at all. Most women's liberationists were saying, 'women have nurtured, helped and supported others for too long – now we must fend for ourselves' ... the insistence on a concentrated focus on individualism, on the primacy of self, deemed 'liberatory' by women's liberationists, was not a visionary, radical concept of freedom. It did provide individual solutions for women, however. It was the same idea of independence perpetuated by the imperial patriarchal state which equates independence with narcissism, and a lack of concern with triumph over others. In this way, women active in the feminist movement were simply inverting the dominant ideology of the culture – they were not attacking it ... (hooks, 2000, p. 78)

I bring this up intentionally in order to begin to sculpt the focus of this chapter, and the visions for emancipatory transgressive trajectories that it wants to explore. As a historical treatise it seeks to look into the emancipatory work of women over centuries without simply conflating these efforts with some contemporary aspects of feminism(s) that might depart from the logic, values and efforts mobilised by our grandmothers and mothers. Ikeotuonye continues to outline what we miss if we allow ourselves to only understand women's struggles on the continent through a 'proto-feminist' discourse:

... to understand what these African women were doing, one has to take into account the historical conditions and the forces that were shaping the environment ... what

these African women were protecting and fighting for is a ‘culture’, a society that includes both men and women and children (male and female) and their action was against colonialists, whatever their gender. (Ikeotuonye, 2016, p. 303)

This quote seeks to extend the logic of women’s struggles in Africa as something that goes beyond the ‘battle of the sexes’ perpetuated by some iterations of feminism(s) (Ikeotuonye, 2016, p. 302). Ikeotuonye reminds us of the bigger contextual issues at play that have formed an indelible part of the emancipatory visions of women on the continent, and how what was at stake and what needed to be protected went beyond some of the manifestations of individualism championed in liberal feminism(s), towards a society beyond imperialism that does not require the oppression of anyone at all. In addition, perspectives such as Africana womanism claim that the solutions to gender inequality can be found in African philosophy:

Essentially, the Africana womanism position is that the framework for a world free of oppression already exists within traditional African philosophical world view – if only the Africana women will claim it. (Yaa Asantewa Reed, in Chilisa and Ntseane, 2010, p. 619)

Pamela Maseko takes this point further by elaborating what requires reclaiming in her context. She speaks directly to the experience of women within isiXhosa-speaking society and the ways in which women yielded power across time can be obscured by some feminist discourses, simply because of the language used to describe them:

I grew up in a social context where there was a general understanding that there were members who had profound knowledge and understanding of issues relating to society, regardless of whether they were men or women. *Amaxhegokazi*– the senior womenfolk – of my village lived these traits, and through the tales they told us as young people I got a sense that those traits are common in *abafazi*⁴² in isiXhosa-speaking society.

I am often perplexed by scholars on feminism, both from within and outside of the continent, who cannot make sense of this power of women in the African continent. Is it because it presents itself differently from Western epistemologies? For African scholars, is it because we do not know, or is it because we lack an understanding, or an ability to make sense of what we know? (Maseko, 2018, p. 40)

The insights given by Reed and Maseko point to different ways in which we can conceptualise women’s power in indigenous African cultures. I am interested in how both

⁴² The word *abafazi* has been translated directly into English as ‘woman’. However Maseko challenges and extends our understanding of the roots of the word by showing us that the root of a noun or adjective changes its meaning (Maseko, 2018, p. 50). The morpheme *kazi* or *azi* “adds a kind of superlative, a degree of greatness and awesomeness in the noun ... In isi-Xhosa, the responsibility of the carrier of the name and the connection in terms of social relation is, instead, of great worth” (Maseko, 2018, p.50).

assertions posit that an African philosophical world view can be seen as an emancipatory resource for African womanists. What is particularly useful here is the calling up of cultural resources that can create a decolonial world for all, an objective that goes beyond what some contemporary feminisms advocate in their struggles. Ogundipe-Leslie substantiates this view by saying that discourse around feminism(s) ought to embrace a vision for social transformation that includes the past and present work of women in Africa:

‘STIWA’ is my acronym for *Social Transformation including women in Africa*. This new term describes my agenda for women in Africa ... without having to answer charges of imitativeness or having to constantly define our agenda on the African continent in relation to other feminisms, in particular, white Euro-American feminisms which are unfortunately under siege by everyone. This new term ‘STIWA’ allows me to discuss the needs of African women today in the tradition of the spaces and strategies provided in our indigenous cultures for the social being of women. [It] is about the inclusion of African women in the contemporary social and political transformation of Africa. (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994, p.230)

This chapter aims to engage the transgressive impulses of women on the continent and the diaspora on their own terms, whether or not these adhere to some understandings of feminism(s). It attempts to acknowledge the different ways of being involved in women’s struggles over time. By acknowledging the tensions in locating and naming the politics of our mothers and grandmothers, I do not wish to devalue what the banners of feminism(s) have contributed. I recognise the many ways in which the historical labour of women on the continent has coalesced into the language that African feminism(s) continues to build going forward. To refuse outright to recognise the work of African feminists is to refuse to acknowledge the coalescing of this labour into the struggles of women today. This would mean cutting the lines between the past and the present in ways that demobilise the traction built over generations. The conversation between the past and the future (as evidenced in Napiadi’s story) is something that the continuity of women across generations represents. Credo Mutwa is quoted as saying that women “exist in the past, present and future at the same time... she does not belong to one’s father or oneself, but to those yet unborn and one’s ancestors” (Mutwa, 1996, p. 626). This way of thinking implores us to consider and critically explore the trails of intergenerational meaning making that persist through women’s struggles over time.

This chapter considers intergenerational perspectives of women’s struggles over time. It hopes to find resources that can speak to particular issues in women’s struggle rooted over time. It chooses to do this with care and in the hope that different essences of those struggles

over time can be appreciated – despite the names and banners that champion them. We have always been more than the names we called ourselves, and I believe that at the heart of the African feminist project is the power of solidarity, something that this chapter seeks to demonstrate with varying expressions of women’s struggles over time. I cannot with conscience become divisive about the project of feminism(s) even as I continue to seek greater nuance in the way we speak about women’s struggle’s over time in Africa. In summary, this chapter seeks to employ an open and generous way of working with the different ways that women’s struggles have articulated themselves to themselves over time. It endeavours to gain access to the politics embedded in those struggles on their own terms by wondering out loud in the words of Nokulinda Mkhize about “what the liberation language” of my grandmothers and mothers would be in its own right, and how to acknowledge the power embedded in their chosen rites (Mkhize, 2015, p.3).

As a part of this concern, I have been challenged to find alternative sources for where these articulations reside in history. Alex Dodd, renowned South African art historian, describes the feminine as an “inarticulate force” (Dodd, 2018). What I find useful about this description is that it speaks about a force that is undoubtably present but does not (always) articulate itself in the ways that we have become accustomed to appreciating the performance requirements of ‘power’ in contemporary society. The feminine she speaks of reveals itself in another way. It might provide an alternative and potentially under-read form of articulation in the face of dominant meaning-making strategies, but it is nonetheless powerful in its knowings, and vital in the contributions it makes to society. Mackenzie Wark substantiates this view by speaking about the value of inscribing new ways of digging up the archive:

Sometimes to take three steps forward one has to take two steps back, back into the archive, to find the materials for going on, but in a new way. I just don’t think the canonic theoretical resources trotted out over and over are adequate any more to understanding the present. We need new ancestors, and new ways to read our contemporaries. (Wark, 2018, p. 61)

Having explored the articulate force of historical leaders that spearheaded thinking and praxis around liberation on the continent (in Chapter 3), it remains now to illuminate the ways of knowing that women have held over time that include *other* modes of expression and praxis. These modes of expression are indelibly rich in their formulations, but necessarily distinct in their choices around how to engage their own visions and struggles for freedom in the world.

So far in this study we have explored the power of literary fictional texts as a hermeneutical resource that thematically engages the questions at hand. In this chapter, we add the potential and power of poetry and lyrical forms of knowledge alongside this. These poems will highlight the expressions of African women on the continent, in the diaspora and within the global south. The decision to include insights from women and queer folk from the diaspora and beyond is acknowledged by W.E. Du Bois:

... people of African origin and descent 'have a contribution to make to civilisation and humanity' that their historic experiences of holocaust, enslavement, colonization, and segregation have long throttled and thwarted ... the methods which we evolved for opposing slavery and fighting prejudice are not to be forgotten but learned for our own and other's instruction. (Du Bois, 1973, in Rabaka, 2010, p. 17)

In harmony with the opening remarks of this thesis 'Africa is a country', this chapter seeks to see the struggles within the continent and the diaspora as interconnected and relevant especially in terms of emancipation and the accompanying pedagogical praxis over time. The chapter also seeks to synthesise the critical thoughts of women of African descent including the diaspora because it recognises that the knowledge at these interfaces is fundamental to my political education, in that the questions I found there proved relevant for me in my meaning-making as an African woman. I have heard rumblings of discontent in current day student-led struggles that question whether black American 'womanists' or 'feminists' can give credence to the struggles of women on the African continent. Indeed, the introduction to this chapter started off with the desire to not describe the struggles of women on this continent by *only* linking them to the political framings of feminism(s). This chapter seeks to acknowledge these tensions by highlighting the interfaces of women struggles on the continent, whilst also exploring instances in which the discourses emerging in the diaspora are resonant. Thus, the aim is not to completely conflate the thinking of women in the African context with an understanding of women's struggles in the diaspora. The intention is to show where the two meet and assist each other in their aims. After all, I cannot write this chapter outside of what has relevance for this study, whether it is found here on the continent, or is part of the meaning-making found in the African diaspora or in the global south. This is because all of these spaces lend something of value to that which seeks understanding in the chapter. In other words, I endeavour to be faithful and open to the lyrical affirmations of those women that have preceded me on this continent, whilst also affirming how their concerns are coherent with the voices of women and queer persons in the diaspora and the global south

who have undertaken to speak and write about the connections of women's struggles around the world.

We come now to a description of what poetry gives us access to, especially with regard to its role in unearthing necessary pedagogical tools that can help us move forward. The work of Audre Lorde (who describes herself as a black lesbian feminist) is helpful in this regard. Her thinking is useful here particularly as she describes in detail the way in which poetry illuminates an understanding of women's struggles across time. Her paper "Poetry is Not a Luxury" is used below to allow the kind of knowledge that resides in poetry to become a part of our meaning-making. For her, poetry plays a special role:

... it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are, until the poem, nameless and formless – about to be birthed, but already felt. That distillation of experience from which true poetry springs births thought as dream births concept, as feeling births idea, as knowledge births (precedes) understanding. (Lorde, 1985, p. 1)

I choose to meet our grandmothers, mothers and sisters in poetry shared over generations that served the purpose of not only "birthing thoughts", "concepts", "knowledge" and "understandings" but also most importantly, they provide sustenance for their own servitude along the way. Chilisa and Ntseane (2010, p. 621) substantiates this thinking by stating that:

In an effort to decolonize dominant methodologies it is becoming necessary to analyze local folklore, songs, dance, and poetry to provide insight into the values, history, practices, and beliefs of formerly colonized societies...

This indigenous knowledge makes visible the spaces of agency ever so present in the life experiences of marginalized feminisms and yet so absent in the academic debate.

Here we see the importance of witnessing the knowledge that expresses itself powerfully through different mediums and acknowledging this as a powerful resource going forward. This knowledge speaks intimately of what matters for people through forms of expression particular to their culture. Whilst this is true of indigenous cultures it also applies to what women have been able to do with poetry in contemporary times. In understanding the particular role that poetry plays, Lorde is quoted again at length, to provide further immersion into the possibilities emerging from her thinking. She explains the power of meeting the potency of who we are as women through poetry:

... as we become more in touch with our own ancient, black, non-European view of living as a situation to be experienced and interacted with, we learn more and more to cherish our feelings, and to respect those hidden sources of our power from where true knowledge and therefore lasting action comes...

For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into tangible action...

...Poetry is the way we help give names to the nameless, so it can be thought. The farthest external horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled out by poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives. (Lorde, 1985, p. 37)

The feelings and emotions in poetry create ideas, thoughts and knowledge and then action; this is a beautiful way to think about women's poetry in particular. Poetry is thus a resource that helps us understand how the most intimate feelings and thoughts intoned there speak of the burgeoning forms of praxis distilled within women's experience. Bringing this into conversation with how African women have written about poetry, Gabeeba Baderoon has explored what is made possible through women's poetry in the introduction to the very recently published "Our words, our worlds, writing of black South African Women poets, 2000-2018":

In the new terrains that they crafted, Black women could write poetry of an entirely new kind – visionary; dealing not only with trauma, but also pleasure; giving unceasing attention to injuries to women that had become ordinary in their familiarity; creating more layered visions of Black life, including the forbidden memory of the joys of Black life under Apartheid; asserting new public lineages in which women stood proud; and envisioning histories and futures that had never been put into words before. (Baderoon, 2019, p. 1)

We can see the value of this kind of work in the new terrains that poetry creates, and the lineages that it fosters. Sisi Maqagi echoes this point:

... Black women's subversion of normalised and hegemonic societal spaces, which routinely confine the heterogeneous subjectivities in the sameness of narrow and devaluing ideological concepts to categorise and control them. Black women's poetry deploys images of spatial and temporal expanses that defy such enclosure – images of words, stories and songs which, in defining their experiences, register their own lived histories, as well as their transgression of those historical societal boundaries. It is this legacy of agency that becomes a gift for tomorrow's generation. (Maqagi, 2019, p. 63)

This chapter seeks to honour the written transgressions of this kind that have worked to give expression and sustenance to the dreams that women and queer bodies on the continent and in the diaspora have expressed over time. It leans into the places where this kind of lyrical language folded itself into forms that were conducive. It seeks to acknowledge the depth of the knowledge found at the heart of this kind of expression.

I have chosen to engage with Margaret Busby's massive "international anthology of words and writings by women of African descent from the ancient Egyptian to the present" amongst other similar anthologies of African women's poetry because they acknowledge the difference between the history of oral traditions on the continent and (equally) the power of the written word as it came from women of African descent. Here Busby shares the thinking that underpins the anthology called *Daughters of Africa*:

Beginning *Daughters of Africa* with a selection of anonymous songs and poetry from Africa ... underlines the oral tradition that runs throughout the diaspora and highlights the fact that African women's creativity has roots that extend beyond written records... 'Orature', the term coined by the late Ugandan literary critic Pio Zirimu, encompasses both the tradition of unwritten creativity and verbal transmission of that creativity. (Busby, 1992, p. xxxiii)

This is simply the beginning of Busby's anthology. She layers the intention to adequately represent the history of this creativity by acknowledging how words written by women of African descent are strategically opening up spaces for recording stories never told through this medium. Busby shares some of the thinking that compels women of African descent to write their stories:

The thirst for literature with personal relevance has inspired many Black women's creativity – Toni Morrison has explained that what she writes are the kind of books she wants to read, a sentiment endorsed by Alice Walker: 'I write all the things I *should've been able to read*' as well as by the young Zimbabwean novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga who has said: 'I'd try to look for myself in the books that I read, but I didn't find me'. (Busby, 1992, p. xxx)

What does it mean to "find oneself" in what one reads? It means to see reflected the questions and queries embedded in one's life world. In this way, I feel that looking into the lyrical content of these kind of expressions gives us a way of looking into concerns that prior to this have that not found a way to showcase the knowledge embedded in the world of an African black female imaginary. These concerns stretch to include questions about love, relationships, power, coloniality, survival, regeneration and resurgence. In other words, the emancipatory concerns and discourses of women of African descent can be found in the creativity they embrace, whether it has arrived through the ages as part of 'orature', or with the specific desire to write into the world that which has been omitted as a worthy vantage point. The last issue that the introduction to this chapter seeks to clarify is of course language and its impact on the understanding of the resources being shared. Again, Busby leads the way in this discussion:

The linguistic versatility demonstrated by people of Africa and the African diaspora is in itself a remarkable testament to survival of vicissitude in a history that has weathered subjugation and colonisation by the powers of Europe. (Busby, 1992, p. xxxiii)

It is this versatility that I hope to engage by calling on a diverse range of texts that can in their own ways give expression to what has meaning in that context. The use of English within the texts (especially if they are translated) is something we need to acknowledge as potentially limiting; in the act of translation something vital is lost. According to June Jordan, “if we lose our fluency in our language, we may irreversibly forsake elements of the spirit that have provided for our survival” (Busby, 1992, p. xxxv). This is a particularly significant loss, especially since it is this very spirit I yearn to catch a glimpse of. Undeniably, the use of English both within this study, and in these texts, diminishes the sense of the expression found there. I do however gain fortitude by the fact that I found the women who will accompany me in this chapter through the language of English, and I celebrate the threads of resonant meaning that exist there (Gqola, 2018).

This chapter gathers poems about women’s struggles across generations, poems that specifically speak to the shifts in experience there. The review considers both high intensity struggles as well as those less intense middle-class experiences. Straddling these two worlds and the different levels of negotiation embedded in them is important because in a bifurcated world we can easily write and mobilise in ways that only see the struggles while trivialising what exists outside. These experiences form two sides of a contemporary predicament that require our attention and careful navigation.

This chapter will also consider the resources that women mobilise in order to sustain themselves and the generations that live on beyond them. As a part of this, the politics of survival will be engaged, with questions about intergenerational renewal including, from a contemporary perspective, what can be possible when we honour the sources that created the conditions for our continued presence here? This is an attempt to ask questions about the regenerative potential of the praxis that has sustained women’s struggles over time.

4.2 Digging up Forgotten Archives and Naming the Resources we Find There

As a way of beginning, let us consider the relevance of this way of knowing in relation to the opening poem in this chapter.

Women of Courage

There will be a morning song
for those who clean the dust
from the children's bruises
the blood of the wounds from bullets
those who wipe the sleep
from the eyes of the weary
and whose labour shields
the frail bodies of the old
those whose pain is multiplied
by the pleas of their young
scarred by the precision
of their inquisitors
who refuse to retreat in battle
and who are dying with the sum of this knowledge
There will be a future.

(Iyamide Hazeley, 1992, p. 906)

‘Women of Courage’ speaks to the depth of work that women straddle, and the expanse of knowledge embedded in the work of everyday struggle. These relentless demonstrations of care are exercised in the moments in between and during longstanding struggles for emancipation. The poem above provides a narrative that captures both the battles waged with the outside world, and those everyday expressions of solidarity and care that are devoted to collective subsistence and the determination to exist and resist with dignity over time. The poem specifically plays on the role of women as carers within the community, and the daily labour that sustains the health of their families and homes, whilst also pointing to women as warriors and their physical defiance as part of the struggle for emancipation. Here is an intimate example of the work that ‘Women of Courage’ do. The intimate knowledge held here is precisely what a focus on state-based political ideology (no matter how cogent and rigorous) cannot give us. It cannot give us insight into the depth of this struggle, and the toll that mobilising at these different interfaces has on those who continue to carry these varying responsibilities every day.

The poem reminds us of the depth of “this woman’s work”, and the vast and weighty “sum of knowledge. The implication that the women “dying with the sum of this knowledge” gives a

sense of the weight that comes with this knowledge, whilst simultaneously and generously pointing out all the resources they mobilise at the intersections of their experience. This poem evokes all of this whilst also claiming in a resolute and poised manner “that there will be a song” for them, that “there will be a future”, that this weighted knowledge must surely create a future that can adequately honour women, and their devotion to the emancipatory futures over time. The poem begs the reader to see “this woman’s work” as the phenomenon that it is, to perceive in the small everyday moments the shape of that which has grounded emancipatory struggles over time, whilst also challenging us to credit women with the recognition they deserve. This recognition needs to be proffered, “not as an act of charity, or benevolence from governments and constitutions” but as a result of understanding how what they contribute is sustained through a “sacred process of belonging” (Matamabanadzo, 2017) Matamabanadzo reminds us here that women’s existence and their offerings do indeed belong, and they do so beyond the dictates of institutional mandates. They belong by virtue of them being woven into the very fabric of life. Their presence and their work are a sacred part of life as we know it, and need to be valued as such.

Hazeley’s poem gives us access to all this at once, demonstrating the claims offered by a lyrical understanding of the world. The poem invites the reader to consider more than “one pattern of coherence” (Lee, 2010, p 21). Beyond a linear presentation of an idea, the poem gives us smatterings of images that make an impression on the mind. The relationship between the different ways ascribed to ‘Women of Courage’ is a complex kaleidoscope of the facets of emancipatory struggle. It also gives us other examples of what it means to transgress. “The sum of this knowledge” implies there are many ways that women summon a myriad of resources and responses in struggle. Some of these resources even seem contradictory i.e. the ferocity of “refusing to retreat in battle” even whilst they gently “wipe the sleep from the eyes of the weary” and feeling the pain of their experience, whilst also being inextricably connected to the “pleas of their young” (Hazeley, 1992, p. 906). This is a holding of the paradox, between great struggle and deep care; a battle waged contemporarily that is tethered to the generational assertions of their young. Within her body, a woman perceives and participates in all of this. The breadth and depth of this work and its ability to transmute pain into enough sustenance to endure another day is surely a form of transgression, not only in challenging the dominant over culture, but in its ability to sustain, protect and create life itself. The spiritual resources that lie at the heart of this are seldom spoken of, or acknowledged within political analysis, and yet they are an essential aspect of

emancipatory struggles over time. The way in which women alchemise oppression in this way is described by Comas-Diaz:

They embody a paradox; on the one hand they are socially despised, and on the other they become spiritual consecrators of hope for their people (Isasi-Diaz, 1996) ... Using their moral agency, they teach others the alchemist's secret, or how to turn dirt into gold. Therefore, womanists' spiritual transformation enables them to alchemize their oppression into liberation. Rather than feeling defeated many reconnect with their spirit of liberation. Imbued by *spirita*,⁴³ women learn to transmute pain, grief, and shame into strength – the spiritual transformation of aggression and desperation into self – affirmation and hope (Algarin & Pinero, 1975) – as a reframing of oppression (Comas-Diaz, 1995). While alchemizing their oppression, womanists reconnect with their indigenous strengths to renew their gifts of power. (Comas-Diaz, 2007, p. 17)

Comas-Diaz goes as far as describing women who do this work as beings who act as a 'crossroad' or a 'bridge' which provides a raised level from one way of being to another; that their bodies and their work offer us access into other realities, other paths beyond that which threatens to consume them and their loved ones in the present (Comas-Diaz, 2007, p. 15). It is important to keep in mind the conditions that being a 'bridge' or 'crossroads' in this way is born from. This is an "intelligence born of survival" in which struggle is deeply inscribed (Mkhize, 2018, p. 148). According to Mkhize,

It is important to not romanticize the lengths that Black women have to go to in order to make it in life. They are subversive out of necessity of survival, not just a theoretical thing. It is important to see that there is an actual person going through all of this difficulty...(Mkhize, 2018, p. 148)

Yes indeed, it is important that we remember that this work, when it does manage to happen, is performed by women while they have "six mountains on their back". These 'laminations of oppression' are described below:

In her case the African woman has six mountains on her back: one oppression from outside in the form of colonialism and neo-colonialism; two, oppression from traditional structures: feudal, communal, slave-based, etc.; three, her own backwardness; four, the African man; five, her colour or her race and six, the woman herself because she has internalized these oppressions. African feminism for me, therefore, must include issues around the woman's body, her person, her immediate family, her society, her nation, her continent and their locations within the international economic order because those realities in the international economic order determine African politics and impact on women. (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994, p. 228)

⁴³ *Spirita* is defined by Comas-Diaz as "the spirit of liberation among women of colour" (2007, p. 13).

One might never really know what it means to keep one's soul intact and provide a thoroughfare for others in the face of the laminations of these oppressions unless they have gone through it themselves. Thus, the alchemy alluded to by Comas-Diaz is something taxing, something intensely trying even though we continue to be accustomed to noticing its presence insidiously all around us. So, what would that voice sound like, speaking in its own words about the process of transmuting the oppressions one experiences in society and also those one has internalised. The challenge and resolution entailed in the alchemy of those who manage to metabolise the harsh reality of these six mountains is powerfully illustrated in Abena Busia's poem 'Liberation' (Busia, 1992, p. 869):

Liberation

We are all mothers,
and we have that fire within us,
of powerful women
whose spirits are so angry
we can laugh beauty into life
and still make you taste
the salt tears of our knowledge.

For we are not tortured
anymore;
we have seen beyond your lies and disguises,
and *we have* mastered the language of words,
and we have mastered speech.
And know
we have seen ourselves.
We have stripped ourselves raw
and naked piece by piece until our flesh lies flayed
with blood on our *own* hands.
What terrible thing can you do to us
which we have not done to ourselves?
What can you tell us
which we didn't deceive ourselves with
a long time ago?
You cannot know how long we cried
until we laughed
over the broken pieces of our dreams.
Ignorance shattered us into such fragments
we had to unearth ourselves piece by piece,
to recover with our own hands such unexpected relics
even we wondered
how we could hold such treasures.
Yes, we have conceived
to forge our mutilated hopes
into the substance of visions
beyond your imaginings
to declare the pain of our deliverance:
So do not even ask,
do not ask what it is that we are labouring with *this* time;
Dreamers remember their dreams
when we are disturbed –
And you shall not escape
what we *will* make
of the broken pieces of our lives.

This poem illustrates the sense of alchemy alluded to earlier: In it we hear and feel anger splitting into wild laughter that can tear open spaces. We meet tears that saturate themselves into calcified knowledge. A knowledge one can taste in the coarseness of its jagged edges. We see the soul uncovered, reaching the bareness of being “stripped raw”, not only by the doing of others, but also at the own hands of women oppressing other women, and women’s internalised oppression of themselves. The sentence “what can you tell us which we didn’t deceive ourselves with a long time ago” speaks to a passing of time in which the echoes of ignorance used to oppress women are in turn taken up by them in their own mouths and actions. This passing of time shows how this currency of oppressions begins to erode as the women themselves begin to recognise the iterations of bondage and oppression that are reinscribed through time. These patterns are exposed and exhausted in their fallacies through the laughter of women’s voices breaking free from cages they learn to recognise over time. To transgress is thus to recognise these patterns over time and to work oneself out of the coercion (self-imposed and otherwise) that perpetuates it.

The brokenness and the shattered fragments of the soul intensely portrayed in the poem give way to rites of excavation, as they dig to recover and reclaim themselves piece by piece. The sense of finding “unexpected relics” in that excavation breathes new fire into the poem, heralding the transformation of “mutilated hopes” into the “substance of visions”. This is transgression marked by the transformation of one’s deepest suffering into the steadfast resolve to create alternative visions that nurture life in the places where it has been suppressed. These visions become the new platforms from which one’s mobilisations for the future stem, and by surviving the past, one “declares the pain of deliverance” into an alternative future. Something in the ambit of the ability to transcend oneself is presented in this poem. The women in the poem become their own path, they become a bridge or a “crossroads” spanning from the experience of one set of circumstances whilst reaching out for the safety and sanctity of their own being and their community. What liberation means and how it is performed in this poem entails surviving and living beyond many “dark nights of the soul” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). The women emerge as witnesses to their own survival, and as a result of this grace their presence, no matter what shape it may be in, proclaims that they have survived what was meant to break them. Their mere presence has the power to collapse the ontological forces which denies their existence. Their life and the life of those around them, despite it all, is the greatest testament to the defections of laminated systems of oppression designed against them and yet still, there is always more work to do...

In the face of the diverse knowledges exhibited through the poems and the rites of excavation that uncover them in ‘Women of Courage’ and ‘Liberation’ we meet the power of feminine leadership in its ability to face, endure, metabolise, alchemise and at best, surpass internalised and external oppression. These powers are a generative force that are activated by logics within and beyond public political discourse as their legitimating mechanism. We get a glimpse of a struggle waged between definable historical moments through these poems and the kind of regeneration that aids their survival.

As a way of appeasing the spirits of those gone before, and acknowledging the intense journeys of women that have deeply affected our understandings of who we are and who we have been across times, Makhosazana Xaba adds to this conversation through her poem ‘Tongues of their mothers’ (2008). In it she does her own kind of accounting of the gifts and diverse knowledges of those that have come before her; of the women who have shaped the history she is a part of. Her poem ponders out loud what it means to ascribe to these women the powers they possessed outside of the narratives and the stories of the men in their lineages that continue to overshadow who these women were in history and what they contributed. It is a treatise to begin to define in different ways what women across times have contributed. Xaba names some of these ubiquitous “women of courage” by chronicling the power and audacity of some of the women from her context:

Tongues of their mothers

I wish to write an epic poem about Sarah Baartman,
One that will be silent on her capturers, torturers and demolishers.
It will say nothing of the experiments, the laboratories and the displays
Or even diplomatic dabbles that brought her remains home,
eventually.

This poem will sing of the Gamtoos Valley holding imprints of her baby steps.
It will contain rhymes about the games she played as a child,
stanzas will have names of her friends, her family, her community.
It will borrow from every single poem ever written about her, conjuring up her wholeness: her
voice, dreams, emotions and thoughts.

I wish to write an epic poem about uMnkabayi kaJama Zulu,
one that will be silent on her nephew, Shaka, and her brother ,
Senzangakhona.

It will not even mention Nandi. It will focus on her relationship with her sisters Mawa and
Mmama, her choice not to marry,
her preference not to have children and her power as a ruler. It will speak of her assortment of
battle strategies and her charisma as a leader. It will render a compilation of all the pieces of
advice she gave to men of abaQulusi who bowed to receive them, smiled to thank her, but in
public never acknowledged her, instead called her a mad witch.

I wish to write an epic poem about Daisy Makiwane,
One that will be silent on her father, the Reverend Elijah.

It will focus on her relationship with her sister Cecilia
and the conversations they had in the privacy of the night,
how they planned to make history and defy convention.
It will speak the language of algebra, geometry and trigonometry,
Then switch to news, reports, reviews, and editorials. It will enmesh the logic of numbers with
the passion that springs from words capturing her unique brand of pioneer for whom the
country was not ready.

I wish to write an epic poem about Princess Magogo Constance Zulu,
one that will be silent on her son, Gatsha Mangosuthu Buthelezi. It will focus on her music
and the poetry in it, the romance and the voice that carried it through to us.
It will describe the dexterity of her music-making fingers
and the rhythm of her body grounded on valleys,
mountains and musical rivers of the land of the amaZulu. I will find words to embrace the
power of her love songs that gave women dreams and fantasies to wake up and hold on to a
language of love in the dialect of their own mothers.

I wish to write an epic poem about Victoria Mxenge,
one that will be silent on her husband Griffiths. It will focus on her choice to flee from
patients, bedpans and doctors. The poem will flee from the pages and find a home in the sky.
It will float below the clouds, automatically changing fonts and sizes and translating itself into
languages that match each reader.

It is a poem that will remind people of Qonce
that her umbilical cord fertilized their soil. It will remind people of Umlazi that her blood
fertilized their soil. It will remind her killers that *we* shall never, ever forget.

I wish to write an epic poem about Nomvula Glenrose Mbatha, one that will be silent on my
father, her husband Reuben Benjamin Xaba. It will focus on her spirit, one that refused to fall
to pieces, rekindling the fire she made from ashes no one was prepared to gather.
This poem will raise the departed of Magogo, Nquthu, Mgungundlovana, iNanda, Healdtown,
Utrecht, kwaMapande, Ndeleni and Ashdown, so that they can sit around it as it glows and
warm their hands while they marvel at this fire she made from ashes no one was prepared to
gather.

These are just some of the epic poems I wish to write about women of our world,
in the tongues of their mothers. I will present the women in forms that match their foundations
using metaphors of moments that defined their beings and similes that flow through our
seasons of eternity.

But I am not ready yet to write these poems.
(Xaba, 2008, pp. 25-28)

This poem moves through time, sewing a patchwork of the legacies of women ancient and modern into their rightful place in history. The poem is a form of record keeping that evokes names long hidden from history. In this poem Xaba reaches across times to work a healing balm into places that are bruised by the ravages of history. She restores the legacy of the stories of those hidden throughout history back to the ownership of the women that forged it. The poem extends the roles that women have played over history within and without traditions that circumscribed their power in society. It expands wildly on the abilities of “women of courage” illustrating the great diversity of who it is that we are evoking when we insist on acknowledging the labour and knowledge of women across times. In it we see those so grotesquely displayed, standing in their wholeness, held by the memory of the land and the

people that loved them. We see the mastermind and strategies of great seers that divined the destinies of the kingdoms we still revere. We see the work of pioneering journalists who were mathematical geniuses and leaders the country was not ready for. The poem venerates unsung musicians that helped many understand the splendour of love that could be coaxed from their own tongues, whilst also mourning the tragic loss of struggle stalwarts who chose a life of service and were brutally murdered during Apartheid. Finally, the poem comes home, recounting the alchemy of the poet's own mother produced by creating fire from ashes "no one was prepared to gather"; a fire that generated enough warmth to comfort the souls of the beloved departed.

Reading this poem with 'Women of Courage' and 'Liberation' points to the internal and external acumen of women, the audacity they represent and what they managed to generate in their lifetimes. They are a reminder of how the place that we stand in now is the result of the silenced labour of those that have come before us, whose nerve cultivated the possibility of our existence.

It is strange that both the poem 'Women of Courage' and 'Tongues of their Mothers' end on a hiatus of sorts. The first proclaims that "there will be a song"; this is something left hanging in the balance, something yet to be fulfilled. Similarly, the second poem ends with the writer's confession that she "is not yet ready to write these poems". The irony is that both poems do the work of recounting the shape and essence of what is missing. They manage to sculpt a semblance of the diverse sensibilities that need to be acknowledged. Their poems do the actual work of tracing the contours of what the 'song' or 'epic poem' could be; their authors take us closer to the realisation of what is missing, what needs to be sung or written. Why then do they both posit the necessity of future work in order to complete the projects they have undoubtedly started?

Xaba gives us a clearer idea of what may be hanging in the balance, of what work needs to be done in order to accede to the visions of the epic poems she wishes to write. The title of her poem, 'Tongues of their Mothers' as well as the caveat at the end give clues about what she is *still* trying to get at. The desire to "present the women in forms that match their foundations using metaphors of moments that defined their beings and similes that flow through the seasons of eternity" give us specifications about *how* she wants to go about producing these accounts (Xaba, 2008, p. 27). She insists on doing this in a way that honours the foundational

languages and metaphors that are connected to these women. This is about honouring the ontological and epistemological life worlds of those that she reveres. It is about finding a way to have those life worlds revealed and not obscured within the language she chooses to express herself with. Perhaps this is work that requires the hiatus that she etches into the end of the poem, for it means a different kind of immersion into the life worlds of those women she seeks to honour. Maybe what she has in mind requires a different expression of those life worlds than those she has successfully managed to conjure in this poem that is written in English.

What ensues from the caveat she provides at the end of the poem are questions that link to the thematic focus of transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis. This work requires the digging up and reclaiming of knowledge that sits unacknowledged as part of history, in this case crediting women with the recognition that they deserve. What follows in Xaba's poem is the power of being able to do this "in the tongues of their mothers" which is read as; through the languages in which these womens' mothers were immersed. It calls on a generous and rich engagement of the languages that their mothers used as an adequate way of celebrating who these women were. To use the language of their mothers is a different way to fully receive these women in history. This is an embrace that is couched in the epistemological and ontological life worlds of their mothers. It is not one that is defined from the outside, it is one that mobilises its own meaning-making at the heart of such an embrace. Xaba's last stanza left me wondering too if we have the capabilities to do this, if we are ready, and importantly, if we are not ready to do this yet, what will become of the alternative histories yet to be written in this way, and the knowledge embedded in them?

All this sparks a critical conversation about the work of excavation and finding "unexpected relics" that undoubtedly require wise powers of perception and how this ultimately leads to the work of representation (Hazeley, 1995). The poem asks us to consider and be careful about the ways we retell the stories we have reason to value. It is important to consider the embrace of language we use to describe the deeds we find, to observe the ontological foundations it reifies. This perspective, when seen in tandem with the ethic of decolonisation, means resourcing ourselves with ways of being and knowing that stem from other ontological foundations, to invite the nuance of other languages to speak to us about what can be learnt from that experience. We might lose these intimations that are contained there if we try and access this knowledge through a medium different to their foundational mother tongues. The

poems also leave us with something to consider on the language of English. As incomplete as this might be, this may be the only vantage point through which some of us can access some of the resources that come from digging up the archives. This leaves us with questions about how intergenerational transmissions occur across women's struggles, and the challenges in regeneration that emerge from this. In the next section we turn to an inquiry around intergenerational transmissions of this nature, and the complexities in translation that emerge from women's struggles over time.

4.3 Intergenerational Transmissions/ Intergenerational Translations

Honouring the cumulative efforts of women that have challenged the oppressions they have faced across time asks us to consider the nature of intergenerational transmissions that have been garnered, and what has been imparted going forward. This is an important aspect of women's struggles that we need to consider critically as a resource, but also as a tapestry in itself that can be read over time. In this section, we explore the role of intergenerational transmissions in furthering emancipatory struggles, and the ways in which transgressing shifts in iterations across times. The section hopes to sit squarely *in between* these articulations of emancipation and ask from this present space how the history of women's struggles and their chosen contributions have adapted over time. We start with a poem by Lourdes Teodoro who writes from the perspective of an older generation mother looking fearfully at her young children who have inherited a world filled with inequality, fear and uncertainty:

The Generation of Fear

Beyond the belt of the horizon
our wrists are squeezed
and without a word the clouds disperse further and further
squeezing our wrists.

our heads emptied
into the generations we brought into the world,
all anointed with prison lime.
our fruits grow without flavor or smell
and we accuse them of betraying the seed
but they, innocent, know nothing of betrayal.

they are the children of the generation of fear
and from the moment they saw the sun, it was already dark during daytime.
but from some order they got the courage
to walk in the streets with empty hands.

Our children are fruits that do not reflect
beyond the table where dinner happens
when they're not just the looks of a frightened lizard
hearing footsteps and hiding in the bushes on the look-out for their share of rubbish.

They are the children of the generation of fear
whose smothered scream blocked the artery,
and pressure was brought down
through the emptying out of thought.
They want flowers and hymns in my blood
but in my blood there is only blood
and fear of speaking out and fear of remaining silent

because our children

are our children
and we need them to be the children of their times
these times we have built
with silence and death.

without horizons, this time is cold
without horizons, this time is ugly
for our children.

It is necessary to plant the land now
when all has been forgotten so it can last.
like ancient oaks
just providing shadow.

The generation of fear files past and wants to think
wants to say, tell, recall.
Only history plants consciousness
in the opaque moment.
Desperate embroiderer, the generation of fear
hunts for scraps, dyes bits and pieces
and tries to build, shows its face and hands out of the old outburst.

How difficult it's become to be
but it was always difficult to be in vain.
(Teodoro, 1992, p. 382)

This poem pays homage to the 'underbelly' of struggle and modernity, especially from the perspective of mothers or parents who have in their lifetime been fearful and anxious for the survival of their young ones (Maldonado-Torres, 2008). It gives us a way of seeing into the parts of the speaker that have become weary, wondering what will become of this generation they have birthed. It begins by acknowledging the constricted nature of the existence that is lived. The phrase "wrists squeezed" evokes the image of hands being tied, whether literally or metaphorically, implying a loss of the ability to respond or to act from the generosity of one's free hands. The reference made about the clouds dispersing evokes an image of the scarcity of rain, perhaps implying that the hands are tied because of the lack of the sustenance of the land under such conditions. But the sense of loss of resources goes further in the second

stanza as the voice speaks of how her “head” has been “emptied” into the “generation we brought into the world”. It is as if they poured everything they had into this generation, who in turn are marked by “prison lime”, whether this is a metaphor that denotes the symbolic incarceration that they are born into, or alternatively the reality that prisons are full of these young people. They are described as fruit devoid of the fullness of its life force, somewhat anaemic “without flavor or smell”, born into a time of darkness which obscures the light that day should offer.

Despite the precarious nature of their being, the third stanza gives an inkling of something that is seeded in them to survive: “by some order they got the courage to walk the streets with empty hands”. There is a sense of will that imbues the action to walk the streets in search of something, anything that can sustain them, the “courage” to etch out an existence. The gesture of walking around with empty hands seems to make a demand; they want more than they have been born into, they want the welcoming nourishment of “flowers and hymns” in her blood but she does not have this to offer. She is trapped between the act of “speaking out” and “staying silent” and is involved in her own psychic impasse that has her negotiating whether she can risk staying silent, or whether she should risk speaking out. These trepidations speak to the threatening environment she is caught in.

She understands that this environment is what has given birth to this generation. The words “because our children are our children and we need them to be the children of their times” shows the imprint that her times have had on these children, whilst also asking questions about who they need to be in order to be able to respond to the questions of their own times. This for me asks questions about the passing of the baton and how this will be done in a time “without horizons” without the assurance of life, or succour for their unsatiated open hands.

The woman in the poem turns to the land in the tenth stanza, to do perhaps what she always has done; working with the land in ways that can eventually provide a “shadow” that can provide shade and rest in the future, a place away from the unrelenting sun. She turns back to the land in order to maintain it as a resource “so it can last”, even as the children walk in the streets, presumably away from this.

The last two stanzas begin to show what is rising in that generation. Not content with being emptied heads, “they want to think” “to say, tell” and “recall”. There is something that they

invigorate through their questions and longings. They do not want to remain in a stupor. The phrase “only history plants consciousness in the opaque moment” speaks to the work that they have to do in the present, in the thick opaqueness of their experience in order to understand what is happening and who they are. That ‘consciousness’ can only be found by engaging that “opaque moment” in history through their queries and desire to speak and recall. And they do demonstrate this deep desire to engage. The words “desperate embroiderer” shows the fervour of their actions to sew together whatever “scraps” they can find in order to try and build something in order to “show their face” out of the old “outburst” of history. This is the life of hustle, scratching out a living from anything they can; this is determination to put one’s hands to work and to stitch together what is useful and can be found. In the last sentences, she laments about “how difficult it has become to be” but in the same breath she affirms that no matter how difficult it has come to be, it is harder to feel that you are “in vain” that you have no purpose and are of no consequence. The last lines recognise that the “courage” to try and do something, anything, is perhaps a better recourse, because to be “in vain” would be much harder.

Teodoro’s poem speaks to inherited generational struggles and how “the generation of fear” begins to work with their experience as they go forward. The voice of the woman in this poem is markedly different from the defiant voices in ‘Liberation’. There is a resignation in her voice that leaves to the next generation the struggles they are “embroidering” a response to. This is another perspective on how what could not live or was unnamed in one generation could be taken up by the next one.

The hauntings that one generation can posit on another are also shared through contemporary poems written by Toni Stuart and Koleka Putuma. They share their encounters with the mirror, and what this brings up in terms of the intergenerational transmissions working their way through them. We begin with an extract from the poem ‘Spiegel Im Spiegel’ by Toni Stuart who shares her conversations with her mother’s memory through the reflections she sees in the mirror:

Spiegel Im Spiegel

II mirrors in the mirror

there are tears here i don't know
how to cry. tears i am afraid to let go of
because they built me, and if i cry them

i will be dismantled, limb from limb.
in every mirror, i see more than just myself.
to the right of me, and behind, the long line

of women i come from and the tears,
the tears that held their bodies together
sometimes until they died.

i watch my mother
wrestle the sadness in her, how it steals
the life from her breath. how she holds onto

things that no longer live, and her fear
that there will be nothing
of her left behind if she should cry.

we do not talk about her sadness.

my mother keeps trying to lose weight.
i wonder if she knows that tears are heavier than food?
i don't want to live in my mother's fear skin.

fear runs deep in our blood. fear and a nameless
shame we never speak of. my mother knows
something she is not telling me about our skin

about where we come from, but i'm afraid to ask.
i'm afraid she might come apart at the soft tears
the tears will make in her flesh.

i have always wished i was darker;
somewhere down this line, i must be
with my round cheekbones, flat nose and thick lips.

_Don't look in the mirror, _ my mother doesn't say.
all you will see is how thin you are not
_and how dark you are not, _

this is what i hear in her silence....
(Stuart, 2013)

In this poem Stuart describes the weight of trying to process what remains unspoken in the stories of her mother and all the women of her lineage. She begins by sensing something in her psyche that is seeking release, the contours of which are elicited through the uncried tears in her. While she acknowledges the need to cry these tears, she also knows this weeping as something withheld in past generations. More complex is the innate knowing that these uncried tears are in their own right a foundation that have “built her” and paradoxically

brought her to the place she is now. The generational tears are thus the platform on which she finds her grounding, as well as the 'fear' skin that seeks to shed itself in her own experience. She fears that the weight of the tears will pull her apart, because these tears are the confluence of generations of sadness, and they arrive with an intensity that is utterly overwhelming. These are the tears the women who lived before her and died still holding them.

She recounts the way her mother "wrestled sadness" throughout her life, and how there was no language between them that could speak of her grief or her fear. She does not want to live with this fear, and yet it remains in the uncried tears that threaten to rip her apart. She goes on to locate the coordinates of the origin of this grief and fear which might be connected to shame and a secret held within their family linked to their skin and how it came to be the colour it is. She knows there are many stories that chart the journey of her lineage and she wants to know the secrets embedded therein, but is "afraid to ask". She longs for the "dark" face hidden and unspoken for in her lineage of women, a secret repressed and muffled over time that arrives in her body as unprocessed grief and sadness. This poem speaks to intergenerational transmissions and the struggle to process that which has been silent and yet demands to be released in the present. It brings us back to the question of intergenerational translation (in the tongues of their mothers) and adds to it the experience of metabolising that which has been hidden across times in other ways beyond the language of words. These tears reach for the writer in the present moment as a way to express what has been unsaid over generations. The tears are thus an alternative expression of what cannot be pinned down through words. She interprets and dares to process her mother's silence and the silence of the women in her lineage and in doing so plays her own unique part in the long history of her people going forward. Whilst watching a live performance of this poem, Stuart remarked that it had fallen on her and many women of her generation to do the emotional work that her mothers and grandmothers could not do as they struggled for a better life for their children and their communities (Stuart, 2019). There is grace in being in a position where she and others can begin to attend to the emotional release of what has been held over generations. Her naming of this work marks a transition in intergenerational transmissions, one that attends to exiled aspects of one's wholeness that still insist on fulfilling themselves.

Koleka Putuma's poem 'Reincarnation' is also concerned with the generational laminations that she faces in the mirror:

Reincarnation

The mirror spits your grandmother back at you.
Her determined eyes.
Her machete mouth.
Her howling courage.
You are third-generation
Messiah
(Putuma, 2017, p. 20)

The pace and brevity of this poem jolts the psyche: something immense is recognised in a fleeting glance in the mirror. In it the memory of a grandmother is ‘spat’ back in bursts that recall her determination, her ferocity and her courage. The odysseys in her grandmother’s struggle are revealed in hot flashes through these descriptions. The poet recognises them, as well as herself as a “third-generation” vessel and vanguard of this legacy. In naming her place in the cycle she also names and enfolds the experiences of her mother calling her a messiah. This word has religious connotations of a Christ-like figure, a liberator who in many ways is an icon of great transmutation. One is enticed within this imagery to envision what these women did in their lifetimes and how they acted as spiritual resources and defiant conscionable presences for those around them. It also acknowledges the illumination brought by the women in her line, their sacred hearts and the liberatory paths they charted that paved the way for others. The poem positions its author as an inheritor of this legacy, whilst also pointing to an open trajectory in which she is playing her part in the long line of women that she carries with her. One is left wondering what her rendition of this inscribed role will be.

These two poems speak to the intergenerational impasses across generations, literally inhabited by the memory of the women gone past. Their lives and struggles come crashing into the present, asking questions about what it means to move forward together, because there is no place outside of the history of the lineages that ‘built’ you . As a rejoinder to these poems and perhaps a direct response to the voice of the assumed mother in ‘The Generation of Fear’, another poem ‘The Chain’ is offered. It animates the voice of a younger generation in response to the struggles inherited from grandmothers and mothers. This poem speaks back to the paralysis around whether to “speak out” or “stay silent” articulated by the voice in Teodoro’s poem. It marks the chosen transgressions/transmutations of a woman who is clear about her role in the wake of the long line of women behind her.

The Chain

I no longer care, keeping close my silence
has been a weight,
a lever pressing out my mind.
I want it told and said and printed down
the dry gullies,
circled through the muddy pools
outside my door.
I want it sung out high by thin voiced elders
front-rowing murky churches.
I want it known by grey faces queuing under
greyer skies in countries waking
and sleeping with sleet and fog.
I want it known by hot faces pressed against
dust-streaked windows of country buses.

And you must know this now.
I, me, I am a free black woman.
My grandmothers and their mothers
knew this and kept their silence
to compost up their strength,
kept it hidden
and played the game of deference
and agreement and pliant will.

It must be known now how that silent legacy
nourished and infused such a line,
such a close linked chain
to hold us until we could speak
until we could speak out
loud enough to hear ourselves
loud enough to hear ourselves
and believe our own words.
(Craig, 1992, p. 555)

In this poem Christine Craig opens up hidden places and spaces allowing what has been painfully imbibed and swallowed through generations to escape vehemently. Similar to the ‘The Generation of Fear’ who want to “speak, talk and recall”, she embodies a successive generation that is ready for the truth and affirmations of their own humanity to ring out, to be “sung”, in order to release the “weight that has been pressing on her mind for too long” across generations and into her experience. She proclaims her sovereignty and freedom in this poem. Her understanding that her right to do so comes from the inheritance of the silence imbued in her veins is poignant. The “deference, agreement and compliant will” strategically performed by her grandmothers and her mothers across generations have literally “nourished” her ability to take this stance in the present. In this way, her words echo what Stuart articulates as she tries to release the emotional charge of what has “built” her. She pays homage to the labour of those that have come before her whose works “infused” the possibilities embodied by her in this poem.

What I find beautiful about this poem is its ability to honour very different traditions of what the emancipatory struggle has meant for women. Instead of emphasising the negative effects of the ‘dumbing down’ that the generations before her strategically chose in order to “compost up their strength”, Craig acknowledges the act of “keeping their silence” as something that nurtured the possibility for her to arrive where she is today. The final line “to hold us until we could speak, to hold us until we could speak out” shows the levels of fierce and intimate nurture involved in the transmissions of this emancipatory ethic across generations. By caring deeply for the generations after them, this lineage nurtured them to find the strength of their own articulation; they provided a space where those that followed could practise hearing themselves so thoroughly, that they could begin to believe in the power of their own words.

It is interesting to see generational “crossroads” or “bridges” represented this way; a vital connection between generations can be preserved and released in ways that honour its source. It challenges us to read into whether the emancipatory struggles that are taken up in contemporary times are recognisable to our grandmothers, that is, whether they have preserved within them a kernel of the original ethic that formed the substrate of what they instinctively responded to, whether through their “composted silence” or through their “howling courage” (Putuma, 2017, p. 20). I say this intentionally calling back to the premises articulated at the beginning of this chapter. This is a question of how to stay connected to the transmissions seeded through time and the contemporary translations we engage in as part of that legacy.

In the poem ‘The Chain’ Craig deliberately positions herself within that chain of praxis inscribed over time. She decides to stick close to it and validate the way her mothers and grandmothers fostered and “composted” and seeded their emancipatory zeal within her. This, combined with the other poems ‘Women of Courage’, ‘Liberation’ and ‘Tongues of their Mothers’, gives us a picture of women attending to the emancipatory needs of the moment with the kind of devotion, care, strategy, brilliance and a fierce personal evolution that could indeed birth generations that could learn to “speak out” and “believe” their own important words. Understanding the ethic that underpins what has ‘built’ you and moving forward with this in ways that translate its aims and purposes in contemporary times is what I am tracing through these poems. This becomes important especially when we consider how “contemporary forms of globalized capitalism both harps upon affective and emotional

layers, cultural memories and aspirations of subjects” in ways that reconstruct them as “identity-bound pleasures that need to be consumed” (Braidotti, 2011, p. 274). Capitalism is insidious because it can take the emotional charge and cultural memory that underpins feminism(s), even African feminism(s), and make these resources faithful to the values of short-term profit and consumerism (Braidotti, 2011, p. 274). In this perspective, “moods and yearnings are both publicly expressed and commodified, mostly for the sake of biopolitical governance and adequate consumption, which entails a significant amount of distortion and even willful ignorance of the actual historical events” (Braidotti, 2011, p. 273). Within this perspective, some translations of African feminism(s) taken forward hold the veneer of the cultural memory they stem from without honouring an ethical through line that it demands. We are instead left with a consumer-based performance of feminism that can be unhinged from the ethical substrate that initially gave it life. The discernment needed to sense these insidious shifts are a necessary part of transgressive praxis work especially as they pertain to fostering a decolonial future, for we have to keep our eyes on the shifting terrain we are in, and consider seriously what it means to mobilise in alternative ways. Attending to intergenerational gaps and intergenerational translations that are dislocated from their source thus becomes important.

As a way of taking this conversation further, an exchange between Gogo Ngoatjakumba and Nomalanga Mkhize is shared below. Concerns about intergenerational exchange and generational gaps are brought to the fore:

NM: ... For me, this is all really about developing ways of speaking about gender and developing theory that makes sense for our context. I feel feminism, right now, cannot speak adequately for our context; yet, we need gender to be visible...

GN: Well, even intersectional feminism of right now does not seem to reach exactly the heart of our problem ...

NM: Is this not because at the heart of it, Black people face an economic problem and all the related psychoses, including the kind of income-neurotic households you describe, that we all know so well, cannot be adequately captured by our contemporary literati feminism... The Black condition just seems to overwhelm the theories that we currently have.

GN: Yes, the ones who are making the theories are the ones who are sipping wine – they get it, but they don’t get it. The ones who really get it tend to reject this English, they reject *isilungu*⁴⁴ We need to all be looking at this animal of the economy and the things it spawns.⁴⁵ You cannot do it with this individually driven ‘My Feminism’. We do not want to really confront the true effects of the economy on Black people, we are

⁴⁴ *Isilungu* means English in isiZulu.

⁴⁵ The direct words that Gogo used in isiZulu were ‘*lesis’hwane namachawe aso*’ which means ‘this beast and its spawn’.

in the belly of the crocodile. We do not want to really understand this economic monster that has swallowed us into its inside. We do not want to truly face what it has made us become. Of course, I will admit, I have stopped reading theory because I am so tired of English.

NM: I think the earlier generations of Black feminists – both in theorizing and in fiction – were able to articulate this mess that is made of us. But as with you, I often feel that my generation does not fully grasp what the condition is right now.

...

NM: So, are we going to have to re-theorise feminism for today?

GN: What we need to do is to re-theorise ourselves, because the current definitions of who we are, where we think we come from, where we think we want to go – we need to look at that again. (Mkhize, 2018, pp. 149-150)

This aspect of ‘re-theorising’ ourselves (or as Ogundipe-Leslie would put it “re-creating ourselves”) remains an important question in the intergenerational renewal of women’s struggles on this continent, and how these are inextricably linked with the economic injustices, extreme levels of psycho-social and gender-based violence and the social and spiritual fragmentations that it perpetuates (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994). Interestingly enough, language shows up again as a vital part of how to honour the roots of the struggles women have been part of in the conversation between Mkhize and Gogo Ngoatjakumba. Inferred in their exchange is the role of the discriminatory use of English in the translation of these struggles across time, and how the efforts to articulate the contemporary situation that we find ourselves in eludes a discourse that is solely formulated in English. Pamela Maseko substantiates this point:

... Words themselves are not random, but are craftily selected to reflect the manner in which social beings make sense of their surroundings. In other words, the manner in which things are given names reflects society’s thought about those things.

... while language as a means of communication is important, it is not as important as the knowledge, ideas and wisdom embedded in the language itself. (Maseko, 2018, p. 41)

There is something about the constructions of oneself, one’s community and one’s purpose that is carried through indigenous African languages that often does not translate adequately through the use of English. Something is lost in translation that fails to give us the tools we need in contemporary times to further the work initiated in decolonial ways. As a way of looking back into the particularities of our grandmothers’ lineages compared with what is articulated in contemporary struggle, we can consider the poem ‘Lineage’ by Margaret Walker. The poem is poised as a query that seeks important answers to the questions of how we honour the lineage we come from, and how we currently experience ourselves in the wake of that legacy:

Lineage

My grandmothers were strong.
They followed plows and bent to toil.
They moved through fields sowing seeds.
They touched earth and grain grew.
They were full of sturdiness and singing.
My grandmothers were strong.

My grandmothers are full of memories
Smelling of soap and wet clay
With veins rolling roughly over quick hands
That have many clean words to say.
My grandmothers were strong.
Why am I not as they?
(Walker, 1992, p. 266)

The poem registers a kind of nostalgic dislocation and a question about where her grandmother's presence is within her. It strikes me that the poem makes many references to how her grandmothers' connection with the land was fundamental to their praxis. It echoes the voice of the mother in Teodoro's poem that spoke of going "back to the land" even if her children choose to wander the streets openhanded. The relationship with the land is explored in rich metaphors about what it means to sustain and regenerate life. Walker questions why she is not like those before, as if these ways of being are outside her everyday praxis. This makes me recall a memory my own mother shared with me: when she was young, as she excelled at school, her father sought to relieve her from the work in the fields by telling her half-brothers and sisters and cousins that "*jembe yake ni kalamu*".⁴⁶ It is interesting to think about the shift in relationship to the land that this meant in my mother's life compared to her own mother's life. Moreover, it is a powerful statement for the work my mother was expected to do through her education; she in turn was planting something, regenerating something through her work. This also has implications for the intergenerational knowledge that I inherited, and the adjoining implications of what my work should create. I also wonder about the unharvested resources that sit in its archives within these intergenerational transmissions and translations. In other words what could my grandmother do with her work and what am I doing with my work as it stands? How can I make present what might be missing and necessary across these experiences? Going back to the poem by Walker, her question about why she is not like her grandmothers probably also stems from a change in the land-based praxis that anchored their everyday life as well as the language they used "in the tongues of

⁴⁶ This statement in KiSwahili is my grandfather's explanation of why my mother was not out tending to the fields like the rest of her siblings. The direct translation is 'her hoe (for digging) is her pen'.

their mothers” that held their own understanding of who they were and their contribution to the life of their community and relations.

Babalwa Magowana adds to this conversation by acknowledging the institutional knowledge embedded in the knowledge of grandmothers (Magoqwana, 2018, p. 76). In her thesis the isiXhosa noun *uMakhulu*⁴⁷ is used rather than the English word ‘grandmother’ as a way of “contributing to local concepts rather than adopting imposed categories, theories and paradigms” (Adesina, 2006, in Magoqwana, 2018, p. 76). Her contributing chapters in a recent text on decolonizing African pre-colonial historiography she asserts that:

I position *uMakhulu* as the ‘body’ of indigenous knowledge, from which ideas about history, leadership, and survival do indeed flow. *uMakhulu* forms the centre of what we know and how we know in many African households and directly contributes to the epistemic foundations of knowledge with spirituality as part of ‘knowing’ in her institution....

uMakhulu hence provides an inclusive and well-rounded approach to knowing, without segmenting and disconnecting it to everyday life. For instance, her teaching on environmental awareness through recycling in African households is indicative of the institution seeing the environment, society, and spirituality as a connected unit. Recycling of goods (clothes, tins, and saving water) has been part of this institution long before we knew about its ‘environmental benefits’... this is a form of pedagogy, which practically helps us deal with enduring challenges that have shaped our ‘body of knowledge’ by contributing to imagining new forms of knowing. (Magoqwana, 2018, p. 79, p. 85)

It is wonderful to see how the work of grandmothers is being reclaimed in the literature, through poetry and analysis, and through the strategic use of language. This helps us with the task of re-creating ourselves by giving us other ontological and epistemological roots that define where it is that we come from and the assistance that is available to us should we choose to resource ourselves with alternative visions of where we come from, and where we hope to lead ourselves to. These contributions ask us how we can influence our praxis in the present moment by remembering where it is that we come from. Again, it asks us to consider the ethics and through-line of the transgressive impulses we can consciously initiate as a part of this legacy. To be clear, this is not about imitating the struggles of those that have gone before us; it is rather about understanding the ontological roots of that struggle and being aware of how contemporary iterations of feminism(s) may advance ethics – as compelling as they might be – that can betray this. This is also not to say that struggles cannot *redefine*

⁴⁷ This word in isiXhosa denotes a senior mother or an elder mother which holds a different local resonance to ‘grandmother’ in English.

themselves over time; it is simply a reminder of what has and continues to be endured and the kind of collective resources that have consistently tried to meet the socio-economic and psycho-social violence and burdens that continue to be prevalent in society and that women, in particular, experience and often mitigate for many. Within this, there is a need to stay present with the issues as they present themselves in contemporary times, and not *theorise ourselves away* from these everyday realities, especially if we are privileged enough to not have to bear the cold front of these burdens. In the simple words of Rupi Kaur, staying faithful to intergenerational struggles whilst addressing them, rooted in one's own time, depends on how honestly we can respond to the queries embedded in her poem 'Legacy':

Legacy
i stand
on the sacrifices
of a million women before me
thinking
what can i do
to make this mountain taller
so the women after me
can see farther?
(Kaur, 2017, p. 213)

The objective of the work she seeks to do is set out in the last sentence: “to make this mountain taller so the women after me can see farther”. Inscribed in this objective is the desire to build on what has come before and to be a vessel through which the intergenerational transmissions or the “sacrifices” she has benefitted from, can be furthered for those coming after her. In her own way Kaur asks questions about how she can be faithful to this legacy but within this she adds a point of speculation around what would be useful, around what would best honour the legacy that has put her in the position she is in, whilst also serving those yet to come. The answers to “what can I do” emerge in different ways for women who have perceived the privilege and responsibility of having such a baton passed to them. The next section points to the different ways that women have responded to these questions, and the implications that their chosen praxis has on our understandings of what transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis looks like in the wake of these choices. We turn to works that present their choices in the next section, specifically highlighting what women have chosen to unlearn and learn as part of playing their part in the emancipatory struggles that have fostered them.

4.4 Divestment, Recalibration and Resurgence

As a way of contextualising the terrain from which some women's choices in divestment and recalibration stem, Koleka Putuma assists us again by giving us a sense of the circumstances from which she chooses to assert particular versions of herself going forward. In the poem 'Graduation' she asks questions about what it means to 'recreate' oneself or come home to oneself, whilst being keenly aware of the intergenerational struggles and ontological legacies that have fostered her.

Graduation

You will leave your parents' nest
Cultivate familiar traditions borrowed from your childhood
You will realise none of it is new or yours
You will work and send money home
You will work and not send money home
Earning money will earn you a seat at the grown-ups' table
Contributing financially will allow you to open your mouth at the grown-ups' table
But you will still watch your mouth at the grown-ups' table
When you return home
You will slip into roles you have outgrown
Because it is easier than explaining
Your parents will get older
You will want to work harder so they can retire early
When your parents visit
You will prepare their room
And hide all the things they probably know or suspect about you
Your mother will offer to help with the cooking
The way she chops onions is loaded with questions
You both have not mastered how to chop onions without crying
Chopping onions that way is how you have difficult conversations
You have both learned how to dance on graves
Without mourning what is dead or lost between you
Eventually
When your mother asks
Where you left the things she gave you
You will want to say, *I am unlearning them*
But unlearning is not a real place or destination
So you will choose to say you don't know and apologise out of habit
You will realise your lovers gave you their mothers stuff, too
And that maybe *unlearning* should be a place
And all the womxn in your family should gather there more often
Until unlearning is a tradition you can pass onto your children
Until chopping onions is not an occasion
Until you know how to hold each other
At funerals and inconvenient occasions
As you get older
You will attend more funerals
Than weddings or 21sts
You will attend more baby showers than birthday parties
At family gatherings
You and your cousins will do the things your aunties used to do
Your baby cousins who are not babies anymore
Will sit and drink ciders with you
Talking sense finally
Time will have bridged a gap in some places

And poured an ocean in others
 The elders will ask you to help them understand what you do
What you do is another way of saying *job*
 When answering
 They will nod in agreement with confused eyes and pursed lips
 Then respond with
You know in my time...
 The elders will no longer send you out of the room
 When unresolved family traumas ruin dinners
 You will want to facilitate
 Using a language of grieving that will be foreign to them
 You will realise the elders in the room
 Learned the alphabet of hurting and falling apart differently
 For you, healing looks like talking and transparency
 For them it is silence and burying
 And both are probably valid

And
 Then
 You will realise
 That
 Coming home
 And
 Going home
 Do not mean the same thing.
 (Putuma, 2017, pp. 35-37)

This poem charts desired breaks and evolution through some of the legacies that elders have passed on. In it we hear an almost rote and interminable list of the commitments the poet grew to perform as a responsible adult within the family. A sense of ambivalence, and disquiet is raised around the inevitability of some of the ‘traditions’ she is enfolded into. It begins with marking the important threshold of leaving one’s family “nest” and the way in which the traditions that bore you follow you on your way out. The words “you will realise that none of it is new or yours” shows a reflection on the traditions that one has imbibed as being neither novel nor particularly significant to her, something she can consider indifferently and which trails at her feet as she moves.

She stuck to her duties, in particular, sending money back home to contribute to the sustenance of her homestead whilst acknowledging that this does not always happen. She admits how she sometimes fall short of the role expected of her: “you will work and not send money home”. Through this, the poet signals her relationship with “black tax”, which refers to how people of colour in particular send money home to provide much needed subsistence. Masana Ndinga-Kanga writes about the prevalence of black tax in South Africa which I believe to be relevant to the way it works across the continent and the world:

The beneficiaries of affirmative action, education and employment are often still intimately connected to those who made it possible for them to earn higher levels of income. The problem is not that their families need income subsidies, but that South Africa's continued capitalist system has further created structures that perpetuate poverty and make the need for black tax a reality. In this context, black tax does the real work of income redistribution in South Africa. It also does the work of skills transfer, emotional support, social cohesion and resiliency building that the state has attempted and failed to do for survivors of apartheid and their offspring. (Ndinga-Kanga, 2019, p. 1)

The voice in the poem speaks about how sending money home in this way elevates one's status in the household: it will "earn you a seat at the grown-ups table". The theme of "graduation", the title of the poem, deepens: by sending money home, she moves from being a child or dependant at home to someone who can sit with the grown-ups and potentially even be granted the opportunity to "open [her] mouth at the grown-up's table". However, even though she has made it there, she does not really feel that she can fully express herself. She "still" watches her "mouth" when she is sitting there. Through this description, one imagines her sitting wide-eyed, absorbing what is happening in a place she previously was not allowed to be. She is wary of not overstepping her mandate, she listens cautiously, but does not have 'permission' to express herself fully in this place.

In the next series of descriptions, we gain insight into a different sense of self the character inhabits outside of the roles she performs in her home. She writes about how "returning home" causes her to "slip into roles she has "outgrown", that going back home requires a very particular performance of oneself that is "easier than explaining"; it is less taxing somehow to go with the learnt culture that assigns everybody a role than to begin to assert something different than what is expected of her.

Time passes in the poem, and her parents get even older. The desire to work even harder is expressed here, so that she can send enough money home to help her parents retire comfortably. But now there is a reversal of the dynamic of going to the family home: instead her parents arrive into her space for a visit. She prepares their room and "hides all the things they know or suspect about" her. This is a powerful image, one in which we see how what is expected of her limits alternatives, or more poignantly, an authentic expression of herself. Whilst these omissions might be done out of a kind of respect to the legacy that produced her, in the poem they produced a stifling, an impasse keenly felt. There is a reification of the mundane task of chopping onions. She intimates that the way her mother chops onions "is

loaded with questions” as if each percussive stroke of the knife slicing through the onion beating the edge of the cutting board is part of an extended inquiry reaching towards her. In this description one can imagine the younger woman recoiling at what remains unsaid in this unusual interrogation, but we also see how she participates in this exchange, for they both “have not mastered how to chop onions without crying”. The reference to crying is a wonderful double play on what onions actually do. This could also allude to how this loaded practice is a substitute for what cannot be cried or shed. By performing the task of chopping onions, they weep publicly and discreetly about what remains unsaid between them. This reification of the work of chopping onions is profound for it is the way they “have difficult conversations”. What is left unsaid between them is alluded to in the next sentences, for they have “both learned to dance on graves without mourning what is dead or lost between [them]”. The losses incurred and unspoken in their relationship have led to this impasse where there were not sufficient words, flow or currency of any sort with which to move their intergenerational learnings and knowings through iterations that can digest the vast distance between them.

The silence between them is finally broken by the question that her mother asks her: ‘where did you leave the things that I gave you?’ is loaded, carrying the symbolic weight of all the intergenerational transmissions that have been handed down. There are many things that she has been given, including the spiritual, psycho-social, cultural and material elements that her mother herself struggled for and maintained. The young woman’s wants to utter the response “I am unlearning them”, this is a powerful rejoinder to the choices that women make around what to carry forward and what needs to be laid to rest. Here another kind of composting is suggested, one in which the younger woman in the poem is deciding slowly who she wants to be. The fact that she does not say these words out loud but simply thinks them spells out the hidden presence of the intergenerational breaks and shifts already mobilising themselves. Her unspoken words somehow seem inadequate to her at that time. She wonders if “unlearning” can be considered a real place at all – is it something she can speak of together? She chooses instead to abandon this response and instead “apologise[s] out of habit”, but we as witnesses to the poem know that there is learning underway that cannot be curtailed. She recounts the way in which this “unlearning” has already been taking place, “between loving and leaving [her] lovers” as if each encounter and parting has allowed her to shed some aspects of the skin she did not want to bear any longer. She reflect on this learning further realising that it is not only her who has had been carrying her mother’s stuff around, but her lovers too arrive

with the baggage of the transmissions that they received. At this juncture she almost takes back her cowering apology and instead begins to assert “that maybe unlearning should be a place”, that beyond the understanding of the commitments one is expected to perform, there should also be a place in which “unlearning’ is also allowed to play its part. That it should be named as a *legitimate* space and that “womxn in [the] family should gather there more often”. That there ought to be a place where womxn should collectively take stock of what needs to be released and what no longer serves. She asserts that this practice should in itself become “a tradition you can pass onto your children”, so that “chopping onions” does not become “an occasion” to speak of. She raises the image of a place where womxn in the family can learn other relational languages to hold the complexity of the experiences they have collectively endured.

The voice in the poem becomes even older, and her cousins and begin to “do the things their aunties used to do”. They become the ones that are looked to expectantly by the younger generation. Their ‘baby cousins’ “sit and drink ciders” with them. The next sentence “talking sense finally” arrives as a kind of relief in the poem, a place where an intelligible and mutual communal exchange is fostered between her and her baby cousins. The poignant phrase “time will have bridged a gap in some place and poured an ocean in others” contemplates how as the distance between her and her younger cousins lessens the gulf between her and her mother’s generation continues to widen. It is a painful admission of what cannot be bridged in some relationships and what can in others. Even still, she continues to trace the nature of the dislocations between her and the generation of the elders.

She tries to share what she does for a living, but knows that the constructions of a “job’ that they are most familiar with might make it hard for them to get what it is that she actually does or who she actually is. They look at her “nodding in agreement with confused eyes and pursed lips”, a gesture that reveals both a fervent desire to really understand what is being shared with them, and simultaneously perplexity and bewilderment about what she is actually saying. The elders are captured in this image as not really getting it, trying to reach for what she is saying, and putting into conversation with what they used to do “in [their] time”. This exchange is characteristically endured and not resolved as with many of the exchanges between the elders and the younger woman throughout the poem. As the reader, one becomes accustomed to this impasse, straining to hear and express what has meaning across these generations.

Finally, the poet names some of the enduring differences between the generation of her elders and her ways of being. Even though she has graduated to the extent that she is no longer sent “out of the room when unresolved family traumas ruin dinners” she finds that the way that she wants to attend to these traumas is so intrinsically different to the way that they have dealt with this over generations. She wants to “facilitate using a language of grieving that will be foreign to them”, but she in turn realises that “the elders in the room learned the alphabet of hurting and falling apart differently” – they have different ways in which they hold the pain and confusion that life has offered them. The aspect of being foreign to each other is a potent one. Even though they were collectively responding to the same trauma, they cannot fully understand and fold into each other’s expressions of grief and the need for healing. She goes on to say, for her “healing looks like talking and transparency... for them, it is silence and burying”. These two reactions talking or silence, and transparency or burying are polar opposites; they are seemingly deep contradictions in the impulse to heal between these generations. They have survived trauma in completely different ways, owing to their different histories and cultural socialisations. Putuma accepts these contradictions as both ways of doing this “are probably valid”. Here we are left to perceive the weight and intentions of these very different responses and to admit they both have their value in different times and circumstances.

The poem ends with a clear and tired resignation that charts the frustrated efforts of the young woman in the poem has sustained throughout the stifled trajectories of the poem. She resigns herself to her own understanding of what remains missing in her own experience of working through family dynamics in her own perspective: “And then you will realise that coming home and going home do not mean the same thing”. In this resignation she differentiates between returning to her ancestral home and being a part of the family with the imagined relief that truly “coming home” to herself could bring. This tension is one that is unresolved in the poem, one that eludes resolution, a sentiment shared when one has tried all manner of things but still finds parts of oneself exiled by the expected commitments and performance of themselves one is limited to in one’s family. The poem seems to mark the fertile beginnings of the transgressions she needs to make in that lineage, not for lack of respect for what has come before, but as a way of fulfilling another language for what it means to attend to the generational challenges and questions about the world that she holds in her time. What is irreconcilable in the poem leads us away and into another way of being that she seeks to find the strength to inhabit privately as well as publicly within the constellation of her family.

This poem is very useful in speaking to the context in which generational shifts occur. Putuma puts us into a place where we can feel the weight of knowledge carried in different generational experiences and the sheer lack of air that compounds into the necessity for “unlearning” as an important aspect of intergenerational transmissions. She gives a context for some of the reasons why the politics of strategic divestment and recalibration are so much a part of women’s struggles over time. What it means to transgress over time changes based on the arising desires and choices of women in the present in the full knowledge of the choices that those who have gone before them have made.

A poem that takes the theme of unlearning further and specifically names the divestments that the character seeks to make is ‘The Bridge’. The poem emerges out of a collection of writings by radical black women of colour entitled ‘The Bridge that is my Back’ (2015). In it we hear spoken out loud another rendition of what it means to be the bridge or the crossroads that was revealed in the first section of this chapter. At this juncture, the responsibility and power of being the bridge or the crossroads is not venerated as an intense function that women play within society; it is instead critically expounded as a way of being that can curtail the development and evolution of herself and others.

The Bridge Poem

I’ve had enough
I’m sick of seeing and touching
Both sides of things
Sick of being the damn bridge for everybody

Nobody
Can talk to anybody
Without me right?
I explain my mother to my father my father to my little sister
My little sister to my brother to the white feminists
The white feminists to the Black church folks the Black church folks
To the ex-hippies the ex-hippies to the Black separatists the
Black separatists to the artists the artists to my friends’ parents...

Then I’ve got to explain myself
To everybody

I do more translating than the Gawdamn UN

Forget it
I’m sick of it

I’m sick of filling your gaps

Sick of being your insurance against
The isolation of your self-imposed limitations
Sick of being the crazy at your holiday dinners

Sick of being the odd one at your Sunday Brunches
Sick of being the sole Black friend to 34 individual white people

Find another connection to the rest of the world
Find something else to make you legitimate
Find some other way to be political and hip

I will not be the bridge to your womanhood
Your manhood
Your human-ness

I'm sick of reminding you not to
Close off too tight for too long

I'm sick of mediating with your worst self
On behalf of your better selves

I am sick of having to remind you
To breathe
Before you suffocate
Your own fool self
Forget it
Stretch or drown
Evolve or die

The bridge I must be
Is the bridge to my own power
I must translate
My own fears
Mediate
My own weaknesses

I must be the bridge to nowhere
But my true self
And then
I will be useful.
(Rushin, 2015, p. xxiv)

This poem is a vehement shedding of the 'superpowers' that radical women of colour have incurred over generations. These powers have previously been used to cater to the needs of all those around them, sometimes intercepting and carrying the burden of those who ought to be doing more. This builds on the voice of Putuma, by asking questions about what it means to "come home" to oneself, and what the role of women in emancipatory struggles can be in this regard. The poem peels layers off with dexterity. It names in succession what she no longer willing to perform as a bridge. The far-seeing ability to be everything to everyone is seen here as something that can be abused, something that cause endless distraction from other critical work that she could be doing.

She begins by speaking candidly about the burden of being able to see and "touch both sides of things" which infers the ability to have a wide-ranging perspective that goes beyond the

binaries and boundaries that others stagnate around. In the poem she is implicated as an unwilling bridge for many people that are cleaved apart. She chronicles her mediation role intergenerationally within her family between her father, her little sister and her brother. But this role spilled over to white feminists, to black church folks, to ex-hippies, to black separatists ... the list continues. It seems there is always some misunderstanding between different factions and her way of seeing and bridging has become something that is relied upon. This endless work has her running from pillar to post. She wants to reject the role of filling the expanse between others, a role that probably had much to do with historical legacies. Black women have been bound by the work of attending to the myriad needs of their communities. The voice in the poem rails against the ways in which this role has manifested itself in her lifetime; she is exhausted from the demands of affording this service to many disparate factions. She “is sick of filling in” other people’s gaps. I find it very interesting that she can indeed do this work; she has done it over years (maybe even over generations) and that many have come to rely on her for it.

The reasons why she chooses to change the script stems from an understanding of what an over reliance on this role has created around her. The eighth stanza describes how she feels the kind of work that she has been doing produces a kind of inertia. Her way of being has inevitably become an “insurance” policy that protects many against their own “self-imposed limitations”. Despite this endless and potentially invisible work, she still ends up being the “crazy” at “holiday dinners”. The sense of strange isolation and not fitting in is somewhat similar to the loneliness that Putuma shared about going home. Something about being the “odd one” at “Sunday Brunches whether with family or friends, and the scapegoating and derision that comes with this. She goes further to notice that sometimes she is the “sole black friend to 34 individual white people”. She has become the exception, the person that can be relied on to be there and (this is key) she does this to her *own detriment* – there is no indication that those that she is collaborating with actually accede to the bridging work needed of them in the world. They have become accustomed to some levels of bypassing the commitment needed from them to address the issues of the times. They have become reliant on someone having to explain to them ad infinitum and being consummately there to mediate “their worst [selves] on behalf of their better [selves]”. The character in the poem is waking up to the need for all those mentioned to play a greater role in their own liberation and to facilitate the important conversations and relationships in order to truly evolve. She sees how her proficiency as a bridge across vast terrains stifles the ability of others to rise to the

occasion of their own evolution. And here she passes the verdict that they have been avoiding: “stretch or drown evolve or die”. This shedding of the prescribed role of being everything to everyone is an interesting one to consider. It turns on its head the premises of the first poem in this chapter. “Women of Courage” showed the propensity for women who mobilise and care on so many different levels: those that are “dying with the sum of that knowledge”. It is interesting that the words are “dying” with the sum of knowledge and not “living”. There is certainly so much work to be done and in ‘The Bridge’ there is a underlying assertion that this work must be done with others – each strategically shouldering responsibility. Here we see some aspects of that weighty knowledge being shed, albeit with a caveat at the end of the poem that clarifies the chosen movement going forward.

The bridge that I must be is the bridge to my own power
 I must translate
 My own fears
 Mediate
 My own weaknesses
 I must be the bridge to nowhere
 But my true self
 And then
 I will be useful.
 (Rushin, 2015, p. xxiv)

These last two stanzas of ‘The Bridge’ reveal the new movement she is choosing, one that is able to give herself enough attention to masticate her own “fears” and “weaknesses”. She wants to attend to what is unintegrated in her, to do the work to arrive fully as herself in the world. It is her “true self” that she seeks to turn to now, and this turn crucially will make her “useful”. The choice of the word “useful” keeps an element of service to the work that she seeks to proffer and serves as a rejoinder to Kaur’s question “what can I do...?” (Kaur, 2017, p. 213).

The question or balance that this review keeps circling is how to conceive of the emancipatory struggles of women in Africa and the diaspora without collapsing into the tenets of a very western conceptualised feminism and/ or the neo-liberal laminations it produces. In the light of these questions how can we begin to reconcile the assertions to be a “bridge to nowhere but my true self”, a sentiment contemporarily apparent in my view. The symbolic shift away from the generational weight of serving everyone *in ways that erode the lifeforce of women themselves* towards an ethic that firstly seeks to nourish and foster a deeper knowledge of oneself in ways that can position one to offer one’s gifts to the world is

a significant one. There can be no doubt that this shift is built on the “sacrifices” of those that have come before us; however, there is a turn being asked for within this praxis that asks: what can be achieved when women step into their own power and cultivate their contributions to the world by being in alignment with the forces and gifts that lie within them? The bridges that women make back to themselves contribute to new horizons of praxis firstly amongst themselves, and inevitably to their communities. The privilege of attending to one’s own journey and evolution can reseed new possibilities that will be useful for many others on successive legs of the journey to come. It is in fact this privilege that has produced many of the poems that have served as theoretical compasses in this review. The call here is to journey forward through time reinvigorating the historical devotion and labour of women with a praxis that allows a different manifestation of the powers that we have become accustomed to expecting. This is a resurgence of the power of the feminine into articulation of itself that gets to the heart of the questions and presuppositions it chooses for itself deliberately ,outside the traditional dictates of what is expected. This should not be confused with narcissism or a triumph over others, or ‘narrow individualism’, but is rather a way of acceding to new visions of what can be brought forth in ways that ultimately enrich society as a whole (hooks, 2000, p. 78). This is an affirmation of a future that is bound to be different to the ways in which such efforts have presented themselves in the past.

The chosen transitions or movements from one aspect of generationally inscribed roles towards a vision of something else that is desired is traced in Malika Ndlovu’s poem ‘Struggle to Surrender’. Here she traces many movements from what one has intrinsically known or inherited towards other ways of being waiting to be explored. These ways of being chart the discovery of new territories that she is inching towards.

Struggle to Surrender

From struggle to surrender
 Blood to breath
 From thought to feeling
 Ideas to senses
 From mind to gut
 Desperation to inspiration
 From conditioning to dreaming
 Strategy to impulse

From warring to loving
 Difference to oneness
 From doubt to believing
 Questions to silence
 From distrust to faith

Insecurity to equilibrium
 From worry to joy
 Frowns to laughter

 From exhaustion to enthusiasm
 Dragging to dance

 Body to being
 From imprisonment to liberation
 From attachment to freedom
 Judgement to acceptance
 From anchoring to flight
 Holding on to letting go

 From known to unknown
 Roots to wings
 (Ndlovu, 2004, p. 133)

The movements that Ndlovu traces in her poem carry her from one way of creating and responding to the world to another. Each line carries with it an impulse towards an extension of sorts, a stretching out of the senses beyond what one has been used to. We see her move from the intensity of “struggle” towards a state of “surrender”. Here the constant push against the grain, is substituted with an expansive openness experiences through surrender. The intensity of work that is created from the “blood” coursing through one’s veins shifts towards the allowance and intake of “breath” to infuse one’s being. Excessive “thought”, “ideas” and the “dictates” of the mind are released to give way to a landscapes of feelings and senses driven by the “gut”. This is a movement into the body in the fullness of its knowing. The “erotic knowledge” of the subject takes the fore beyond the previously creative hyperrational prowess. She wants to trust her “impulse” and forego the endless calculations of “strategy” (Lorde, 2007, p. 59).

She acknowledges the feeling of “desperation” and “conditioning” as an impulse and wants to experiment rather with what “inspiration” and “dreaming” can offer. Her transitions take her from an atmosphere of “warring” into the terrain of “loving” as a place that she can work from, and here the decision to move from an emphasis on “difference” towards “oneness” is affirmed. She tries to still cascading “doubts” into the “anchor”(age) of what it means to “believe”. The “questions” and “insecurities” held are asked to dissolve into “silence” and “equilibrium”, a place where “faith” takes precedence over “distrust”. She invites “joy” and “laughter” to take its rightful place. And she continues to desire that “exhaustion” and “dragging” give way to “enthusiasm” and the beauty of her own “dance”. She is moving into a sense of her own “liberation” and “freedom” foregoing the cramped and clinging states of

“imprisonment” and “attachment”. She seeks to “accept” more rather than “judge”, to “let go” where she has “held on” for too long. She is “flying” where she has been “grounded” for too long, she moves from what she has “known” to somewhere else, “unknown” and vast. The “roots” that have stayed close to the ground give way to “wings”: she is soaring where once she moved bound to the earth. The roots of her struggle are finding new wings and travelling to a different place altogether.

This poem is an intimate release and a reconfiguration of the axis through which the voice was previously configured. She dares to find new coordinates from which to make her offerings to the world, shifting past very necessary and sticky encumbrances that have only taken her so far and impede her thriving and the creation of the world on her own terms. Lorde sees her move towards her erotic knowledge as “an assertion of the life force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work and our lives” (Lorde, 2007, p. 55). The poem describes a chosen chrysalis and the different ways she seeks to break through to the world with the essence of her soul intact. It is a way of regenerating and re-imagining a resource gained over time by consciously shifting it into a new iteration. The promise of resurgence is intimated through these movements, it entails the emergence of new praxis on behalf of the future that is paradoxically linked to the field of knowledge and ways of being, that presided over the past. There is a through-line presented in these transitions, that asks questions about what one is in a position to do now, from the “sacrifices” and learning gained from the past. It is a treatise to learn from, honour but not be *defined* by past historical experiences. It is an endeavour to arrive in revived ways in the present. Clarissa Pinkola Estés defines this kind of learning as a kind of processing that is able to create new things:

... the psyche is a grinder of ideas; it masticates concepts and breaks them down into usable nourishment. It takes in raw material, in the form of ideas, feelings, thoughts, and perceptions, and breaks them open in ways that makes them usable for our nourishment.

This psychic ability is often called processing. When we process, we sort through all the raw material in the psyche, all the things we’ve learned, heard and longed for, and felt during a period of time. We break these down into parts asking “How shall I use this best?” We use these processed ideas and energies to implement our most soulful tasks and to fund our various creative endeavours. In this way a woman remains both sturdy and lively. (Pinkola Estés, 1992, p. 397)

This aspect of grinding raw material and transforming it into “soulful” creative tasks is akin to what is demonstrated in Ndlovu’s poem. In it she is moving and milling through ideas, feelings and thoughts deposited into her psyche, and tries to transmute them towards what is “useful” for her nourishment, her work and her life going forward. Estés describes this transformation and what it ultimately generates:

For many women the transformation from feeling oneself swept away or enslaved by every idea or person who raps at her door to being a woman shining with *La Destina*, possessed of a deep sense of her own destiny, is a miraculous one. With eyes on straight, palms outward, with the hearing of the instinctual self-intact, the woman goes into life in this new and powerful manner. (Pinkola Estés, 1992, p. 450)

Here we see what the injunction to being “a bridge towards oneself” can ideally produce. It can be a calling to produce one’s own destiny and in so doing produce alternative destinies for the world. This coupled with the desire to create and consciously bring to life that which is yet “unknown” unseen or hidden within the over culture, that which has been sidelined as a viable way of being, is a practice of transgression that does indeed birth new worlds. Estés invites those on who are on the verge of these transgressive breakaways to gather themselves in ways that resonate strongly with the meaning that has been brought together in this chapter. Her remarks below serve as a poignant and succinct way to trace some of what has been emerging in this chapter:

... if you are on the verge of breaking away, taking a risk – daring to act in proscribed ways, then dig up the deepest bones possible, fructifying the wild and natural aspects of women, of life, of men, of children, of earth...

She must shake out her pelt, strut the old pathways, assert her instinctual knowledge. We can all assert membership in the ancient scar clan, proudly bear the scars of our time, write our secrets on walls, refuse to be ashamed, lead the way through and out...

... Let us keep in mind that the best cannot and must not hide. Meditation, education, all the dream analysis, all the knowledge of God’s green acre is of no value if one keeps it all to oneself or one’s chosen few. So come out, wherever you are. Leave deep footprints because you can. (Pinkola Estés, 1992, pp. 459, 460)

Within this patchwork of quotes we are reminded about the power of excavation as part of the transgressive journeys we choose to take, the closeness we need to assert towards sensibilities that might be proscribed but are a necessary part of the unheard assertions that all those around you and behind you possess in exile. She reminds us this can be done while still asserting and anchoring ourselves, by remembering those that have gone before us and the scars that they have come to bear over time. It is from this that we lead ourselves “through and out”. Lastly, we are reminded that the work we do in this vein is in the service of all

those that come after us, that there is no value in stepping into this journey simply for one's own aggrandisement. Yes, the work that we create serves as a rudimentary pathway for others searching and striving to bring to life something that might yet be unnamed and burgeoning in their own consciousness, for this is how we move in sure-footed and agile ways towards a future that is worthy of our longing (Rushdie, 1999).

Pedagogical Openings

The deep forays into poetry that were made in this chapter provided an opportunity to look into the praxis embedded in the writings of women and queer persons in Africa, the diaspora and the world. These pedagogical openings seek to do the work of distilling into the language of praxis what it means to transgress towards decolonial futures. They have done this through the very embodied work of condensing fears, hopes and dreams through iterations of poetry that have illustrated what “survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into tangible action” has meant for them (Lorde, 1985, p. 37). The “low theories” that have emerged from this are ways of being that are rooted in everyday experience, many of which are underway as tangible ways women learn, unlearn and regenerate themselves towards a future they feel is their destiny (Wark, 2018, p. 60).

The poems presented in this chapter are not meant to be read as a linear or singular process undergone by an individual woman. For a richer analysis of pedagogical praxis over time we can consider the experiences in the poems happening concurrently at different speeds for a diversity of women navigating their present realities. Interlinked cycles of indigenous strategies, survival, generational traction, denial and assimilation into the over culture, stasis, processing and resurgence as outlined in these poems are experiences that are layered across time. Women and their communities have been ‘waking up’ to different facets of these at different times. In addition, as much as the poems focus on particularities raised by different women, when they are read collectively, they ask important questions about how we can continue to better see the different rites of passage of women and queer persons. This can also apply to the journeys of men towards a decolonial future, and their shedding and learning en route. Important to consider is the prevalence of high intensity struggles for women, whilst also acknowledging the space of processing, unlearning and resurgence that are chosen when the edge of that struggle is challenged, navigated or eases enough to produce alternative choices. Straddling the many worlds that exist amongst these varied experiences is vital, lest we unwittingly subscribe to praxis that only reproduces and ‘visibilises’ one part of the

bifurcated world produced by coloniality. By this I wish to signal the ways in which we can easily write and mobilise in ways that only see our own struggles, while trivialising those of a great intensity outside of these. The summary of praxis emerging from these poems bears witness to this; it is important to write in ways that account for the different and intense spaces the poems have already elucidated.

Insights around the central concern of what it means to transgress in decolonial ways and some of the practices that have helped women and queer persons to gain traction across generations are shared in the next sub-section. What is emerging from this reading of poetry is shared as small praxis-based nodules with important factors to keep in mind in this kind of work. They are presented in concise paragraphs in order to provide a coherent distillation.

Appreciations of the journey that women and queer persons have taken over time, and the transgressions they have chosen in service of a decolonial future requires firstly a deep recognition and navigation of the patterns that have established themselves. One needs to be able to read these patterns and to discern how they still persist in the present. An essential aspect of this is curating one's own rites of excavation that can dig up and reclaim alternative resources of knowledge that are unacknowledged and yet part of history.

The work of excavation surfaces big questions about how our understanding of what we find can be couched in languages that reveal *more* than what English can offer us. Our grasp of the knowledge in these archives is seriously affected by our ability or inability to comprehend the life worlds that languages alternative to English can produce. They are vital kernels in our perception of the decolonial world that can be traced from the past. Without doing this work what we find in the archives risks being coloured by meanings we are accustomed to generating in English. We inadvertently create a world that folds in on itself because of the narrow parameters that an English based ontological viewpoint imposes on what we see. We need to learn and become proficient in new languages that can describe a vision for emancipation. We need other ontological and epistemological roots to define where we come from, and the resources to create alternative visions of where we hope to go.

Key within understanding the difference between our grandmothers' life- worlds and those that we willfully choose to generate should be a renewed reverence for the relationship with the land that forms a praxis-based foundation imbued with rich metaphors and ethical

learnings around what it means to sustain and regenerate life. Our praxis ought to reveal the way in which our grandmothers' relationship with the land produced who they were and what they chose to create within their communities. We often claim thinking that is transgressive even though it might fit into a colonial and neo-liberal individualistic understanding of progress rather than an ethic of regenerating community whilst respecting and co-creating with nature. The actualities of our grandmothers practice in the past can serve as useful mirrors to look into from which we can ascertain the *intention* of our praxis today in comparison. Can our pens continue to be our hoes for digging and planting new seeds? We need to challenge ourselves to go beyond a glib veneer of cultural memories so as to begin to articulate what it is we evoke and honour when we speak of women's struggles over time. Our particular theories of who we are or our re-creation of ourselves is strengthened by a way of seeing the generational strengths that produced and resourced us.

These three comments, excavation, language and land serve to ground us in more visible ontological foundations, thus making us more accountable to the ethical through-line that contemporary movements towards transgression can still learn from. It affords us the responsibility of not theorising ourselves away from who we have been. In the same vein, it is important we do not simply imitate the struggles of those who have gone before us. It behoves those occupying a different present to redefine themselves in ways that account for what is missing and still required for women and the many they collaborate with to articulate and fashion a vision of the future that is still "not yet".

An important part of this is bearing witness to the intergenerational transmissions that are taking place and what remains unsaid between generations. This healing is undertaken in many ways including the excavation processes alluded to. They can however take on the psychic metabolisation of what remains unprocessed in other ways beyond language. Listening to what remains unsaid and doing the work to articulate what is unnamed is a praxis that invites one to use imagination and emotional landscape to perceive what lies at an impasse and release it. There are reminders within the poetry that it is a powerful process to attend to exiled aspects of one's wholeness. This is a privilege that in many ways is producing a turning of sorts, a shedding of skins that is facilitated by the work of those that have gone before. It is a rite of passage that finds a way to remain faithful to lineages that 'built' us by inviting new possibilities for arrivals in the present (Stuart, 2013). In this way intergenerational impasses can be signals for when the truth and affirmations of one's

humanity seek a healthy release. This is how vital renewal happens. What one chooses to unlearn at these ‘crossroads’ becomes as crucial as appreciating the histories of those struggles that have fostered us. The crossroads are a place of integration that ask questions around what it means to step into one’s rightful place and arrive in soulful and useful ways in the world.

Witnessing the bridges that those who have come before us have traversed, as well as the ones that they have created, is powerful. Priya Vallabh writes beautifully about this in her tiny book *A Mother’s Bridges* (2019) quoted in small extracts:

... But have you noticed the bridges our mothers built for us through their very beings?
... From the confines of their lives and social roles, they build the bridges into a world beyond them for their daughters.
... And through their bridges, they send us into a future that excludes them ...
... a world so often denied them ...
... a world so very nearly beyond them ...
... Look how different the worlds of women – mothers and daughters – have become in one small generation.
... Have you noticed the bridges our mothers made for us?
... Which bridges do we now build for our daughters to come?

Vallabh points to the work that has gone before us and that we are yet to do. Our grandmothers and mothers managed to place us on the other side of the bridge charging our practices with the possibility of working towards a decolonial future in which we are more capable of facing, enduring, metabolising, and alchemising the internalised and externalised expressions that limit our imagination of who we are and what we can create in the world. When we practice in these ways we serve the creation of new spaces and new manifestations that burn open paths for those that will come behind us. There is a responsibility to lean into the possibilities of what this decolonial future could be, and we need ourselves intact and whole in order to generate its possibilities in the present through the moves we dare to take.

The end of this chapter marks the end of the first part of this thesis, where we have had the opportunity to re-imagine and listen to the voices of those that stand behind us, egging us on towards our visions for emancipation. The next section moves into the methodological thinking that has resourced this study thus far, as well as those trajectories that have helped to produce its second half. It recounts the choices made in engaging and co- conspiring with contemporary Change Drivers in South Africa, adding into the fold the questions they hold at the edge of their praxis.

Part Two

Chapter 5: Foregrounding the Meaning in the Method⁴⁸

5.1 Introduction

Coming now to an exploration of the role of methodology in this research project; it is important to foreground the way in which questions about the content of the research (what needs to be explored) has always been followed by urgent questions about the kinds of representation that would be best suited to this. I challenged myself to think strategically about the way that “form precedes content, and indeed lingers afterwards” (Stark, 2003, in Leggo and Sameshima, 2014, p. 547). As a part of this, I was challenged to consider the ways in which “the form of representation of any work directly affects the effects of the research”(ibid.). In addition, it also became important to consider the different audiences this study intends to arouse, with the understanding that “if the work does not touch the heart of [these] audience[s], the understandings will not linger” (ibid.). Such perspectives ultimately led me to dream about the possible role or function this research could have in the world. In other words, my concern with representation throughout this project has been one that sought to live up to the understanding that “it is the *purpose* of the research that should drive the choice of methods and the selection of the best way to *re-present* its results” (Pozzer-Ardenghi, 2014, p. 5139, my emphasis). I have also been aware that often the question of methodology is only seen as critical in the representation of the *results* of the study – as if the other parts of the study arrive unperturbed and unmediated by questions of representation and relevance. In order to liberate the study from such a narrow conceptualisation, questions about representation and method were an integral part of the initiating thoughts about the

⁴⁸ A phrase built on Marshall McLuhan’s affirmation that “the medium is the message”. His work sought to emphasise the way in which the medium that one uses “communicates meanings over and above the meanings conveyed through the content” (Gibson, 2008). In relation to this study, this phrase invited me to question and consider the broader impact of this study’s representational forms and what the repercussions of this might have going forward.

research, its concerns, its queries, its purpose, its politics and the way it performs all this in the world. In line with this thinking, Willinsky's writings challenge us to stretch the parameters of the role of representation in research:

... the idea of 'representing research' is taken to suggest a gap between the act of research and the subsequent manner of its representation... I want to move beyond this representative approach. It tends to reinforce the idea that the real work of research takes place prior to the attempt to represent what took place and what it means. Thus, I find the sense that one is now writing up the research something of a misnomer, as it suggests one is simply reporting on what happened. The act of writing is just as integral to the research as any other aspect, whether the design of the study, negotiating access to the school and assembling of the sample. This is to say, the act of writing turns all that took place into a coherent comprehensible act of research. It is not simply a process of transcribing (or representing) what took place in the name of a research project. Rather, the writing does more than assemble, as it actively constructs an integral whole out of the series of steps undertaken in pursuit of a research question... (Willinsky, 2014, p. 576).

I find Willinsky's probe into the work of representation in research very useful because of its questions about the integrity and rigour of the research from its conceptualisation to the representational forms used while "writing up" (Willinsky, 2014, p. 576). It invites one to consider carefully the representational forms that one uses to convey meaning within the study. It became apparent to me from the onset of this study that the issues of representation in this research project needed to be addressed within the design, conceptualisation, implementation of each of its stages including the writing of every chapter. This was a conceptual treatise to think carefully, and within my capacity as a researcher and artist, about how to engage each piece of the puzzle. I was challenged to consider how to represent what transpired on this research journey in ways that could invite the voices and experiences of those that have accompanied me to arrive with a semblance of integrity or representational coherence that matched the nature of their offerings. Thus, re-thinking about representation became an important part of the framing of this research project, which at once sought to signal its credibility within an academic context, whilst also showcasing its ability to partake in diverse epistemic cultures in useful, rigorous and accessible ways that could be recognisable for a wide range of audiences. The dexterity that this required has been a significant part of the journey. It has required that I court a relationship with uncertainty whilst listening carefully to what the next possible steps could be. In order to do this I had to commit to making the road as I walked it. In this way, the research has been a dialectical conversation that I have undertaken with the concerns I met at every corner. More will be

said on this journey as part of this chapter, but first it is important to continue to dive deeper into the role of representation in research.

Because this research project deliberately invites readers to consider the merits of listening to and acting upon transgressive impulses, I had to be committed to critically and creatively engaging with “the hegemony of certain kinds of discourse in academic research”, particularly research on Africa (Leggo and Sameshima, 2014, p. 539). I endeavoured to do this by signaling, where appropriate, a respect for traditions that have insisted on intellectual rigour, whilst also “co-conspiring” with alternative formulations that insist on expanding the terms by which knowledge is received. I did this by intentionally working to open up imaginary and real territories that knowledge traverses, and the diverse ways that it makes itself known to the world. The sense of widening the range of sources of knowledge is echoed below:

In order to identify what is missing and why, we must rely on a form of knowledge that does not reduce reality to what exists. I mean a form of knowledge that aspires to an expanded conception of realism, that includes suppressed, silenced, or marginalised realities, as well as emergent and imagined realities. (Santos, 2014, p.157)

This quote opens up different parameters through which knowledge can be sourced, by inviting us to look not only into the kinds of knowledge that has been suppressed or marginalised but also knowledge that is emerging through a different sociological imagination. This challenged me to think carefully about the methodology that I would use, because the methodological lenses used would assist me in working with knowledge in the ways that felt necessary. As such, it became apparent to me that the methodology and the forms of representation used within the project could not be separated from their conceptual underpinnings. I understood that the method employed at each stage was not simply a set of procedures for reporting reality; there is an underlying hegemonic (or counter-hegemonic) discourse and authority that methodology weaves into the body of academic inquiry. Methodology in this perspective is performative; it produces realities, it re-crafts realities, and creates new versions of the world in its wake (Le Grange, 2015). Law takes this point further by stating that method:

...is not even simply about the kinds of realities that we want to recognise or the kinds of worlds we might hope to make. It is also fundamentally about a way of being. It is about what kinds of social science we want to practice. And then, as a part of this, it is

about the kinds of people that we want to be, and about how we should live. (Law, 2004, p. 10)

Following this line of thought, methodology does not simply represent how one goes about one's research. Within the methodology itself is an ideological imprint that is cultivated through its representation. If the desire of this project is to build an "intellectual legacy rooted in the African experience", if indeed this research is about regenerating and re-imagining future possibilities for emancipatory pedagogies in Africa, then it is fitting that the methodological design of this project ought to come to the fore and help to generate a generous exploration of this vision (Hountondji, 2009, p. 9).

In the next sections, I reflect on the questions that I held about representation, the choices that were weighed up, and how I tried to find a way to accede to an expression of an "undivided self" by working to synthesise the diverse concerns that I held (Palmer, 2004). This journey has been an attempt to journey with myself and others in their wholeness and when faced with "messages [that] safeguard the separation of the body from the more abstract entity altogether: mind and/or spirit" (or any other such binary-based-separation that fragments and exiles a part of ourselves), I have endeavoured to "dance between" these contradictory "masks" (Gqola, 2017, p. 11). This is an attempt to confront "the binary oppositional way we have been programmed to think" and a decision to "no longer choose" between polarised possibilities that present themselves in contradictory terms (ibid.). It is a political imperative that seeks to exceed the limits of:

... the binaries which undergird positivist legacies in the sciences and social sciences that have been used to devalue and deauthorize ways of knowing from disenfranchised groups. (May, 2015, p. 35)

Instead, a commitment to synthesis has taught me the value and struggle of trying to live into a broader conception that can both carry and at times go beyond the assertions of truth and meaning steeped in an either/or approach towards emancipatory possibilities in research. Research of this nature:

... presses us to account for wider contexts of knowledge production and reception and to question received logics or methods by drawing on 'both/and' thinking to examine underlying assumptions. (May, 2015, p. 35)

Part of what this has meant, is that I needed to find ways to demonstrate and make explicit the work that this has required. This is because the work that has happened as a part of this is

a potent inquiry into potential pedagogical praxis. In other words, by trying to go beyond binaries I was already working within a praxis that could in itself provide useful answers or insights to the broader research question around the future of transgressive pedagogical praxis in contemporary Africa. As such, providing an honest and vulnerable account of what transpired in praxis serves the purpose of this research. The intention here is not to simply problematise what happened in praxis to the detriment of what it can offer us, *or* to elevate its status into something immediately useful. Instead, this study seeks to acknowledge some of the emerging complexities embedded in learning to commit oneself to a decolonial practice that can embrace a both/and approach to inquiry. In line with the thinking of Lavia and Sikes, I wish to reiterate what kind of reflective practice can be useful for this study:

... it is evident that we [] stand on the side of problematising what might constitute hopeful practice. To us, it seems that such a disposition makes clear that we choose neither to render romantic nor reify our practice. Rather, we occupy a deconstructed mode where vulnerabilities and complexities foreground any attempts to marginalise or silence our choice to confront centre/periphery issues. (Lavia and Sikes, 2010, pp. 90-91)

I appreciate the honest way these scholars engage with their uncertainty and their quest to accede to a decolonial practice by committing to problematise and learn from what they did. Additionally, the honesty entailed in neither “reifying” nor “rendering romantic” their praxis is useful (Lavia and Sikes, 2010, pp. 90-91). This gives a different stance that does not rely on me creating perfect research or presenting an overly defensive and impenetrable thesis for fear of being found wanting. Instead of this, a commitment to exploring the vulnerabilities and complexities that emerged when engaging with issues of methodology and representation throughout this study is exactly what has deepened my ability to lean into the research questions. The questions around regenerative transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis going forward have been invigorated by the complexities engaged with at every turn. It is in this ‘messiness’ that this project gave me its best lessons, and I seek to share the vulnerability embedded within the process there unequivocally. To echo the sentiments shared in the introductory chapters of this study: by being honest about my vulnerability I release myself from the dilemma of considering “what parts of [myself] to leave out” while I am in “pursuit of decolonising practice” and instead welcome the full complexity of the trajectories that have shaped me up to this moment (Lavia and Sikes, 2010, p. 93).

In the next section, I deepen the conversation about moving beyond binary-based contradictory thinking by sharing how thinking about methodology helped me to bridge the contradictory terrains I encountered as part of this study.

5.2 The Work of Methodology is to Embrace Paradox in the Service of Hope

The methodological choices made in this research project have sought to acknowledge the contradictions and paradoxes in praxis at different interfaces of the study. Thinking about methodology became a way of seeing and working into the generative possibilities between or around varying interfaces. One such paradox was the conceptualisation of time held within the study. As a study that seeks to explore what has come before us as it continues to journey towards what is “not yet” in the present, this research project reaches backwards and forward at the same time whilst asking questions about what that means for our praxis right now. In this way, the study asks us to be faithful to the paradox of an African conception of time, by asking us to think and dream at the interface between the past, the future and the present.

But there are more paradoxes that the work sought to straddle, and it seems worth exploring what the idea of a paradox or ‘contradiction’ offered to my thinking as a researcher. When reflecting on the social, ecological and economic climate we find ourselves in, and what this means for the type of work that we do, Rah Busby describes this particular moment as a paradox that has important implications for what we choose to create through our varied works as practitioners, seekers, researchers and concerned humans. A short excerpt of her intimate reflection amongst a group of women is shared:

We are living in a time of great paradox. The old is dying and the new is being born – neither is complete in their cycles. We have so much choice... (Busby, 2018)

These words echo the conceptual gauntlet laid out in the space between what is ‘no longer’ and what is ‘not yet’. The quote also asks questions about what it means to continue to witness the pervasive effects of iterations of colonialism and neo-liberalism (in the past and in the present), effects that continue to debilitate the possibilities of a shared future, whilst also acknowledging the devotion and longevity of past and present struggles to transgress these limits. My interpretation of these words infer that the “old” she refers to symbolises that which is untenable and pervasive and the “new” refers to the unsatiated desires for emancipation that have continued to assert themselves in the past and present. Hers is, of course, an optimistic or rather ‘affirmative’ stance on the possibilities we can engender in this

world, based on the many choices we can make (Braidotti, 2011). This is a regenerative perspective that aligns with this research project. It seems to me that in the interface between what has become regeneratively ‘untenable’ and what is yet to come, the role of methodology becomes a very important pedagogical question. As an educator, a social practitioner and artist, the “choice” that Busby refers to, demarcates the space in which transgressive decolonial praxis ought to develop itself. In fact, in the gauntlet between the ‘no longer’ and the ‘not yet’, the power and privilege of choice and the potential influence it could have is the only practical terrain we have access to. Put in another way, the methodological deliberations that can be accommodated within this gauntlet could possibly provide a ‘bridge’ for learning and praxis into the future, a ‘crossroads’ of sorts (Commas-Diaz, 2008, p. 176). There is thus a desire within this research to attend to the gaps and impasses that present themselves through varying interfaces in this work in earnest ways as opportunities to open up new trajectories. The questions, ambiguities and contradictions that present themselves in the interim belie the potential of what can emerge going forward.

The work of methodology in this regard is to sit with the paradox. This could entail honouring what is past and has generative potential, what continues to create harm in the present, whilst concurrently maximising the critical engagements with the life-giving choices we can make with others in the present. It could also entail being cognisant of interfacing challenges that seem to provide no respite. For example, as a way of trying to illustrate the nature of the contradictions and paradoxes I am referring to, De Sousa Santos paints a resonant picture below:

It is not easy to get rid of a situation that is as convincing in its contradictions as it is in its ambiguities, a situation that is as comfortable as it is intolerable. (De Sousa Santos, 2014, p. 87)

These words expose some of the psychosis involved in contemporary living and emancipatory struggle. The word “comfort” juxtaposed with the understanding of what is “intolerable” could refer to different positions in an unequal society and world. It could also signal that we live in a world where relative comfort and intolerable circumstances co-exist, seemingly unperturbed by each other. These experiences are two sides of the same coin, in the sense that one circumstance ultimately creates the conditions for the other to exist. The paradox of modernity, its spoils and its “underbelly” are revealed in De Sousa Santos quote (Maldonado-Torres, 2008). The quote also points to some of the trajectories leading from our present choices. At the interface between living into a situation that can maximise what is

comfortable and yet unsustainable and one that seeks to address what is intolerable, methodology ought to provide the space to discern the impact of the choices we make on the emancipatory possibilities. In line with the contributions of both Busby and Santos, the conceptualisation of methodology in this research hopes to practise bridging the gap between the range of choices we have available right now, in the service of a future that is worthy of our longing (Rushdie, 1999). This understanding of the function of methodology echoes the thinking of the poet Rilke who urges us all to:

Take [our] practiced powers and stretch them out
until they span the chasm between two
contradictions...
(Rilke, 1989, p.261)

This is a complex attempt at seeing and working into and beyond the contradictions of the present as they reveal themselves. By attending to interfacing and contradictory complexities, methodology can be a place where praxis can redefine itself, and experiment in ways that can hopefully expand the terms under play, going beyond the frames that benefit from binary thinking (May, 2015). This understanding of methodology describes the engagements that were undertaken in this study, whilst also directly responding to its broader call to regenerate transgressive pedagogical praxis in contemporary Africa. The contradiction and the paradox is thus revealed as a site for pedagogic exploration. More is said on the generative potential of the contradiction:

The fertility of a contradiction does not lie in imagining ways of escaping it, but rather in ways of working with and through it. If the time of paradigmatic transition has a name, it is certainly that of enabling contradictions. (Santos, 2014, p. 238)

Emancipatory bearings for the future can thus be fueled by the questions, concerns and tensions raised by the contradictions of our times. Zimitri Erasmus describes the capacity to navigate between and beyond the contradictions of the present as coming to know and be in the world “otherwise” (Erasmus, 2017). In my understanding, the phrase “otherwise” animates a transgressive impulse around mobilising and moving with different, alternative, “other” ways of knowing or being *wise*. Her work specifically speaks to issues of race, and how to “forge a new humanism in South Africa”, but I believe that what she has etched out in her thinking resonates intersectionally, to speak coherently about issues related to gender, class or any other identity-based social constructions that one feels obliged to transgress in order to live an “undivided life”, a more radically humane life (Erasmus, 2017; Palmer, 2004). It is also worth considering the word “otherwise” within the discourse of black radical

feminism and its intersectional principles. In critical writings on intersectionality, this concept:

... functions as a kind of *resistant imaginary* – a way of intervening in historical memory or interrupting the dominant social imagination by thinking ‘otherwise’. (May, 2015, p. 34)

This propensity to go beyond the dominant social imagination is echoed in Erasmus’ work. She shares her own rendition about how we can alchemise normative states of being, and the contradictions one finds there into viable emancipatory alternatives:

To turn the friction between normative ways of knowing and possibilities for coming to know otherwise into productive engagements for building a future now, it is important to be mindful of the resources we use and if how and why we select these resources when forging a shared, necessarily provisional world. (Erasmus, 2017, p. 103)

The emphasis on “resources”, what they are, how and why we use them, is an issue of methodology. Being in the world in this way is seen as a “critical generative praxis” that brings together “modes of living, political praxis and learning” (Erasmus, 2017, p. 103). Other resonating understandings of this perspective have also described being “otherwise” as exercising an alternative “form of sociological imagination”, which “tries to know better the conditions of the possibility of hope” whilst “[defining] principles of action to promote the fulfilment of those conditions” (Santos, 2014, p.185).

In this study, I have attempted to live into the possibility of hope by challenging myself and being seriously challenged by the representations and methodologies I engaged with. In the next section, I explore the overarching theoretical and praxis-based outlooks and their coalescing strains that have enabled me to weave my way through ways of re-presenting African history, the transgressive possibilities demonstrated over time, and what is emerging contemporarily for Change Drivers in South Africa “otherwise”. I also delve into transgressive impulses within academia that have supported me to boldly chart ways of re-presenting research in ways that try to satisfy its emancipatory potential “otherwise”. An exploration of what decoloniality has meant for me in this study leads the way into this conversation, highlighting the reasons behind the eclectically generative mix of methodologies employed in the construction and representation of this study.

5.3 On Decoloniality and its Methodological Strains

My struggle to produce this study has been coloured with questions about what it means to aspire towards decolonial praxis within the informal education, non-governmental organisational (NGO) space I previously occupied, and furthermore, how to inquire and live into that praxis within an academic context as part of a doctoral study. Straddling these worlds has required that I think carefully about how to produce an emancipatory narrative within spaces that have historically colluded with the project of imperial design, colonialism, and the neo-liberal agenda. While reflecting on this, I am reminded of Audre Lorde's admonition that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde, 2007, p. 112). This statement has been reproduced prolifically over time. It was originally written as a critique of the way in which the study and practice of feminism at the time demonstrated a worrying lack of solidarity with "poor women, black and Third World women and lesbians" (Lorde, 2007, p. 110). Lorde questioned how the practice of feminism could possibly reproduce anything other than a hegemonic discourse if it was unable to work productively with difference. The emancipatory intentions of feminism were thus questioned by its inability to practice itself in a radically inclusive way. Lorde's convictions at the time continue to serve as a critical reminder to question how and what I am reproducing through this work. She has had me asking questions about whose voices need to be included, why they should be included, how this should ideally be done, and what each particular perspective ultimately contributes to the broader project and its meaning-making. In line with this thinking, Marilyn Strathern stated that "it matters what ideas we use to think other ideas" (Strathern, 1990). Donna Haraway took this statement further:

... it matters what thoughts think thoughts. It matters what knowledges know knowledges. It matters what relations relate relations. It matters what words word worlds. It matters what stories tell stories... (Haraway, 2016, p. 35)

In other words, the political and ethical coherence of those who are accompanying me on this study matter greatly, and I have endeavoured to purposefully engage as diverse a history of transgressive decolonial praxis as possible. This has been done in order to affirm a counter-hegemonic history that has been invisibilised through the dominant meaning-making machine. By honouring diverse legacies of transgressive praxis in this study, I have in fact maintained an argument that we have survived this far and will continue to press on with the decolonial project only by understanding that the creation and sustenance of diverse ranges of knowledge and the rooted practices and ways of being that accompany them, is and always

has been, the *core* of what an emancipatory project must do. One of the many gifts of Amílcar Cabral's legacy remains the assertions he made about "the weapons of theory" within revolutionary struggle (Cabral, 1972, in Rabaka, 2010, p. 238). For him the importance of theory and engaged praxis within emancipatory struggles is defined as the need for a "concrete philosophy" that "seeks simultaneously to provide critical knowledge of the existing society, and become a force in its revolutionary transformation" (Rabaka, 2010, p. 238). In line with this understanding, this study continues this argument by insisting that the production of knowledge and its praxis is something we need to continually reinvigorate in the service of emancipatory futures because only through such reinvigoration can we "make emancipation thinkable again" (Neocosmos, 2016, p.16).

Directly linked to the urgent need to regenerate emancipatory knowledge and praxis in Africa, is the emphasis on promoting a decolonial ethic within this work. In this section, I explain exactly what I mean when I speak of decoloniality, and what is included within its broad banner. As a way of beginning, it is important to assert why a decolonial lens persists as an important outlook for emancipatory futures. Gatzambide-Fernandez describes why this outlook is necessary in these times, and what the implications are for educational projects:

The characteristics of this particular moment are neither spontaneous nor natural, but the outcome of complex dynamics of colonialization and the resulting diasporas and genocides produced by United States and European imperial expansionism. The 'new world view' instantiated by 1492 and its aftermath, persistently imposes particular conceptions of what it means to be human and defines what counts as cultural difference (Wynter, 1995, p.113). White supremacy and hetero-patriarchal order violently enforce colonial modes of human relationality, fabricating subject positions through intersecting and interlocking discursive regimes of gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability amongst others...

In the context of these changes, educators are called upon to play a central role in constructing the conditions for a different kind of encounter, an encounter that both opposes ongoing colonisation and that seeks to heal the social, cultural and spiritual ravages of colonial history. (Gatzambide-Fernandez, 2012, p. 42)

Education in this perspective is seen as a medium through which the continuing violence of the colonial encounter can be disrupted. It is seen as a space where what lies exiled within white, hetero-patriarchal, classist ablelist and gendered discourses can be met with a multiplied understanding of what it means to be a human (Gatzambide-Fernandez, 2012, p. 42). This kind of education has the power to be in the service of emancipatory ventures that seek to explore alternative visions of what a just and sustainable future could entail for

the earth and all sentient beings. This research project accedes to this call and sees the need to decolonise as an essential and necessary part of this.

However, even in saying this, one has to acknowledge the diverse forms of thinking and practice traversed by decoloniality. Mobilising narratives and emancipatory outlooks that challenge the intersectional burdens of “gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability amongst others...” is indeed a wide ranging and multifaceted approach (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2012, p. 42). It requires the inclusion of perspectives that can go deep into an analysis of varied of socio-cultural, ecological and economic constructs, whilst appreciating how they are all linked and how they intersect to laminate experiences of domination, oppression and exclusion that are the result of the colonial matrix of power. Indeed, Walter Mignolo challenges us to remember that:

... decoloniality is neither a ‘field of study’ nor a ‘discipline’ but a way of being in the world, interrogating the structures of knowledge and of knowing that have thrown us, all of us on the planet, into the world. (Mignolo, 2018, p. 381)

Decoloniality thus means being intensely present to the varying interfaces of the challenges of modernity, whilst simultaneously affirming and regenerating the relevance of other ways of knowing and other ways of being that can enhance an emancipatory project. It is useful to think through some of the theoretical outlooks that I have found useful in their propensity to open up both critically robust and creatively generative decolonial pathways.

Whilst on this journey, I have looked into theoretical and praxis-based outlooks that have tried in different ways to assert what it could mean to attend to a decolonial turn. This research has taken me on a journey that has helped me appreciate the many ways in which decoloniality can be addressed, both as an emancipatory impulse in the world, and also as a destabilising and regenerative force in the production of knowledge both within and outside the halls of academia. The sources of these transgressive impulses have been wide, sometimes emanating from struggles intimately connected with the African continent, the diaspora and the global south and sometimes emerging from the far fringes of transgressive discipline-based responses to the production of knowledge in Europe or America. The point I am making here is that decoloniality as viewed within this research is not the something that is solely the custodianship of one particular school of thought, or one geographical space. In fact, what became important to consider as part of a methodological collation of a decolonial ethic, was how one could intentionally coalesce a diverse range of sources that are useful in

the operationalisation of an alternative future. Far from seeing the decolonial as a universal counter-thesis that is the binary opposite to coloniality, this study sought to demonstrate the relevance of a pluriversal vision that can reinforce the power of appreciating a “multiplicity of being” in the face of coloniality (Kulundu, 2017). In doing so, the study hoped to recognise the quandaries in replicating the power dynamics of colonialism that can emerge when transgressive moves assert themselves in an overtly hierarchical and domineering way. There are many issues that need to be interrogated when one doctrine seeks to usurp the power and hierarchy of another and in so doing establishes itself as the new meta-narrative. I have tried to stay cognisant of this, whilst also being conscious of not allowing a sense of paralysis to settle in, the kind of paralysis that freezes the impulse to make a move in any direction (Andreotti, Stein, Sutherland et al, 2018, p. 37). Here are some critical questions worth considering:

How is it possible to fight against dogmas without resorting to other and more potent dogmas? ... Is anti-dogma not another kind of dogma after all? (Santos, 2014, p. 9)

I wanted to steer away from the unintentional creation of dogma as a part of what the study generated. The intention was thus to weave different strands of alterity together through this work and to generate work that could amplify the importance of ‘resonance’ between them (Kulundu, 2017). In the next sub-section, I briefly demonstrate some of the divergent strands I drew on to help me do the work needed for this study. This is shared in brief at this point so as to demonstrate in greater depth why the vision for decoloniality held within this study needed to be carried through pluriversal vantage points that reinforced and strengthened each other’s transgressive audacity, whilst revealing potential blind spots (Andreotti, Stein, Sutherland et al., 2018, p. 36).

An important place to start that shows diverse ways to work with decoloniality, is the relationship of decoloniality with post-colonial discourse. The naming of ‘colonial’ within academia as part of post-colonial discourse can be seen as an important signal of the desire to transgress the terms associated with coloniality. Critics in recent times have questioned the ability of the post-colonial discourse to practically address issues on decoloniality. Entry level discussions about post-coloniality focus on the pitfalls embedded in its choice of syntax. They ask questions about whether we can really talk about being in a ‘post’-colonial era.

... the critical questions confronting us are: Have we really reached the *post* (as in, *after*) colonialism when most of the fundamental features of colonialism continue to plague ‘three quarters pf the people living in the world today’? Is it possible that we

have gotten 'above and beyond' colonialism when it is understood that even with 'political independence' the impact and influence of European imperial powers continue to 'displace' pre-colonial philosophical, spiritual and axiological system and traditions? (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 1089, in Rabaka 2010, p. 45)

Yes, we certainly have not eclipsed the continuing influence of colonialism and neo-colonialism in the global south. However, to evaluate the offerings of post-colonial discourses based simply on its syntax would be to evade the opportunity to think through what work post-colonialism has done since its inception. As problematic as the prefix 'post' is for post-colonialism, it is equally important to discern what we lose when we only understand what it offers us through this lens. This would obscure us from understanding in greater depth the content of the work of post-colonialism and what it was actually set up to do. Despite ongoing debates about what post-colonialism is, some scholars within its tradition have endeavoured to put forward succinct descriptions of what it is, and the work it hopes to do in the world:

[a] 'postcolonial critique' refers to the practice of viewing and assessing the world including the social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of human relations, from a perspective that takes the history of colonization, including ongoing neo-colonization, and its effects on both the colonisers and the colonised into account. The idea of postcolonial criticism is to compel 'a radical thinking of knowledge and social identities authored and authorized by colonialism and western domination. Such an analysis aims to consider the perspectives of the underside, marginalized or 'subalterns' or 'orient' and put into question the universalisation of particularly Western views and solutions. (Comling and Sanchez, 2014, p.2)

This definition and others like it strongly signal how post-colonialism fosters a decolonial ethic that encompasses and welcomes the understandings of those historically marginalised. In solidarity with this definition, McEwan describes post-colonialism as a movement that: "attempts to rewrite the hegemonic accounting of time (history), and the spatial distribution of knowledge (power) that constructs the third world" (Mc Ewan, 2001, p. 95). Taking into consideration the decolonial clarity embedded in these definitions of post-colonialism, what then continues to create discursive cleavages between the obviously related intellectually complicit outlooks of post-colonialism and decoloniality? A broad outlook on some of the critiques launched against post-colonialism are chronicled, in order to provide a coherent picture of some of the questions that have been raised over time:

One of the major dilemmas for post colonialism is the charge that it has become institutionalized, representing the interests of a western-based intellectual elite who speak the language of contemporary western academy, perpetuating the exclusion of the colonized and oppressed (Ahmad, 1992; McClintock, 1992; watts, 1995; Loomba,

1998). Moreover, critics suggest that greater theoretical sophistication has created greater obfuscation; post colonialism is too theoretical and not sufficiently rooted in material concerns (Ahmad, 1992; Dirlik, 1994) ...

As Dirlik (1994, p. 353) argues, 'It is remarkable ... that a consideration of relationship between postcolonialism and global capitalism should be absent from the writings of postcolonial intellectuals' economic relations and their effects elude representation in much of postcolonial studies. (McEwan, 2001, p. 102)

These charges against post-colonialism speak to the operationalisation of its praxis over time and some of the issues that might have had an impact on its traction as an important decolonial discourse. Rather than seeing this as grounds to dismiss the project of post-colonialism and distance it from more contemporary decolonial outlooks, I see this as a space of learning that has been magnified, learning that asks specific questions about how to address the fact that "post-colonialism cannot be easily translated into action on the ground" (McEwan, 2001, p. 103). Furthermore, the charge that postcolonialism has generated an "oppositional stance" that "has not had much impact on the power imbalances between the North and South" asks critical questions about prioritising a grounded praxis as opposed to a largely discursive theoretical treatise (McEwan, 2001, p.103). This critique may also be related to the nature of post-colonialism's critical project which in my opinion relies on being critically deconstructive whilst failing to be adequately generative in its praxis. I believe these lessons are relevant for the decolonial project as a whole even as they describe the trajectories that have followed post-colonialism. Can we not be appreciative of what this discourse has offered the decolonial project whilst also acknowledging the intellectual rut it is said to have gotten into? This is an endeavour to not 'invisibilise' the work of post-colonialism within a decolonial outlook, but to signal its ventures and praxis as useful places to continue its work. We cannot disqualify it because, in its own way, it is an important way of seeing into the decolonial project (particularly from an academic point of view which is relevant here). Thus, I begin the journey in defining what decoloniality means for this study by acknowledging the work that the post-colonial discourse has undoubtedly contributed to decolonial thinking. Sibongile Masuku provides useful insight into the relationship between post-colonialism and decoloniality:

There are a number of divergent views when it comes to the relationship between decoloniality and postcolonial theory... One is that decoloniality is the progression of postcolonial thought. The second is that postcolonial theory is the mother of the thought; thirdly, that decolonial thought is a theory that has no relationship with Western thought and has its own foundation and origin. The one point which I support and I have already alluded to, is that they share an etymological parenthood with the

word ‘colony’. The other point is that they have a theoretical background that is rooted in Saidian thought of being Othered and thus they have more in common than they are different. Therefore, in my view, decolonial thought, but not theory, is an offspring of postcolonial theory. (Masuku, 2018, p. 88)

Being cognisant of the interrelated nature of these two strains removes the temptation to choose sides or to render separate what is obviously an interrelated and complex relationship. However, in saying this, in my own journey I did not find the discourse on post-colonialism to be the definitive foundation for my understanding of decoloniality. I suspect that this also has to do with the period in which my work as a social practitioner and researcher has taken place. As a young researcher I understood the nature of the problem identified by post-colonialism but it did not catapult me into a generative creative response. It was not until the questions in my journey as practitioner met squarely with the resurgence of the decolonial project through recent student activism in South Africa, that what lay dormant for me in terms of the decolonial project, asserted itself boldly. The potency of what was waiting to be addressed literally exploded for me through the voices of thousands of university students in South Africa who rose to protest the presence of symbolic bastions of colonialism in their universities with questions about equitable access to education and a decolonised curriculum (Gatsheni-Ndlovu, 2016, p. 3). They were adamant that it was not *transformation* they sought but *decolonisation*. They brought this word to the forefront of the South African collective consciousness and asserted in their own grounded ways what this meant in action. The conversations, protests and creative engagements sparked by this movement reinvigorated a contemporary understanding of what decoloniality means for Change Drivers in Africa. The potency of expressions at this time was in accordance with much of what I had read in post-colonial literature whilst pointing to a throbbing demarcated area that needed additional collective exploration.

More recent writing from “scholars who form part of the Latin American and African Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality Research Collective” spurred me further into a decolonial way of seeing. This is why the work of De Sousa Santos, Gatsheni-Ndlovu and Maldonado-Torres feature so strongly in this study. De Sousa Santos has been a particularly important guide in this study. The ideas he shares in *Epistemologies of the South* are a cross-cutting influence in this study. This book and its thinking span the terrain between creating adequate theories and concepts to speak carefully and contemporarily into the paradox that we currently face in the global south. But his work does more than this, through its ability to

not only speak coherently about what is missing, but also move towards concepts that can help get to the heart of what is needed from us as intellectual-activists. Using his own language he offers a sociology of absence whilst also showing us how to foster a sociology of emergence (De Sousa Santos, 2014). In this way, his work spans the divide between theory and methodological practice in useful ways. In addition, his work gives a tangible language for praxis for those caught at the interfaces or nexus points between “absented” emancipatory struggles, the “underbelly of modernity” and the insistence on emergence, a praxis that posits that “another way is possible” (De Sousa Santos, 2014; Maldonado-Torres, 2008). His work infuses decolonial thinking with a revelatory language for praxis that lays bare the issues faced on the ground that gives one the strength to face the issues at hand whilst acknowledging the spaces through which alternatives can be birthed. De Sousa Santos gave me the theoretical scaffolding that helped me understand why we need to transgress, and what tools are necessary in order for us to work in emancipatory and pluriversal ways.

The contemporary theoretical work of De Sousa Santos and others helped me to re-enter the conversation about decoloniality in enabling terms. I found deep resonance with the concepts and questions they were working with, especially those that considered what a decolonial ethic would mean in praxis. The formulations of their work were not simply grounded in the theoretical challenges they faced as academic practitioners. Instead, I felt that they managed to share what they thought in ways that made it possible to consider the role of a decolonial scholar in the service of popular grassroots struggles. There was direct resonance with what I was experiencing as a practitioner. They spoke about knowledge production and praxis in a way that positioned intellectual activists and decolonial scholars as complicit agents who need to consider what they were creating through their work. Their questions assisted me in understanding how to regenerate my praxis as a social practitioner in ways that can enable an emancipatory decolonial ethic. They critically shared tough questions while also stressing the need to stay involved and play a part. Critique and creativity, as two wheels of a bicycle, revealed themselves in their written and practical work. This gave me the impetus to embark on my own inquiry about how to regenerate my own practice in similar ways.

But the scope of decolonial thinking that influenced this thesis did not end with this galvanising start. My understanding of post-colonialism and the very real social upheaval in contemporary South Africa, as well as immersion through engaging with contemporary decolonial scholars, looking back into historical discourse on Africa and the diaspora further

fleshed out my understanding about how decolonial praxis had already been taking place on the continent. An understanding of Critical Africana Theory assisted me to see into the threads of knowledge and praxis that have informed emancipatory struggles on the continent. This formed another foundational layer regarding what decolonial praxis has meant historically on the continent, in the diaspora and the global south. It was a historically thorough way of looking into the way that decolonial discourse has always been a part of emancipatory struggles in Africa and elsewhere. In addition to this, the link between social activism and political praxis espoused by Africana Critical Theory was a vital thread (Rabaka, 2010, p. 23). Intellectual activists and practitioners throughout the history of the liberation movements stood out as forerunners in a contemporary struggle for decolonisation. Their works became an essential feature of the knowledge this study sought to work with, specifically because of the pedagogical questions raised by what they managed or did not manage to do. What was additionally compelling about the outlook on Critical Africana Theory is that it managed to synthesise intersectional concerns around race, class, colonialism whilst weaving into the mix a depth of intersectional resonance that invited me to equally engage boldly with radical black feminist discourse and womanist perspectives on emancipation as an additional and complementary decolonial discourse. I could use one perspective to help deepen the thinking needed within the other. The extent to which each perspective sought to shift the existing matrix of coloniality became a pertinent addition to the creation of an alternative “sociological imagination” (De Sousa Santos, 2014, p.185). Similarly, the challenges that each perspective posed to each other became a welcome way of seeing beyond the gaps and blind spots and a means of integrating these into a complementary vision; sometimes they were distinct from each other but always they were reaching towards a greater “ecology of knowledges” necessary for an emancipatory future (De Sousa Santos, 2014). Thinking about the incompleteness of any “ecologies of knowledges” means that we also need to be cognisant of the “accompanying ecologies of ignorances” of each knowledge system because “every knowledge system has foreclosures and limitations” (Andreotti, Stein, Sutherland et al., 2018, p. 36). In this way, these different and related strands of praxis can at best reinforce the gains they bring if they do so together because only by doing this, can they better respond to any gaps or limitations they may have. From this perspective, different knowledge systems need each other in order to adequately face the bigger picture, and as they accompany each other, they could collectively provide an alternative matrix for the way in which I could engage with a decolonial outlook.

Woven in between these resources, the value of indigenous knowledge also asserted its relevance, showing how the ways of being outlined there always provided a counter narrative to coloniality. If one could listen carefully and in different ways one could trace the voices of those that have tried to carry that knowledge forward. Works of African literature and poetry gave a different cadence to not only what these voices had to say, but also how they chose to say it (as shared in earlier chapters). These voices positioned themselves outside of the rigour of traditional academic writing and stayed creatively attuned to the language and expression of ‘ordinary’ people trying to find their way forward. I appreciated the insight these voices gave the research project precisely because of the nature of engagement that their works fostered. This was a different encounter with the voices of history and a way to ‘rediscover’ the depth of knowledge that sits within ‘ordinary’ expressions of struggle and change (cf Chapters 1, 2 and 4). Gaining a sense of these diverse strains of work allowed me to see the emancipatory trajectory that the continent has always been a part. This was a rereading of history for me, one that allowed me to acknowledge how relatable the claims of earlier times are to the ones being asserted today.

What post-colonialism, decoloniality, Critical Africana theory, intersectionality, indigenous knowledge systems, African literature and poetry (and many more complementary strands that are woven into this project) have in common is their rootedness in the struggles of African people, those in the diaspora and the global south who have maintained, through their work, that another way is possible, based on a lens that allows us to look critically at the negative and multifarious impacts of imperialism/colonialism and its tenets. The place as in *where* this thinking comes from (or context) remains relevant. The memory and historical experience of what imperialism imposed onto the world of those that Fanon called “the wretched of the earth” gives them ...

... a head start toward the world historical task of envisaging alternative world orders and more humane and sustainable social systems. It comes down to a double consciousness of both the multiple axes of oppression, and hence of hurt, humiliation, and pain, as well as the creative force they can generate as motors of transversal and collective transformation. (Braidotti, 2011, p. 32)

Thinking with and from the transgressive impulses found on the continent, in the diaspora and the global south was thus a potent place to begin. The collection of insights found there formed the foundation of the first half of this thesis providing the frameworks from which I could begin an alternative chronicling of some of the transgressive impulses on the continent.

The thinking and way of seeing that each of these perspectives offered helped me think critically about where I should look to source an alternative history of transgressive impulses on the continent, and what kind of representations could honour a tapestry of experiences, knowledges and ways of being.

But this was not all that emerged as aligned decolonial impulses in this study. As I continued to look for theoretical and praxis-based alternatives that were decolonial, other examples of a transgressive ethic emerged from other unexpected sources, sources that have also historically tried to provide a counter-narrative to the hold of positivist science on the production of knowledge. Some of these sources have been launched from the epicentre of western scientific rationalism itself. These were articulated ways of knowing that have taken it upon themselves to struggle to open up the narrow corridors of what is considered knowledge within academia. Key praxis-based voices contributed the rigour of their scepticism and their creativity to the ongoing conversation. These practices, though not rooted specifically in the struggles of people of colour on the continent or not overtly decolonial in their purpose, did provide a very useful praxis that aimed ultimately to liberate our ways of seeing and representing the world as part of knowledge production. Some of their insights were particularly useful in helping me think about the potential forms and shape of the first and second part of the study.

The first of these was Jan Zwicky's lyrical philosophy which is an outlook that seeks to release us from a very atomistic and unitary way of seeing the world. In the words of Dennis Lee,

Lyric understanding does not proceed by breaking down wholes into parts, nor by adding up parts into wholes. Rather, it perceives particulars in such a way that their resonant unity is grasped in an instant of recognition. We don't deduce meaning sequentially; we *get* it, as our mental set clicks into phase with its overall shape. (Lee, 2010, p. 21)

This way of thinking was particularly useful in thinking about how to go about sharing the offerings that were gathered as part of the workshops. It appreciates that there are different ways of knowing and that logical/rational/deductive reasoning (though an incumbent part of the history of academia) is not the only way one can go about this. The approach transgresses these norms and seeks to enter into the heart of philosophical thinking in another way, that at its heart wanted to transgress representations of the world dominated by the limitations of human thought. Instead, these philosophical experiments wondered how "human thought"

could better represent itself in order to better ‘fit’ the complexity of the world as it is (Sanger, 2010, pp.14-15). This work helped me gain resolve to experiment with the representations I worked with in the second half of the study. This impulse was reinforced by the transgressions in positivist scientific rationalism fostered by phenomenological practitioners such as Goethe. Similar to Zwicky a commitment to seeing and working with the whole rather than breaking up one’s analysis into segmented parts describes what “delicate empiricism” meant for Goethe. His way of seeing asks whether we can:

... read the gesture of [a] phenomenon to get at the intrinsic energy, or formative idea, emerging as phenomenon? Can we portray, in all complexity, rather than attempt to explain, which must always reduce. Instead of interposing theory between ourselves and the phenomenon, can we see it directly, on its own ground? (Kaplan, 2005, p. 8)

These were important questions for me as I considered what it would mean to acknowledge and honour the offerings made by Change Drivers in “otherwise” ways (Erasmus, 2017). Both these examples (Zwicky’s lyrical philosophy and Goethe’s delicate empiricism) emerge as transgressive impulses within philosophy and traditional positivist science. They are divergent ways of performing the work of philosophy and science in the world. Both shift the normative gaze that has been so pervasive within these disciplines over time by producing work that foregrounds other sensibilities needed in the production of knowledge.

However, and this is an important caveat to add, these works did not emerge out of the desire to foster a decolonial ethic in the world. Walter Mignolo reminds us that the history of Goethe’s phenomenology and delicate empiricism that looks into the life worlds of phenomena is rooted in the work of Husserl, a man who “was thinking in the heart of Europe” (Mignolo, 2018, p. 371). As such, the transgressions witnessed there are still produced by the colonial matrix. This was specifically because Husserl’s investigation of “transcendental consciousness” was in its own way still “oblivious of the planetary consequences of European expansion” and this “testifies to his disregard for the global in his search for the (European lifeworld) transcendental” (Mignolo, 2018, p. 371). This is significant in that whilst there is an epistemological critique that “seeks to reconsider what and how we know – and how we might know differently” the nature of the *history of work* in my opinion does not agitate for an intercultural or pluriversal expansion of “our existing sensibilities and constellations of knowledge, relationality and effect” (Andreotti, Stein, Sutherland et al., 2018, p. 26, 30). This is because Husserl’s work, while articulating the need to acknowledge the lifeworld of the subject within science falls short of acknowledging that:

Chinese, Hindus, and Congolese have their own ways of thinking and doing, their praxis of living in their lifeworld, in which their thinking about their own praxis of living has nothing to do with the history of European Philosophy of which Husserl is so well aware. (Mignolo, 2018, p. 380)

As a result of this understanding, I was struck by the unfinished business of the history of transgressions such as these, and what greater ontological rigour is needed in order to recontextualise their offerings as valuable and yet incomplete in the wake of other pluriversal, related or dissimilar ways of knowing and being that are not *explicitly* mobilised through their perspectives. This is a case of opening up the trajectories of “transcendental consciousness” to embrace a broader understanding and operationalisation of what those life worlds might entail. By engaging with the roots of Goethe’s delicate empiricism and the lyrical philosophy of Zwicky I am both acknowledging the split their work signals within their disciplines, whilst also encouraging this impulse to be more broadly appreciative of other similar, related or divergent shifts that are rooted from other standpoints and worldviews. My task was thus to extend and seed a decolonial logic within the advances taken there. This way of working sought to include these advances as part of an understanding of the “ecologies” and “ignorances” of knowledge by searching for what is valuable within each incentive, whilst also acknowledging the limits of the history of its thinking and thus the potential pitfalls in its praxis to date (De Sousa Santos, 2014; Andreotti, Stein, Sutherland et al., 2018, p. 36). The same challenge also exists for decolonial thinking, that it in itself also needs ongoing reflexivity.

In sum, the point here is that the understanding of what a decolonial impulse or discourse entailed as part of this study was intentionally diverse and open. It drew on a myriad of interrelated discourses that emanated from the emancipatory politics, literature, poetry and praxis of the continent and diaspora over time, while also being attentive to other transgressive impulses that have tried to assert other ways of seeing and being as legitimate forms of inquiry, knowledge and ultimately power. This way of working with methodology insists that the process of decolonisation is one that requires us to keep evolving over time, building on what can help us articulate what has previously been “unsayable” (De Sousa Santos, 2014). The methodological ideas gathered have thus been a way to acknowledge the work that has happened over time through different currents of thinking that have insisted on and practised a politics of alterity – be it concentrated on race, class, gender, feminism, indigeneity, ecological perspectives – as well as alternative forms of knowledge production.

Thus, decoloniality within this study is not seen as a stagnant theory that has within it very specific performative requirements only rooted in the emancipatory struggles of the continent, the diaspora and the global south. Decoloniality becomes a way of seeing into various movements and endeavours to free power from where it has been intentionally trapped by the impact of coloniality, capitalism, extractivism and patriarchy. In other words, this study does not seek to reproduce a “methodological nationalism”; rather it seeks to signal an intersectional solidarity (and even engender it if the resonances are not clear) amongst practitioners, creatives, ideological imperatives, philosophies and sciences that have signaled the need to move towards alternative ways of viewing and co-creating transgressive meanings in the world (Braidotti, 2011, p. 210). These resources are worked with carefully in order to intentionally invigorate the possibilities that lie within their alternative sociological imaginations in ways that can be beneficial to the tenets of a decolonial way of being.

The work of Rosa Braidotti was an intensely coalescing piece of work that helped me see the relevance of moving with and between resonant strains of (potential and actual) decolonial thought. I am indebted to her articulations of nomadic theory as part of this journey and have found great resonance with aspects of her post-structuralist approach. My motivation in following her thinking stems from the realisation that while we have our gaze on our realities, her work really is about the manoeuvrings we make in becoming more human, and going even further than this, in articulating the need to decentre the “arrogance of anthropocentrism” (Braidotti, 2011, p. 88). I found this to be particularly relevant especially when used as a tool to transgress coloniality which has systematically tried to suppress the humanity of people or the sacredness of the earth and other sentient beings. This is the frontier at which I meet her work. Her post-structuralist dreams of how we are becoming cyborg, or the need to think beyond anthropocentric desire in “becoming insect” and “posthuman feminism” invite us to understand new subjectivities necessary for thinking about the decentralisation of anthropocentric arrogance (Braidotti, 2011). Whilst the wide arc of what this entails is deeply appreciated, this research project seeks to meet this conversation at the edges of our capacity to extend into this larger foray. As an educator I had to account for the wide gap between where Change Drivers are and the breadth of her post-structural approach. My sense was that though relevant and incredibly generative in its imagination of the politics of alterity, her ideas run the risk of going too far too quickly in a landscape in which we are trying to attend to more grounded socio- material issues that are confronting us. What I appreciate within her thesis on nomadic theory is the invitation for us all to start from

the “grounded and accountable location” of where we are (Braidotti, 2011, p. 31). In doing so, her work requires that we stay rooted in the situation we are faced with as it presents itself. To speed forward and prioritise the full breadth of her post-structural thinking could limit the exploration of the issues within the nascent decolonial ambitions of this research project. Even though I appreciate the full extent of where her post-structural imagination takes her, in order to meet the questions that Change Drivers hold at the edge of their praxis, I needed to move more slowly, with land being the socio-ecological connection point. My impulse was to ground the work from this context and to work carefully with some of the theoretical and methodological concepts and strategic thinking tools in her work. Her work offers us tools that open up the language of what it means to acknowledge pervasive hegemonies and still continue to choose to create new subjective and collective configurations “in spite of the times” (Braidotti, 2011, p. 295).

The ethical-political concept here is the necessity to think with the times and in spite of the times, not a belligerent mode of oppositional consciousness, but as a humble and empowering gesture of co-construction of social horizons of hope. (Braidotti, 2011, p. 295)

Her emphasis on the powers of affirmation reminds us how creativity and “cartographic” thinking can help us move forward in transgressive ways even while latent neo-liberalism continues to mutate, consume and co-opt counter-hegemonic cultures (Braidotti, 2011, p. 273). She inspires us to stay awake and to keep moving, a concept that is essential to the heart of this study. Her work continues from Deleuze and Guattari’s (1983) inspiration to become *minotarian*, and is an invitation to move beyond established “molar lines” and to work into other *minotarian* ways – in this study as the potential scope of transgressive impulses towards emancipatory futures.

Braidotti helped me understand why we need to operate as “nomadic subjects” that can navigate towards alternative perspectives within the minefield of imperialism and neo-liberal hegemony. What a nomadic vision of the subject entails is shared below:

The nomadic vision of the subject as a time continuum and a collective assemblage implies a double commitment, on the one hand, to processes of change, on the other, to a strong ethics of the ecosophical sense of community – of ‘our’ being in *this* together. Our copresence, that is to say, the simultaneity of our being in the world together, sets the tune for the ethics of our interaction with both human and non-human others. (Braidotti, 2011, p. 210)

Her thinking around “assemblages” correlates to what happened as I began to collate related “ecologies” of possible decolonial trajectories for emancipation in the continent, the diaspora and the world (De Sousa Santos, 2012). I have in fact been working with “assemblages” that are united in the way that they intentionally aim to “[transcend] the present state of affairs” whilst “empowering creative “counter actualisations” or “transformative alternatives” (Braidotti, 2011, p. 32). Braidotti explores the ability of “nomadic subjects” to work coherently with resonant differences:

Nomadic vitalism ...is neither organicist nor essentialist but rather pragmatic and immanent. There is no overarching concept of life, just practices and flows of becoming, complex assemblages and heterogeneous relations – no idealized transcendental, but virtual multiplicities... (Braidotti, 2011, p. 214)

Some might call this a form of “epistemic anarchy”, a term often related to the work of Feyerabend, a renegade scientist with transgressive impulses against the strict demands of positivist scientific dogma (Hattiangadi, 1977, p. 289). He wrote a notorious book entitled *Against Method* in 1975 in which he argued against strict epistemic prescriptions precisely because of their inability to provide a full picture of the phenomena under study. In his own words he shares part of his thesis:

The world that we want to explore is a largely unknown entity. We must therefore, keep our options open and we must not restrict ourselves in advance. Epistemological prescriptions may look splendid compared to other epistemological prescriptions or with general principles – but who can guarantee that they are the best way to discover, not just a few isolated facts but also some deep-lying secrets of nature? (Feyerabend in Hattiangadi, 1977, p. 289)

Feyerabend’s assertion reminds us that a commitment to only one epistemic culture would reduce our ability to adequately see what a novel or “otherwise” essential understanding of a particular phenomenon might be. This way of thinking also invites us to consider that we might need different and simultaneous ways of looking into things in order to see something that we did not expect. Each methodological lens worked with in this study helps us see clearly into different concerns that are the product of the “underbelly of modernity” (Maldonado-Torres, 2008). The concerns, whether they foreground race, tradition, questions of class or the relationship between the individual and society, gender and sex, belonging, unity or epistemological questions and environmental concerns are interwoven; because inquiries of this nature help to surface often unexpected counter-narratives to dominant meaning-making as yet in motion or unknown which is the ultimate aim of the decolonial project. Intersectional responses to emancipation are so important because they challenges us

to build the intellectual and praxis-based muscle to see and respond to these issues simultaneously even though they may evade full certainty.

One last point that needs emphasis in this way of working with decoloniality is that it is not the number of diverse methodological lenses that is important, it is rather the relevance of each strain and what it enables us to do that should matter. Ndebele assists us with this clarification:

... the question of technique does not mean a rarefied, formal, and disembodied attempt at innovation for its own sake. On the contrary, technique implies the attempt to find the best possible ways of extending social perception through appropriateness of form. (Ndebele in Enwezor, 2002, p. 421)

More is said on why this distinction must be made:

These leaps are not to be understood merely in the quantitative mode of plural multiplications, but rather in the qualitative sense of complex multiplicities. In other words, it is not just a matter of weaving together different strands, variations on a theme ...but rather of playing the positivity of difference as an ontological force and of setting up adequate frames of resonance for their specific rhythms of becoming. (Braidotti, 2011, p. 226)

These quotes inspire a ‘tightening’ of what is considered relevant here. This is necessary because this way of working with so many methodological lenses is sometimes critiqued for “leaving everything open” and for possibly “letting the enemy loose” (Santos, 2014, p. 9). The looseness alluded to in the quote above can be juxtaposed with the idea of ‘braiding’ our focus, as the intention was to reinforce and provide different vantage points that have interrelated and useful ways of understanding the transgressions necessary in the world of seeing and representing (as embedded in this study). The impulse was to create a confluence of useful approaches to the subject matter, not a buffet of endless options that would diminish an appreciation of the very specific hunger calling. This is what I set out to do, with each chapter, and with the overall flow of the study. Both De Sousa Santos (from a post-Marxian decolonial view) and Braidotti (from a non-anthropocentric, post-structural view) have emphasised the process of becoming and the relation between being and becoming as a cross-sectional aspect of transgressive scholarship. Below I provide a more detailed breakdown of the specific “rhythms of becoming” inspired by each chapter by exploring the representational choices made in each chapter (Braidotti, 2011, p. 226).

5.4 Different “Rhythms of Becoming”: Each Chapter and its Chosen Form

Starting with the introductory chapter, the conceptual decision to motivate the research as a continental conversation that could appreciate the hallmarks of colonialism and neo-liberalism whilst simultaneously speaking to the precolonial and contemporary pitfalls of our own making was an attempt to discuss without ‘exceptionalising’ what is emerging for Change Drivers in South Africa. Instead, it sought to historically situate what is happening in South Africa in a way that gives the possibility of seeing South Africa’s journey in the context of what has transpired on the continent and arguably also elsewhere in similar forms (e.g. Latin America, India etc.) but this is not explicitly in focus in this study. It was especially important to contextualise what is happening in South Africa in this way because of the tendency towards ‘South African exceptionalism’ that I believe affects the ability of this nation to learn from the struggles and political choices of other African nations. In the company of contemporary decolonial thinkers, I sought to set out a motivating introduction that could scratch at what is often omitted within discourse on Africa, without collapsing into a depression or paralysis around what has not been possible or the limitations of incessantly reducing what Africa is to what is practically permissible within neo-liberal logic of progress (Andreotti, Stein, Sutherland et al., 2018, p. 37). The introduction to the study is decidedly rogue and unreservedly passionate in its desire to reframe valuable possibilities that lie within the continent but are outside of the frame of “good governance” and conservatively compliant citizens (Mbembe, 2001, p. 7). It does this as a way of responding to the campaigns about the inability of Africans to govern themselves that persist whilst rendering the knowledge, perspectives and lived experiences outside of this framework useless. These “discarded alternatives” are set up as the focus of the study. How do some experiences become discarded alternatives?

Dealing with discarded alternatives means dealing with non-existent entities. There are at least two ways in which non-existent entities may ‘occur’ and accordingly, two ways of trashing alternatives. First, there are alternatives that never occurred because they were prevented from emerging. Second, there are alternatives that did occur, but the types of scale, perspective, resolution, time compression, and signature used by science did not recognise them at all or took them for residues. Only a sociology of absences will be able to elucidate the limits of representation at work in each situation. In the first situation, where the alternatives did not occur, we are dealing with silences and unpronounceable aspiration; in the second situation, where the alternatives did occur, we are dealing with silencing, epistemicides and trashing campaigns. (De Sousa Santos, 2014, p. 153)

The introductory chapter makes the point of surfacing what has been invisibilised in history as an important place from which to work our way forward. Taking into account what is missing or needed has been defined as a “sociology of absence”, a term that was useful in steering the direction of this study (De Sousa Santos, 2011, p.153).

Shifting from the alternative political analysis and critique embedded into the narrative-based introduction for Chapter 1 was a deliberate attempt to diversify the written voice I would use in this study. The intention was to include forms of writing that would allow me to work meaningfully with metaphor and story in a way that could hold the through-line of the study. Only by finding a generative story of this nature could I adequately ingrain the idea of charting a journey of temporal complexity and juxtaposition into the study. This became a touchstone, leitmotif and compass for what I chose to engage within the study. Honouring Napiadi’s initiation and the call and response at its heart also gave me a language for speaking about the spiritual and cultural aspects of the intellectual accompaniment that this project was calling into being, and how the metaphor of song is an important aspect of this. This was an intentional desire to draw on cultural and spiritual resources as part of the meaning-making of this work. By exploring the role that Napiadi’s grandmother and mother played in the initiation, I was conceptualising the ways in which I wanted to collaborate with the work offered by different scholars, writers, poets, musicians, thinkers and the Change Drivers that the study co- conspires with. By exploring the relationship of the young girl, her grandmother and her mother across time and how they needed each other to make the future possible, I allowed myself to conceptualise the relationship I was calling into being as I in turn called on the voices of those who have gone before and those trying to find their way within the present. I found that impressing the desire for kinship and familial bonds into the study completely changed my relationship with the texts I chose to engage with. Instead of a focus on collated analysis, which can involve an attitude of separation, I hoped to engage more deeply and ‘viscerally’ in an act of listening and tracing what has been left behind as useful breadcrumbs to eat while walking forward.

Napiadi’s story also assisted with inscribing a sense of movement into the heart of the study. From the onset of this project the idea of it being a journey in pedagogy and praxis has been key to its conceptualisation. In inviting a sense of movement through complex time, the study had to find a way to theorise in motion (Braidotti, 2011). It asks questions about what it means to be on the move in the present moment, whilst acknowledging what has come before

me, and that which has yet to come. The study was also concerned that what emerges from it does not reify a static way of being. Embedded in this way of thinking is the understanding of “nomadic” ways of thinking and being in the world previously discussed and as an important coalescing element in the study (Braidotti, 2011).

Napiadi’s story also sparked an understanding of the important intergenerational work that lies at the heart of this thesis, and I allowed myself to step further into this in Chapter 2. Working with an intergenerational perspective in Chapter 2 was also an endeavour to disrupt the loneliness of single authorship, writing and thinking and to experience the gifts of what it means to think together in ways that can help one see and interact with the wisdom and queries of one’s broader community. In the chapter, the ‘absented’ thinking of my mother is acknowledged as a resource. This was a way of acknowledging and publicly being with the resources that have shaped me. This was also about finding other ways to engage in the review process necessary in doctoral studies. It was a rooted way of starting the work of reviewing by allowing the questions that my mother and I have journeyed with to come into conversation. It gave us a chance to face and name the parts of ourselves as a continent that still hold many unanswered questions and queries. The intergenerational re-reading of Chinua Achebe in Chapter 2 deepened my understanding of the value of intergenerational accompaniment in tangible ways. It helped me orientate myself fully in what it means to look at the world with those that are dear to me as I invited my mother to help me ask pertinent questions about the meaning of Africa and its performance before and during the nascent colonial encounters shared in *Things Fall Apart*. The novel was chosen because it continues to be a transgressive novel in that it sought to depict the African subject outside of the gaze imposed by the hegemony of colonial literature. Working intentionally with literature as a starting point was an attempt to acknowledge other resources that could engage Africa’s history especially when this history begins to wear down our imaginations in cumbersome ways. An intergenerational reading of Chinua Achebe gave us an imaginative way to live into the questions that still persist when re-reading this prolific text in contemporary times.

Chapter 3 involved a more ‘traditional’ political review of transgressive moves towards freedom within liberation struggles using the lens of Africana Critical Theory and praxis. What transpired in writing this chapter was an engagement with a mostly ‘state-based’ ideological exploration of the terms mobilised by liberation struggles. These struggles were embedded in very ‘masculine’ form of analysis. This was by far the hardest chapter to write –

it was difficult to write comparatively and link the struggles of different African countries in what was ultimately a massive historical study. Perhaps it was also difficult to write because of the pain at the heart of that struggle and because a focus on ideology and mobilisation does not always give the space to speak about the emotional and psychological aspects, or the alternative resources that fueled it, for example, the personal qualities and thoughts of Nyerere. The struggle was relentless and it was difficult to explore the thinking of these liberation leaders without collapsing into melancholia around failure. It felt intense and paradoxical to insist that this work still matters despite resilient and recalcitrant systems of oppression. Going through history in this way was challenging. The literature review of transgressive struggles for liberation gave me a sense of the ideological and practical endeavours involved in recasting the social order. It allowed me to engage in relevant debates over decades that give us a sense of what struggles around decoloniality have meant in theory and praxis. It gave me the space to reconcile what has been important in the journeys of those gone past.

Despite the relevance of the reviews charted in Chapter 3, it was very important to find a way to acknowledge what was missing and what was difficult in writing it. Perhaps this is why Chapter 4 took on such a different form of expression, and why it sought as its primary resource the type of mediums that could eloquently put into focus other ways of knowing and being. This was a treatise to not leave our hearts, bodies and spirits behind in the conversation as we recount the long and painful journey of struggle and emancipation on the continent and elsewhere. Ultimately, bringing in the ‘feminine’ and the unapologetically queer also gave the study another way to think about emancipation in Africa and also very importantly, what it meant and means to conceptualise this emancipation beyond the state. What naturally emerged was an acknowledgement of the work of healing and regeneration and the intergenerational passing of the baton that are deeply ingrained within transgressive impulses towards emancipation. Bearing witness to the ways women and queer persons on the continent and elsewhere have literally imbibed the struggles of the times and became the “crossroads” or “bridges” through which cultural resistance and resilience could be forged was an empowering counterpoint in history to demonstrate (Commas-Diaz, 2008, p. 176). Perhaps this is also because the ‘state’-oriented gaze in Chapter 3 missed seeing the qualities of the “bridge” in those that took over the podium from leaders like Nyerere, Sankara, Mandela and others. In the face of what seemed insurmountable in Chapter 3, engaging with the lyrical knowledge and power of women and queer persons on the continent and in the

diaspora, demonstrated the way in which “miracles are happening everyday” beyond the normative rhetoric about what change and progress should look like (Neelands, 2004, p. 53). This is a testament to the fact that we are still here through the work and grace of so many interwoven learnings and choices. In this way, subjective experiences of intergenerational solidarity and change strategically takes its place in Chapter 4 as a vital resource for thinking and dreaming an emancipatory future on the continent and in the diaspora. Using poetry, fictional prose and lyrical writings to honour women and queer people’s struggles gave me a chance to encounter other sensibilities that could acknowledge the nature of their work on the continent, whilst also asking us strategic questions about what we need to be paying attention to as neo- liberalism mutates in its discourse. The power of poetry as a medium that carries knowledge is evidenced in this chapter. The quote below highlights some of the relief I gained in trying to answer the same questions and invite new ones through this different medium:

... in poetry she found refuge from the restrictions of institutionalized philosophical culture . It was a place where words were allowed to carry both thought and feeling; they could be organized into patterns of sound and meaning; they could feed off the resources of the page in a way that discursive prose could not; they could speak to the extra-logical connections active in the world shunned by the hyper-rational mind. (Dickinson and Goulet, 2010, p. 108)

These works of poetry surfaced the very potent psycho-social and spiritual resources that are an essential part of what has kept us going in the face of a recalcitrant machinery that is hard to efface. I found solace in their reflections and renewed strength to keep walking forward. And now we find ourselves in Chapter 5. A place where my own voice as a researcher undoubtedly takes centre stage as I recall the impulses that have shaped the representations that are found in this study thus far. Suddenly, after many layers of very different kinds of accompaniment, I find myself somewhat alone, and having to account for the trajectories I have chosen as part of the research project. Perhaps this space is similar to being mid-way in Napiadi’s initiation, where she cannot hear the calls of her grandmother anymore and is unaware of what might be calling to her from the future. In this space, she too experienced a feeling of being alone and the challenge of keeping with the praxis that sustained her determination to move forward. “Ngkono kea ea!” she continues to call out defiantly, and I must do the same.

The conversation about methodology and representation affords me the space to talk about how I have chosen to move forward, and the trepidations that I have experienced on what has

been uncharted territory for me. At the heart of my methodological dilemma thus far has been a concern that just because I am engaging creatively with this study, does not mean that I get to get away with everything I do. There is a degree of rigour required no matter what forms one uses. Paul Hart substantiates this by stating that:

There is a difference between being reflexive and accruing reflexivity to oneself. By paying attention to the cultural resources we use to author and authorise accounts of ourselves, being sensitive to power and process in research design and viewing one's self with a mobile or fluid sense of identity, we *may* become intelligible and credible in our representations of self and others (Hart, 2014, p. 482).

At this stage I am emerging from the first part of the study and asking myself questions about the levels of self-reflexivity I have managed to demonstrate there and what these mean for the study. In other words, this chapter requires that I 'find strange' the choices I have made in the study and start to surface the ethical implications of these choices (Hart, 2014, p. 483; see also McGarry forthcoming).

Moving on to the second half of the thesis and the forms I willfully engage there, I now shift the conversation about methodology towards a breakdown of my interactions with the people who are in fact the heart of this study; the Change Drivers I co-conspired with. In the next section I share my initial thoughts about how to co-conspire with Change Drivers in South Africa, and some of the theoretical and praxis-based inputs that helped me craft the nature of that engagement. The aim here is to orientate the reader on the methodological questions that shaped the second half of the study.

5.5 Charting the Transgressive Impulses of South African Change Drivers

The first part of the study re-imagined transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis on the continent and in the diaspora around the central organising question:

If we were to look at the emancipatory efforts that have existed across time on this continent and in the diaspora, what themes in praxis emerge from their endeavours, and what questions remain when we put these into dialogue with contemporary times?

The second part of this study seeks to explore the following questions:

What transgressive dreams, visions and freedoms are Change Drivers in South Africa leading themselves to in these times?

And pedagogically related: How might our understanding of transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis on the continent regenerate itself if we were to recognise the visions of the future(s) that Change Drivers are instinctively leading themselves to?

As a way of further teasing out what is behind these questions, a series of sub-questions are listed below, outlining some of the detail the study aimed to explore:

- What transgressive learning is revealed in the experiences of Change Drivers? What dreams are they instinctively leading themselves to?
- As educators for social change how can we better respond to these visions of the future? How do these insights help us attune, reimagine and regenerate praxis-based efforts towards a paradigm of peace, humanness, pluriversality? (Dlala, 2017, p. 52; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p.142)

These questions feed into each other with the intention of attuning to, regenerating and re-imagining a contemporary vision for transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis on the continent and beyond. These questions seek to open up generative possibilities as part of the research project. The methodological thinking about how new possibilities can be opened up relies on the work of Homi Bhabha, one of the fathers of post-colonial thinking who speaks about the possibility of opening up generative ‘third spaces’ that go beyond dominant discourses and binaries in educational research. The ‘third space’ is described as:

A space which generates new possibilities by questioning entrenched categorisations of knowledge systems and cultures and opens up new avenues with (and this is important to underline) a counter hegemonic strategy. (Braidot, 2013, p. 626)

The strategic component of generative research, as identified in this quote, is that it seeks to create a ‘counter hegemonic’ response that uses research as a tool for social change (Braidot, 2013, p. 626). Generative research in this perspective is an emancipatory project. It hopes to frame educative research in a way that reorganises, regenerates and re-imagines the fragmented voices that are marginalised in the dominant hegemonic meaning-making machine. This is research that seeks to look for what is not articulated as part of the dominant discourse, and finds ways to represent this in a way that can inspire more of itself going forward. In addition to the aforementioned focus on an intellectual legacy rooted in Africa, the fragmented voices this project deliberately seeks to champion is the collective voice of

young Change Drivers in South Africa. These form part of a demographic that has become increasingly vociferous in staking a claim towards a future worthy of their longing (Not Yet Uhuru Collective, 2019; Rushdie, 1999). The nature of their expressions takes many forms. According to Barnett, this sense of expression could be:

... A language of risk, uncertainty and transformation of human being... It may be a poetic language, a disturbance or an inspiration... Smiles, space, unease, frisson, humanity, empathy, care and engagement may be helpful descriptors. (Barnett, 2004, p. 258)

I hoped to engender the kind of ‘third space’ that could allow for a wide and eclectic range of expression for Change Drivers to feel welcome to take up their places. Art-based processes were used as a generative tool to elicit open responses from Change Drivers. For Linda Tuhiwai Smith, the use of imagination is a key tool in shifting the dominant hegemonic discourse. We often hear people talking about re-imagining as a tool for social change. But what does this actually mean, and how can we understand the role of imagination as part of this research? Smith has provides a succinct definition of the role of imagination when used as a sociological tool:

The concept of imagination, when employed as a sociological tool is often reduced to a way of seeing and understanding the world, or a way of understanding how people either construct the world or are constructed by the world. As Toni Morrison argues, however, the imagination can be a way of *sharing* the world. This means, according to Morrison, struggling to find the language to do this and then struggling to interpret and perform within that shared imagination. (Smith, 2012, p. 39, my emphasis)

This quote gives us a rooted understanding of what it means to re-imagine as part of research. It is not simply about re-visiting how one sees the world; it is about expanding our way of being by opening ourselves up to alternatives and bringing these alternatives to life through our writing, our art making and our performances. What I find particularly useful about this quote is the speculated role that imagination plays in our ability to share the world: imagination can help to communicate aspects of the world that one is seeing in a way that can make it distinguishable to others. Baronne builds on this thinking by stating that: “arts based research can help ‘develop conspiratorial conversations...’ involving a communion of agents engaged in exploratory discussions about possible and desirable worlds” (Baronne, 2008, in Fendler 2013, p. 788). Arts-based processes could help us share what we see before us, what matters to us and why. The aspect of “struggling to find the language” is intimately related to this (Smith, 2012, p. 39). It is a process of actively trying to build a language that

demonstrates what can be difficult to articulate. As part of this process, it is important to honour the sense of ‘struggling’ evoked in Smith’s quote. The first part of this research was dedicated to struggling through various mediums to find the expressions and representations that could adequately respond to the research questions. The second part of the study equally tried to find ways to invite Change Drivers and myself as a researcher to creatively struggle to offer an understanding of the experiences and questions that were important to share. This required finding creative open-ended ways to demonstrate the contours of the journeys that are unfolding for Change Drivers and the knowledge that sits there. Knowledge of this nature is seen as a vital resource; it is cultural and social capital that holds power that grows as it is articulated and acknowledged as knowledge. Creating a space that could surface this kind of knowledge challenged me to engage with practices that could invite us all to look beyond some of our routine experiences. This was about surfacing the tacit knowledge that we might have taken for granted in our encounters, it was also about revealing those hidden moments that have been so much a part of the meaning-making of Change Drivers and myself as a social practitioner and artist.

So, what are some of the important markers that helped us surface the tacit knowledge that might otherwise have been overlooked in this research? What would be useful to define from the onset that could help me look at the seemingly routine and mundane in different ways? And what kind of theoretical magnifying glasses could help me be more intentional about setting up a space with others where we could enter a discussion that required us to immerse ourselves in this way?

Deeply connected to the overarching theme of acknowledging *who we are* as Africans, is the idea of highlighting the false dichotomy between the spiritual and the secular in academic inquiry. Nadine Gordimer presents the idea of ‘sacred realism’ as a salve for the divided self in secular and academic writing. Sacred realism is an attempt to capture “an undivided self comprising the secular-cum-spiritual as an indivisible whole” (Viljoen, 2013, p. xii). Through this creative impulse, Gordimer invites her readers to “stretch their imaginary boundaries” and to appreciate a world “in which the secular touches the spiritual, and does so without guilt” (Viljoen, 2013, p. xii). She builds a praxis where this is possible, where the demonstration of one’s academic rigour can be bound to spiritual questioning without diminishing its incisive edge.

Audre Lorde explains the need for a representation of wholeness in a different way. Her work generates the idea of a raw form of knowledge that we all possess ‘erotic knowledge’ which goes beyond the celebration of mental and rational prowess as the benchmark of intellect. Lorde explains erotic knowledge as revealing the false dichotomy between the spiritual and the political (much like Gordimer’s understanding of ‘sacred realism’). She also describes erotic knowledge as knowledge that is formed by the “erotic – the sensual – those physical emotional and psychic expressions of what is deepest and strongest and richest within each of us” (Lorde, 2007, p. 59). The erotic for her “is an assertion of the life force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work and our lives” (Lorde, 2007, p. 55). The aspect of reclaiming captured in this quote hungrily echoes the aspect of regeneration, re-imagining and emancipation invited through this research project.

A few generations later, still in the radical black feminist tradition of Audre Lorde, bell hooks builds on the sense of working with the erotic by describing the power of “embodied knowledge”. Embodied knowledge is “a way of knowing that is often expressed through the body, what it knows, and what has been deeply inscribed on it through experience” (1994, p. 91). Through acknowledging what is deeply inscribed on the body, hooks engages in creating a ‘third space’ of her own, that draws out a unique collective experience. She explains what carving out this third space entails:

I have begun to find my true voice and that no pre-cut niche exists for it; that part of the work to be done is making a place, with others where my and our voices, can stand clear of the background noise and voice our concerns as part of a larger song. (hooks, 1994, p. 185)

The second part of this research project aimed methodologically to generate the kind of expressive space where the voices of Change Drivers and mine (as a researcher, social practitioner and artist) could develop the sense of community and freedom highlighted in this quote. The intention was for this part of the thesis to be a ‘third space’ that can speak eloquently about *what we are* and not about *what we are not*. It is a space where what we hold sacred and what is real can be held with the same credibility. It is a space where what is deepest and strongest for us and our embodied experience has the space to express itself.

This motivation to ‘take ourselves seriously’ can be regarded as an ethical standpoint in this study, because it is through the acknowledgement of our sacred, erotic and embodied

experiences that we generate an understanding of the world beyond normative expectations and impulses (Gqola, 2013). An ‘ethical through-line’ of the study is thus inherently woven into the research because as an emancipatory project, the ethics of the study are a central part of its purpose, positioning and performance in the world. The invitation was for Change Drivers to see and understand the value in sharing these intimate aspects of themselves as part of an emancipatory project. This goes beyond simply seeking their permission to use their work. There is a sense of collusion or ‘co-conspiracy’ in asking for their complicity as part of the research project (Temper, McGarry and Weber, 2019). This is why, as part of the invitation shared with Change Drivers across the country (discussed in more detail later), they had to nominate themselves and motivate why they wanted to be a part of the research project.

Thus it was my intention to invite our sacred, erotic and embodied knowledge to be part of the second part of this study, and this called attention to the underlying ethics in this research. What remains now as part of this methodological underpinning is to articulate where and how I intended to find the information that could generate this ‘third space’, and how I crafted the research to be attentive to the necessary varied experiences and expressions. This is the point where the work of bell hooks and Rosa Braidotti became meaningful compasses in the territory I was charting.

Despite the range of expression that I hoped to explore, it is also important to further identify *exactly* what I was looking for within the range of expression I hoped to explore with Change Drivers. I wanted to invite an expressive space for bringing to the fore the wholeness of ourselves, but within this broad vision what useful markers could help me gather the knowledge I need as a researcher? I was particularly interested in looking out for experiences that have helped Change Drivers cross previously uncharted boundaries within themselves as significant markers. In the language of bell hooks, this speaks to instances of transgressive learning. Transgressive learning can be defined as learning that teaches students to “transgress against racial, sexual, and class boundaries in order to achieve the gift of freedom” (Watkins, 1994). For a community of Change Drivers navigating their way through post-apartheid South Africa, issues of race, sexuality, class and identity, amongst others, were huge factors affecting how they navigate and make meaning of this place, while they consider their unique contributions to society. In addition, there were many other issues that Change Drivers consistently bump up against in their work, and in relation to each other, that has

required they reflect on (and in some cases, transgress) boundaries that do not serve their purposes. Viljoen paints a vivid picture of what one has to negotiate at the borders of learning:

... the border implies an idea of a limited territory beyond which is the elsewhere, the *otherwise* and the foreign. It comforts us in our national, social and cultural identity, and secures individuals and groups through proximity network and ties. Beyond that, the border opens onto otherness; difference ... perceived as a space of demarcation or of transit, the border can become a place of transformation and exchange, a real or imagined territory of openness. 'Crossing' borders can also take on a symbolic aspect and represent a kind of initiation or transgression. (Viljoen, 2013, p. xii, my emphasis)

I was curious about what these potential territories of 'initiation' and learning were for Change Drivers, and the instances in which they crossed borders. Beyond the six spheres that Activate! explored with them (leadership, innovation, articulation, socio-political navigation and ripples and waves of change), what else was happening for Change Drivers out in the world beyond this training experience? What kind of transgressive learning did they encounter as they interacted amongst their peers and broader society in general? In what ways were Change Drivers challenged to traverse their personal and relational boundaries out there in the world? This was about asking them to be self-reflexive and critical about their experience so as to identify critical markers they could creatively map. The aspect of critical self-reflection hoped to give Change Drivers an opportunity to revisit their learnings from the beginning of their journey to the present. This methodology echoed the sentiments of bell hooks when she asserts that "without the capacity to think critically about ourselves and our lives, none of us would be able to move forward, to change or to grow" (hooks, 1994, p. 202). The exercise in critical and creative self-reflection hoped to offer something of value to the Change Drivers who were open to this process. This offering was framed in terms of the emancipatory potential of research, and the re-invigoration of research as a human right and a fundamental aspect of the creation of alternative futures (Appadurai, 2013, pp. 282-283):

... while knowledge of the world is increasingly important for everybody... the opportunities for gaining such knowledge are shrinking. This is why it is important to deparochialize the idea of research and make it more available to young people with a wide range of interests and aspirations. Research in this sense, is not only the production of original ideas and new knowledge. ... It is also something simpler and deeper. Research is the capacity to systematically increase the horizons of one's current knowledge, in relation to some task, goal or aspiration ... without new knowledge there can be no new futures. (Appadurai, 2013, pp. 282-283)

Thus, the intention was to offer a creative process of self-reflection as a research process designed to invite Change Drivers to delve deeply into their past, current and future understandings of themselves in relation to their particular and collective aspirations. Again, the relevance of art-based processes in creating new knowledge is a useful rejoinder to Appadurai's call to see research as a human right. Considerable insight has been generated regarding the power of arts-based processes in creating new knowledge. The value of bringing together the work of art, teaching and research referred to below as a/r/t/ography is emphasised below:

a/r/t/ographical research reclaims the status of art practice as a site for knowledge production. Asserting a learning-by-doing approach to collapse the separation between theory and practice, it proposes a process of knowledge building that combines 'knowing (theoria), doing (praxis) and making (poesis)' (Irwin and Springgay, 2008, p. xxiii). By emphasizing practice, the act of inquiry is set in motion, such that the journey is of equal importance to the end result. (Fendler, 2013, p. 788)

This research project hoped to inspire a space where what one knows, does and expresses could co-conspire with the broader questions of the research. The question of how responsive the broader research questions were to the specific impulses of each Change Driver is an important one. Participatory research processes stress the importance of having the participants lead their own way into the questions they find important. I found that asking participants to reflect on important instances of their transgressive learning was an invitation that intentionally invited pluriversal ways of seeing into the broader research question, therefore acknowledging both the gap in research that the project sought to address, whilst exploring and regenerating open avenues for pedagogical experimentation.

This idea of the self-reflective-subject-in-motion was complemented by the work of Rosi Braidotti and her nomadic theory. A nomad can be described as a "member of people who move seasonally from place to place" (dictionary.com). Braidotti aligns this sense of nomadism to an ongoing process of self-actualisation that she describes simply as the process of 'becoming':

Nomadic theory's central figuration expresses a process of ontology that privileges change and motion over stability. ... The minority is the dynamic or intensive principle of change in nomadic theory, whereas the heart of (phallogentric) majority is dead. (Braidotti, 2011, p. 29)

In this description, Braidotti favours the evolution and growth of minority thought and action, seeing this as central to change. The idea of the ‘minority’ highlighted here is an important corollary to the emancipatory ethic in this research. So far, I have highlighted the desire to work with a sense of wholeness and expression and a sense of being that is often ‘occluded’ in the mainstream meaning-making machine. I have also added thoughts about how spaces of transgressive learning give us an opportunity to see and work with special instances of personal meaning-making that might be overlooked within this dominant meaning-making machine. In the quote above, Braidotti expresses the desire to move beyond the dictates of a phallogocentric majority and to prioritise and surface other ‘minotarian’ ways of being in process. She does this in an affirmative way that goes beyond emphasising a sense of victimhood or ‘nostalgia’ or ‘melancholy’ frequently highlighted in the experience of being an occluded minority, and instead inspires us to use the experience of being a minority to bring forth alternative ways of being that are more just (Dlamini, 2009; Braidotti, 2011). This way of thinking aligns itself strongly with creating generative ‘third spaces’ that use memory as a potent tool in creating alternative futures. To re-quote the text shared earlier in this chapter, memory in this perspective is a:

creative force that gives the ‘wretched of the earth’ as Fanon put it, a head start toward the world historical task of envisaging alternative world orders and more humane and sustainable social systems. It comes down to a double consciousness of both the multiple axes of oppression, and hence of hurt, humiliation, and pain, as well as the creative force they can generate as motors of transversal and collective transformation. (Braidotti, 2011, p. 32)

This quote is another rendition of the thinking around ‘double consciousness’ explicated by W. E. du Bois in his seminal text *The Soul of Black Folks* (Moore, 2005, p. 751). Adding to his understanding of the ‘mental conflict’ entailed in being both black and American, Frantz Fanon contributed the conversation about the psychological ‘double consciousness’ into what had been a discussion held within the discipline of sociology for Du Bois (Moore, 2005, p. 752). For these two prolific thinkers, ‘double consciousness’ implied a fragmentation of sorts, a ‘maladaptation’ to a fragmented psyche (Moore, 2005, p. 752). In the example given above, Braidotti gives another interpretation of what ‘double consciousness’ could entail, this time positing its potential for emancipatory outcomes. The quote advocates for those who acutely feel the contradictions of the “underbelly of modernity” to unpack the pain of past and present experiences in order to allow themselves to struggle to create an expressive language that can explore unresolved questions that need tending to as we move forward

(Maldonado-Torres, 2008). In doing so, Braidotti's work (as well as that of De Sousa Santos previously explored) inspires us to think carefully about:

... how to resist the present, more specifically the injustice, violence, and vulgarity of the times, while being worthy of our times, so as to engage with them in a productive, albeit it oppositional and affirmative manner. (Braidotti, 2011, p. 268)

This was about using the indelible history across the poles of society to bring forth a future worthy of our longing (Rushdie, 1999). So, how did I intend to practically trace these journeys in ways that could help me surface the emerging visions of a community of Change Drivers? Braidotti gives us a deft language of inquiry that asks us to pay attention to:

... lines of flight and zigzagging patterns that undo dominant representations. Dynamic and outward bound, nomadic thought undoes the static authority of the past and redefines memory as the faculty that decodes residual traces of half-effaced presences; it retrieves archives of leftover sensations and accesses afterthoughts, flashbacks and mnemonic traces. Philosophical thought especially is a form of self-reflexivity unfolding in perpetual motion in a continuous present that is project orientated and intrapersonal. (Braidotti, 2011, p. 2)

The features of transgressive learning captured in this quote as well as the erotic knowledge, sacred realism and embodied knowledge previously described, were essential to the methodology of this project. In many ways, this perspective echoed the language used to frame this research as a journey in praxis and pedagogical thought. If indeed the research hoped to rediscover past milestones within an African perspective of transgressive decolonial learning, whilst listening for and evolving towards an imagined future in the present moment, then the sense of movement that is implicated in this conceptual framing is substantiated by nomadic ways of seeing, thinking and being. It gave me a useful sense of the patterns that I could invite Change Drivers to reflect on and trace.

At the heart of the thinking about patterns and charting territory is the symbolism of the cartography. A diverse range of educational scholars have experimented with the idea of cartographies as a form of social imagination. For some, creating social cartographies provided "provisional depictions of different perspectives on shared problems of concern," (Andreotti, Stein, Sutherland et al., 2018, p. 12). While collectively mapping different perspectives on shared problems has proved to be a useful tool in education, this research project sought to attend to the reflexive personal and relational meaning-making of Change Drivers as a precursor to a uniquely collective focus. This was because the Change Drivers I

engaged with came from such diverse spaces, I wanted to create the space where they could explore social cartographies of their own transgressive learning in their “communities of practice” before we came to conversations of what this means collectively for them as Change Drivers in South Africa (Wenger, 1998). An understanding of how cartographies, social imaginary and transgressive learning could work together is provided below:

An imaginary is not reality as such, but rather our way of comprehending what reality is, a common understanding that can become so entrenched as to appear self-evident, hiding the fact that there could be any other way of explaining the world. By extending this line of thought toward a social imaginary of learning, cartographies are a resource that could disrupt common understandings of education by giving an account of nomadic learning. (Fendler, 2013, p. 791)

The thematic concerns revealed in this quote fits very well with the focus of this study. Cartographies of nomadic learning or transgressive learning in this study give us a way of looking into the manouverings of Change Drivers in the present moment. Braidotti further explains the thinking behind creating cartographies of the present and the purposes that this can serve:

A cartography is a politically informed map of one’s historical and social locations, enabling the analysis of situated formations of power and hence the elaboration of adequate forms of resistance ... Locations provide the ground for political and ethical accountability ... Cartographies of locations, political (dis) identifications, and strategic reconfigurations are the tools for consciousness raising. (Braidotti, 2011, p. 271)

The subject in motion as presented through cartography enabled us to bear witness to significant political and social evolution happening over time, whilst also charting a way forward through ‘strategic reconfigurations’ of the future. Braidotti is of course drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari in her thinking around a nomadic sense of movement and strategic (re) configuration. This line of thought arises originally from “the geophilosophy” of Deleuze and Guattari (Fendler, 2013, p. 790). More is said on the intellectual precursors of this thinking:

One of Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987/2004) most prolific concepts, the rhizome, is a map. However, this map has an important characteristic; it does not represent but rather produces a given milieu; ‘[t]he map does not depict the unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious...’ (Fendler, 2013, p. 790)

This kind of exploration seemed very useful as a way of tracing the transgressive learning of Change Drivers because it provided an activity “where mapping learning is not merely an

exercise in representation, but rather involves developing an awareness of one's identity as a learner" (Fendler, 2013, p. 790). The specific contributions that Braidotti brings to the legacy of Deleuze and Guattari's work is also highlighted: "Braidotti reminds us that the practice of social cartography grounds the conceptual, often highly abstract, lexicon introduced by Deleuze and Guattari" (Fendler, 2013, p. 791). She thus gives us a way of working with social cartographies that is tangible, whilst being critical to the articulation and further creation of alternative trajectories. The cartography additionally inscribes within it the presence and necessity of movement within it. The motion embedded within social cartographies is shared:

One must indeed start from somewhere specific: a grounded and accountable location and the process of becoming is a time bomb placed at the very heart of social and symbolic system that has welded together being, subjectivity, masculinity, compulsory heterosexuality, and (western) ethnocentrism. The different becomings are lines cutting open this space and demanding from us constant remapping: it is a question, every time of finding new coordinates. (Braidotti, 2011, p. 31)

The sense of constant remapping and finding new coordinates gives a beautiful sense of the future in motion and allows us to inch forward step by step in our meaning making as we confront this uncertain world. Methodologically, I was excited about what engaging with art-based cartographies might open up for Change Drivers. If indeed the intention of this research is to ask us how we can learn for an unknown future, then the use of art-based cartographies of experience gives us useful ways to consistently and reflectively meet that unknown and to reconfigure oneself more strategically by finding new coordinates every time. The sense of motion is constant. It is not a sense of arrival that the research hoped to capture, it was about capturing the transgressive motion in action. This is beautifully captured by the affirmation that "you can never be a nomad; you can only go on trying to become nomadic" (Braidotti, 2011, p. 43). This was a way of working that I believed could seed an interesting and open pedagogical practice for and with Change Drivers working towards a future of our longing (Rushdie, 1999).

I would like to further stress the openness of this creative project. Whilst the cartography provided a very powerful idea to hold the (re)configurations of Change Drivers over time, the medium through which this is expressed for each Change Driver holds the space for an autonomy that is devoted to the sense of erotic, sacred and embodied knowledge that each Change Driver could define for themselves. This is where art, in whatever form(s), became an important aspect of the collective exploration. By inviting the use of art, we all engaged in

four roles as part of this study, that is the role of artist, researcher and teacher and learner. I stress the presence of these different roles as a way of connecting with the term ‘a/r/t/ography’ employed by “a group of researchers from the faculty of education at the university of British Colombia” (Fendler, 2013, p. 788). The usefulness of this term is that it:

... defines itself as a form of *living inquiry*, which involves working from a ‘continuous reflective and reflexive stance to engagement, analysis and learning’ (Irwin & Springay, 2008, p. xxix). This position has a strong pedagogical bent; casting research as living inquiry demystifies it, bringing research closer to our personal experiences and expanding the criteria regarding who possesses the acceptable know-how needed to produce knowledge. (Fendler, 2013, p. 788)

This links strongly with the previous assertions around seeing research as a human right, whilst also substantiating the creation of arts-based social cartographies as a potential knowledge building process that is reflexive and in motion (Appadurai, 2013, pp. 282-283). Social cartographies that are interested in teasing out the relationship between art, research and teaching thus emerge as “a methodological framework that responds to fluid and dynamic concept of nomadic pedagogy” (Fendler, 2013, p.788).

This section has devoted itself to sharing some of the conceptual underpinnings that influenced the design of the ‘third space’ generated with Change Drivers. In the next section, greater detail about the workshops that were held will be shared in order to orientate the reader around how these conceptual underpinnings helped me to create a responsive workshop plan that could attempt to work generously with the research questions.

5.6 The Practicalities of Praxis and its Methodological Contributions

This research project engaged with 21 young Change Drivers from across South Africa in ways that invited them to share the questions and queries they hold at the edge of their praxis. This was an invitation to get a sense of what matters to them, and what questions they bring to their work as Change Drivers. In this section, I describe the methodological ruminations that lay at the heart of creating a space with others in which this could emerge. This was an important part of the study because as intimated in the introductory chapter, this study spells a reflexive break from practices I had previously been engaged with as a facilitator, for Activate! Change Drivers. The project was designed to help me find ways to better prioritise ways of engaging with Change Drivers that could move more coherently with the meaning-making and transgressive impulses that charge their contemporary experiences. In this section, I describe how I worked with methodology in order to engender this process, and

what reflections I gained for myself and from those I co-conspired with about the methodologies needed to do this kind of work going forward. Below is a narrative breakdown of the art-based workshops.

By the end of 2016 I was ready to move into the fieldwork after spending many months in preparation. As part of my preparation, it was important that I found a way to explain to the networks of Change Drivers (that I had worked with previously) what the work that we did together with Activate Change Drivers meant to me, and why I had chosen to formally take a break from that work in order to pay attention to questions I was grappling with in terms of the future of transgressive decolonial pedagogies in contemporary Africa. I also had to explain the opportunity that I saw before us, that is, how we were in position to think about how we could regenerate our ideas about what transgressive decolonial pedagogies looks like in South Africa based on the questions that Change Drivers are grappling with at the edge of their praxis. A brief video invitation was sent out throughout the networks during this time, with a clear request that any of the Change Drivers watching who felt called to be part of a research project of this nature, should contact me directly for more information. A written version of this video invitation is included as Appendix 1 on the online google platform that holds all accompaniments to this thesis⁴⁹. Those that contacted me directly and were interested in hearing a bit more about the research project were sent a detailed individualised letter explaining the project and a brochure that helped those interested in understanding some preliminary ideas about how the project as a whole was going to run. These two written forms of communication to Change Drivers are included in this thesis as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. One will notice that an important part of the project was the thinking about how to communicate what we were going to do. This required that I break down the language I used in these invitations so that the terms could be easily accessible for those that I was hoping to co-conspire with. Instead of using the language around ‘emancipatory pedagogies’ or ‘transgressive decolonial pedagogies’ in my invitation I spoke about ‘education for social change’, a phrase I knew would be able to communicate the heart of the study without alienating those not familiar with these more academic terms.

After the receiving the information shared, Change Drivers nominated themselves and were then invited to consider the knowledge they have gained over decades as crucial to the

⁴⁹ Access to all appendices are available via email: Please email Injairu@sheddingskins.co.za for access.

regeneration of transgressive pedagogies on the continent. Change Drivers were asked to offer their experiences and knowledge as part of this agenda. Initially, the study hoped to invite 18 Change Drivers to participate in its aims, but in the end 21 Change Drivers were chosen because of the levels of interest that was shown. It is important to note that I received over 30 applications to be a part of the project. Each participant was asked to fill in an information sheet that gave a brief idea about why they wanted to be a part of the project. An example of a filled in information sheet is provided in Appendix 3. Ultimately, the selection process was largely based on the desire to interact with a group of Change Drivers from across South Africa that were as diverse as possible when it came to their gender, race, class, geographical location (especially the rural/ urban divide) as well as the politics they represent. It is important to keep in mind that in one way or another I had had the opportunity to interact with a great number of those that applied to be part of the project. In instances where I did not know enough about the applicants and their particular politics, I relied on the insights of my former colleagues at Activate! Change Drivers to give me a good sense of their context and their work . I ended up with 21 co-conspirers interested in collaborating with the project namely:

Prince Charles, Action Setaka, Nozuko Masiba, Funeka Molamu, Khululwa Nkatshu, Thabiso Motlakasi, Lusanda Mfafa, Motsatsi Mmola, Kristi Jooste, Peter Wright, Mkhusele Madiba, Happy Phaleng, Mojalefa Maloleka, Judith Mukuna, Phindi Duma, Ashraaf Kenny, Renier Louw, Kgotso Sothoane, Gcobani Jombile, Sanele Ntshingana and Unathi Jacobs.

I regretted that I did not manage to involve a woman of mixed race or ‘coloured’⁵⁰ origin in the group as two of the candidates from this demographic cancelled at the last moment, just before their transport picked them up. Additionally, I did not manage to get a participant from KwaZulu- Natal, and despite asking my former colleagues to assist me in this regard. One candidate that did seem interested was not able to send in his application in time to join any of the workshop spaces available. Despite this, those that applied to be a part of the programme represented a diverse range of interested persons that I believed would provide a useful starting point in answering questions about what Change Drivers in South Africa are

⁵⁰ The name the Apartheid regime gave to people of mixed heritage in South Africa. It is a politically contested term that many try not to perpetuate.

longing for, and how they go about transgressing their own understandings of the status quo in order to accede to these dreams.

The 21 Change Drivers that confirmed their interest in the project were divided into three separate intakes. Each intake was set to meet for a four-day residential workshop at Stanford Valley in Hermanus. Historically, Stanford Valley was the place in which some of the Western Cape Change Drivers from earlier years had met for training. As such, the secluded and peaceful venue was symbolic of the continuation of a journey that we started together a long time ago – except this time, the format and structure of our gathering was going to be very different. Whereas Change Drivers had come for ‘training’ before, this time they gathered to reflect on and offer the knowledge they had with the aim of strengthening the future of transgressive decolonial pedagogies on the continent. They were invited to influence the way that we teach and learn for social change on the continent based on the legitimacy of the critical questions they hold at the edge of their praxis. The dates for each workshop were set: 30 October – 3 November for Intake 1, the 20–24 November for Intake 2 and from the 4– 8 December for Intake 3 in 2016. Each intake was conceptualised as an iteration that would allow me to learn important lessons about how to create a holding space that could help us work creatively and openly with the research questions. I started off slowly with the first intake by inviting only five Change Drivers to participate. After this initial experience, I increased the numbers for Intakes 2 and 3 to eight Change Drivers each. Each group stayed for four days and three nights immersed in reconnecting with ourselves, the land and the questions that sit at the edge of our praxis. During these workshops we collectively took the time to reflect on the significant moments and experiences that have influenced the different ways Change Drivers think and practice social change in their contexts. This was a space to think about how their practice has evolved over the years and some of the necessary transgressions they have performed as part of their evolution.

We began our time together by creating constellations of who was present for each gathering. We collectively mapped the group in terms of age acknowledging the different generations of Change Drivers that were present. After creating this timeline, we delved into our memories to share some of the first instances in which we felt suddenly aware of the complexities of the social spaces we grew up in, and the first time we understood for ourselves that positive change was needed. These were stories of the first time we got an inkling in our lives of the need to drive change. As each person shared their stories, the history of our social contexts

started to emerge, as well as important tracings of each person's intimate initiations into the need to create positive change in their communities.

After establishing introductory encounters with younger versions of themselves, we began to delve into a co-definition of their understandings of some of the key terms that we often use as a community of Change Drivers. The exploration of these terms was done using creative metaphors and methodologies as a way of creating a space where each person would be challenged to think carefully about the experiences associated around these terms. Creative methodologies provided "suitably strange" and engaging ways to explore and express what we know to be true (McGarry, forthcoming). The strangeness of each methodology was a deliberate tactic to get Change Drivers to go beyond spoken word and rational deliberation as a predominant way of expressing themselves. This was intentional as I was aware that often in the spaces in which Change Drivers gathered, there was a very particular kind of 'debate style' that had the tendency to subsume the way that meaning was collectively made. While this created very robust discussions, I was concerned that other expressive means, and other ways of knowing not bound to certainty and to defending our positions, could be eroded if we only saw the value of our expressions in this way. These creative methodologies hoped to diversify the forms of expression that needed to be welcome in order to get into the depth of our sacred, erotic and embodied knowledge from the start of our time together. What was also an important marked difference that I hoped to signal from the start was the way in which we would approach time together. I was aware about the pressure in my timetable when I facilitated workshops for Activate! Change Drivers and how that impacted the nature of our interactions. I intentionally wanted to create the space that communicated that it was an honour to have the time with them to reflect on our questions. As such the programme was one that was deliberately slowed down, allowing for one critical question to be explored for each day. Each day would provide the space to explore open artistic tools that would provide the space for deep immersion into one's own journey as well as the space to look up and witness what everybody else around us was holding.

The first of the terms that we needed to explore together in order to ground ourselves properly was 'Change Driver' itself. As an introduction to this, a historical account was provided. The intention here was not to take for granted where that term came from, what it actually means and why or why not those present chose to define themselves in this way. As a way of doing this we went for a long silent walk in nature. Each participant was asked to

come back with something they could find in nature that represents what a Change Driver means for them.

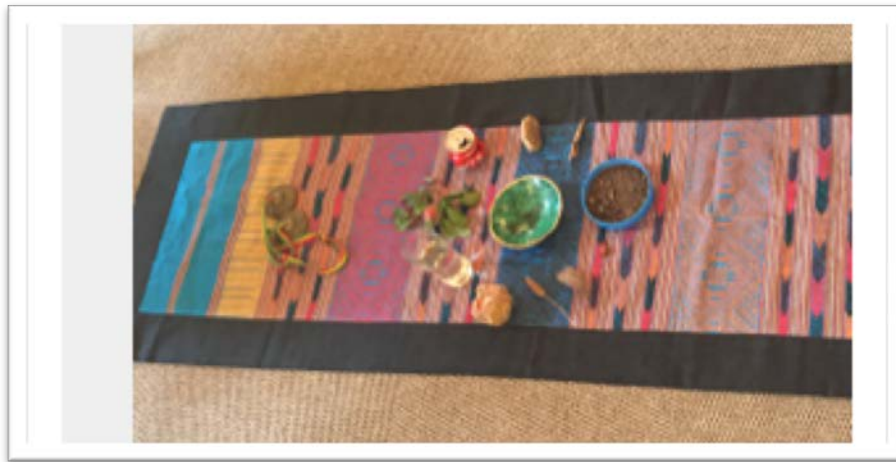


Figure 5.4: Defining ourselves as Change Drivers using something found in nature

Some of the definitions included a Change Driver as someone resilient like a discarded coke can whose presence still persists in the landscape long after its initial use. For others, a Change Driver was like a rock, especially because rocks are what are thrown in resistance to the status quo – thus a Change Driver was described as someone who purposely disrupts the status quo. Others described a Change Driver as someone who purposely sees themselves as the soil, something fertile that is waiting to receive and grow something that can be of sustenance in the world. Others saw Change Drivers as seeds, the element itself that holds new possibility for sustenance. Lastly, Change Drivers were also described as being water something that naturally adapts and takes the shape of whatever vessel it happens to find itself in; a shape-shifter of sorts continually moving and actively adapting to the situations one finds oneself in.

After this, we explored the individual contexts that Change Drivers come from in greater detail, and how this influences their specific work. As part of this we began to analyse collectively what the status quo looked like from their different perspectives. The term ‘status quo’ was used intentionally due to its popular nature – many use it to describe anything as negative within one’s environment. At worst it can be used to describe whatever conspiracy theories one is inclined to believe. So this became a critical session that asked each person to consider what this meant for them, and how it shows up within their contexts. This was an interesting way to pay attention to what is showing up in the life worlds of Change Drivers as they continue to devote themselves to creating sustainable viable futures in their

communities. It was interesting to witness the different features that were brought up as a part of this.



Figure 5.5: Aspects of status quo as proposed in groups

Change Drivers spoke about the impact of patriarchy, traditional culture, sexism, violence, corruption, limited forms of education and access to resources in general as being parts of how they experienced the status quo in their contexts. They also spoke about the way that success is measured and promoted through media as an enduring feature of how the status quo perpetuates itself.

Following this exercise, we co-defined what it means to ‘transgress’ which included ideas about how to keep oneself moving past the boundaries imposed by society upon us, or even moving past personal boundaries in response to society. We used our bodies to express what the act of stepping over boundaries looks like. We spoke about how some situations have the effect of making us shed our skins, and literally evolve forward towards other ways of being in the world.

From here, each co-conspirer was invited to make cartographic maps of the way in which they have navigated their specific contexts, and how this has evolved over time. Everybody was asked to pay specific attention to instances in which they feel they were compelled to transgress, grow or learn something significant in response to their context. We spent a whole

day making creative pieces that included the use of paint, beads, craft pieces string and anything else they could find that would be useful in their creative processes. The instruction was to create a map that charted and adequately represented their transgressive journeys over time. Change Drivers were encouraged to be as detailed as possible about what they had been learning over time in their maps.



Figure 5.6: Transgressive maps

The second day began with a collective walk together in the surroundings. Each person was given five minutes to lead the walk to wherever they wished. It was also at this point in the week that we introduced the camera and Bart Love, our film person as an additional Change Drivers in our workshop. This was done only at this stage because I was aware that during the first day, Change Drivers were immersed in their conversations with themselves as they made the cartographies of their journeys. I did not want the camera or Bart to intrude in this process, and we collectively negotiated when and how the filming could happen – knowing fully well that we all intended to share what was emerging here with the outside world as a way of disseminating the research. The camera was affectionally given a name in the first group, something that stuck over the next two intakes. We called the camera ‘Roger’ and spoke of it in person in order to communicate our feelings about having Roger look at us. Questions about how one was feeling about Roger animated the rest of our time together as a useful way to negotiate when it felt appropriate or not to have parts of our time together being filmed.

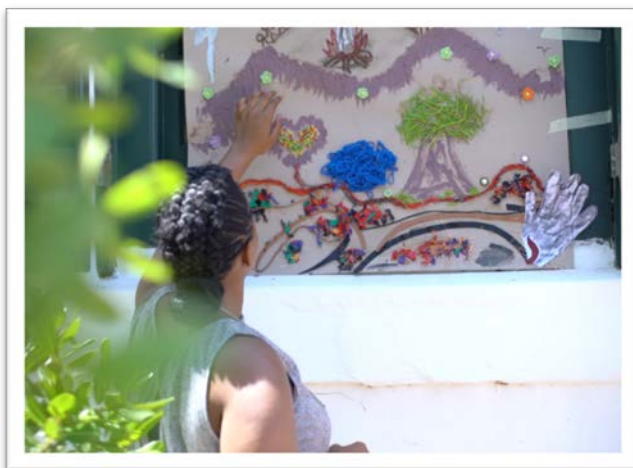
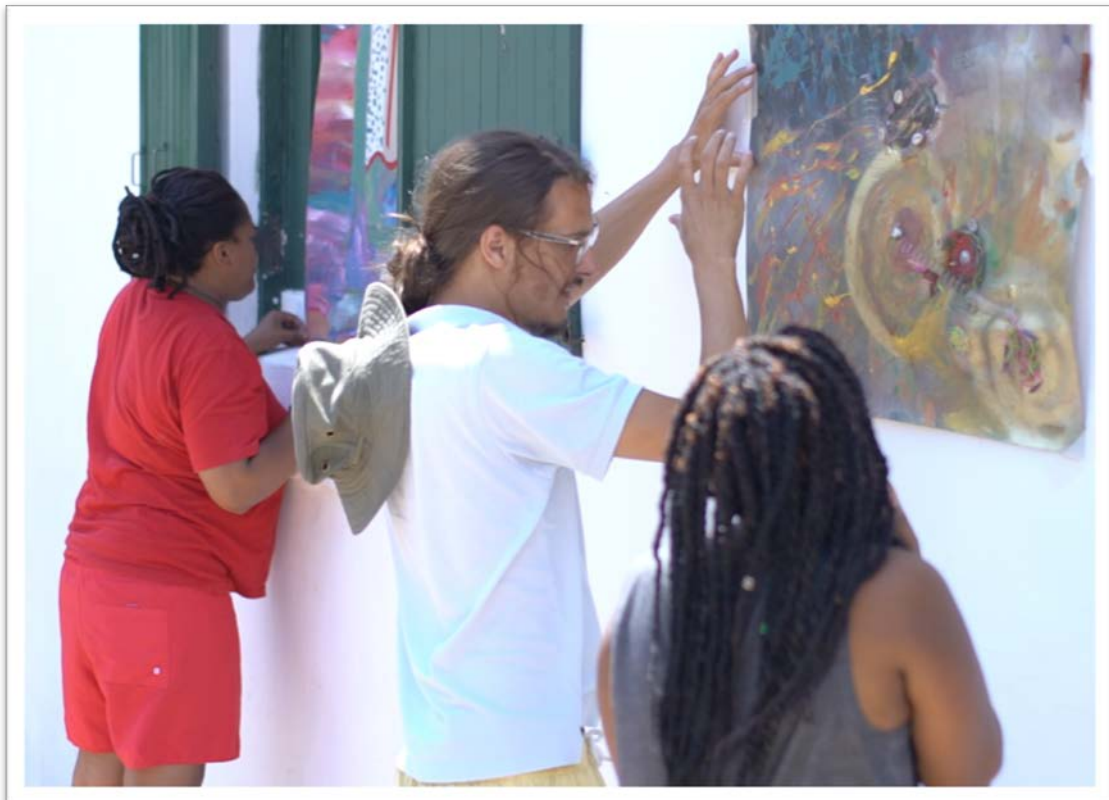






Figure 5.4: Walking together.

After our walk together we took a step back and each person looked at what they had created with fresh eyes. We set up an exhibition space outside and each person had to look carefully at what they had created and acknowledge what they had represented on their maps. In silence each person was invited to journal their reflections on the creative piece they had created. Key questions to reflect on by journaling included: When looking at the pictures they created, what could they say their journey has been like? What have they been learning and unlearning? What are the key transgressive impulses they have had over time? And lastly what have they been ‘becoming’ as part of this process?





Figures 5.6: Reflecting in the exhibition space

After these silent reflections we gathered in plenary to collectively share our reflections around these questions. Each person spoke about what was emerging. This was a very intimate session of sharing and all present were encouraged to listen to the different trajectories of each person, the transgressive impulses they had instinctively followed and the questions that still sit at the heart of their experience i.e. the things are difficult to resolve that they feel keep coming up.



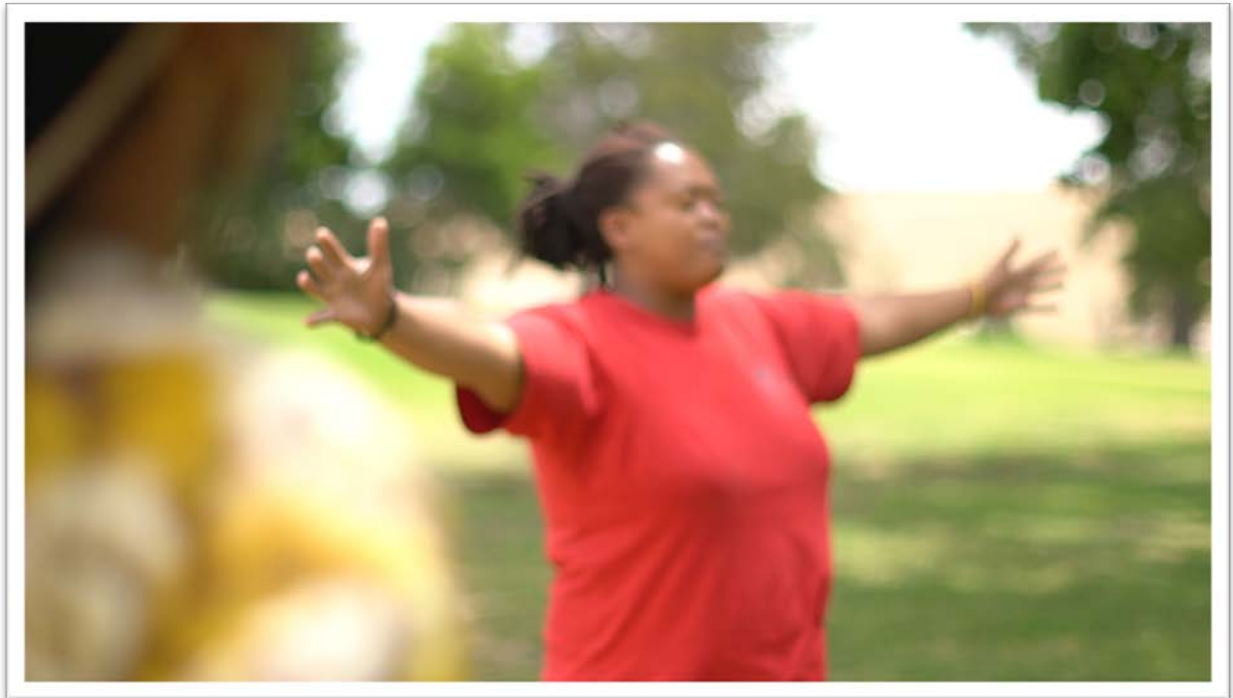


Figures 5.7: Unpacking our cartographies together

As a way of acknowledging some of the ‘heavy issues’ that emerged as a part of this process beyond the use of language, we worked without bodies as a way of crystallising what came up for each individual. We created body maps which consisted of sculpted images that used the body to express the residual feeling that each individual felt lay at the heart of what they had journaled and shared. Each individual was tasked to create a body image that captured where it is that they find themselves in their journey. We gathered in a circle and as each person shared their body map, those around them echoed their image so they could see themselves reflected back to themselves through the chorus of their peers. After this, participants in pairs reflected on the sense of movement they hoped to generate from where they are to where they want to be. Keeping in mind the body sculpture, what would be the position that they would like to find themselves in their journey going forward? They created new body sculptures depicting where it is that they hope to move to. Once they had decided what this would be they were invited to go back to their original movement and find the natural movements from their first body image that would lead them to the second one. Through doing this, we began to theorise using our bodies to reflect the movement required from where we are now to where we hope to be. We took turns observing each pairs’ sense of movement and acknowledging the transitions that they hoped to make in their journeys. This aspect of body work aimed to inscribe the theme of movement or nomadism into the trajectories Change

Drivers had already expressed, demonstrating through our bodies what gestures each person was looking up to in their life and work. It also was a way of slowing down to see some of the transitional movements they needed to invite into their lives to move towards what they had reason to value.





Figures 5.8: Witnessing and echoing each other's body maps

After sharing our reflections on these individual exercises, we raised our gaze up from our individual trajectories and tried to understand the broader social context of these cartographies, these stories and sculptures. We raised questions about the current social climate in South Africa based on the trajectories Change Drivers find themselves in.

Questions included: What can we say is happening more broadly that is creating these responses for Change Drivers? And what are we trying to create collectively as Change Drivers in response to this? This included a conversation about how we collectively define the common good. This was an interesting and intense conversation across all the groups as each individual perspective battled to reconcile a collective understanding of the common good. It was a useful dialogue within groups because it highlighted the many ways in which like-minded progressive Change Drivers have very different and passionate ideas around what is most important to foreground when it comes to our ideas of the common good. In the second group, the term ‘common good’ was troubled by participants. They felt that the term has a history that did not emerge from their concerns. Learning from these conversations gave us a chance to frame the conversation around what ‘freedom’ rather than the ‘common good’ could mean. This was a term Change Drivers felt more comfortable with. The conversation was fascinating, long with many silences. It took us into places where we questioned so much of what we desire and wondered what it means to adequately reach for something one has never experienced. It was also somewhat sobering to acknowledge how hard it was to respond to these questions amongst like-minded peers, especially as much of the energy of young people in South Africa at the time was being channelled into demanding a decolonised vision for freedom. Do we even know what this means for us as a collective? How do we plan on making this happen through our actions? These are some of the questions collectively deliberated by the groups.



Figures 5.9: Transitioning from the personal to the collective



Figures 5.10: Transitioning from our personal stories into our collective thoughts



Figure 5.11: Asking questions about what this all means for us as a collective

The whole group was then challenged to create a creative expression of any kind that captured the issues highlighted in their conversation. Each group shared a play in the end that

captured some of the tensions in the conversations that emerged as well as what they could agree on.

On the third day the group was encouraged to start focusing on the individual offerings made towards the question of transgressive decolonial pedagogies for the future. We started off by a meditation that helped us imagine all those that have come before us that have tried to drive change. This involved thanking the many hands, seen and unseen, that have been an important part of our journey of learning and struggle going forward. We then turned our attention to all those coming after us – the ones that we (whether we are aware of it or not) open paths for through our work and our questionings. The thinking was that as a result of our immersive time together, each person could begin to craft their own understandings of what matters to them. We ended off this guided meditation by asking each individual to write a letter to those coming after them: other young people on the continent who want to drive change, telling them what they think will be essential for them to know, and what they personally consider should constitute learning for social change in the future. The letters expressed what each person present hoped that those who are coming after would know to help guide them on their way. People then read out their letters to the coming majority of young people on the continent and beyond.



Figures 5.12: Writing letters to the future



Figures 5.13: Sharing letters written to the future

After the reading of these letters, all those present were encouraged to reflect on the time that we had together. This included our conversations about what it means to drive change, what the status quo means and looks like in their contexts, what it means to transgress, their particular journey or mapping of their transgressive impulses and the stories that come with it, their ideas around the common good as well as their appreciation of those that have gone before and their hopes for those coming after. An interview space was set up with Roger (the camera) and Bart (the filmer) ready to witness each offering. I sat opposite each participant reminding them of what had been covered over the past four days and some of the particular

insights shared by each individual as part of their process. My role was thus to invite participants to comfortably inhabit and share what they felt was important and essential to them when they look back at the days we had shared. Thus, throughout the week as a facilitator and creative guide, I had to listen carefully to what each person was saying or painting or expressing through their bodies in order to keep track of their journeys. My role was to acknowledge the understanding that: “telling stories is a joint activity accomplished between speakers and listeners ... the narrator needs a listener to tell a good story; a good listener is a collaborator, a partner in storytelling” (Lispari, 2014, p. 164).



Figures 5.14: Listening to each other's letters

When it came to the time where each person offered their reflections some Change Drivers were able to roll with what they had on their mind with very little support, others benefitted from prompting questions (such as what does it mean to transgress for you? or the asking for more information about what they meant) that brought out key insights they had shared and embodied during the week. Each person in turn was invited to share a useful offering that spoke to the heart of the research question. Their offerings included sharing their key insights around the themes we had explored together. This was a way of gathering what remained at the forefront of everyone's minds and hearts and the impressions our time together had generated. The result was a film archive that captures the specific offerings of 21 Change

Drivers in South Africa after an immersive art-based experience with their peers. The online Google platform that is an accompaniment to this thesis has a clip that captures each person's offerings as part of Appendix 6⁵¹. Some of the questions that I asked to support each person craft their offerings are included as subtitles. More information about how and what I chose to do with these offerings is shared in section 5.10.

What remains important to say about the workshop process was the way in which having three iterations of creative workshops helped me reflect on the role I wanted to play as a practitioner and how this could be better crafted to serve the ethical imperative of the research. I have mentioned before that these workshops challenged me to think differently about my role. Instead, of being a trainer that was guiding Change Drivers through an experiential curriculum that held particular views about what Change Drivers need to know or learn, I was now in a position where my main imperative was to create the kind of space where what Change Drivers know could be invited to emerge and assert its own legitimacy however it might arrive. Within this, the questions of what my power looked like shifted from a position of some authority around the assumptions of what was useful to learn, towards one that sought to appreciate the expressions of each person's sacred, embodied and erotic knowledge. Starting slow with the first group allowed me to gain the confidence or different standing I needed to invite and to listen to open-ended explorations with the knowledge that something interesting would emerge. The stories that came from the long walks we took, the reflections on what it means to be a Change Driver, the status quo, what it means to transgress and the cartographies we painted gave me the confidence to relax a bit more with each group. Here I was learning that something could pop out on the other end of these processes and that with each iteration I could work a little more to challenge Change Drivers to stay even closer to themselves even whilst participating in creative forms that might feel a bit strange. In other words, I gained 'audacity' as each iteration came through. By the time I moved from five participants in the first intake to eight in the second, this audacity was both necessary and well-established.

Whilst the first group was generous in their responses and well aware that I was finding my feet, the second intake arrived with an incredible capacity to engage robustly with each other

⁵¹ All appendices are available via email: Please email Injairu@sheddingskins.co.za for access.

in conversation about what mattered. They were incredibly energetic and ready to exhaust every conversation to its conclusion. They were hungry for the engagement with each other and desired to learn from each other. I needed the confidence to keep them engaged in what was true for them, while challenging the forms and depth through which we could express this. I listened more carefully in this group, even to the voices of dissent around processes by paying attention to what they wanted to express. In other words, it became less about the methodologies per se, and more about making a space with them that could hold and appreciate what was very quickly tumbling out of them. Sometimes the methodologies were not as fast as their pace, and in these instances we found ways to let it roll, knowing that whatever conversation or expression that was happening was an important part of the study. For example, Motstatsi dutifully worked on her cartography, but when it came to sharing what she had represented, she looked up at everyone and said “what I really want to talk about is this ...”. And she launched into a very real sharing about challenges in her community.

The third intake was far more meditative and deliberate in their reflections and thinking. They fully absorbed the spaces in between and seemed to appreciate the spiritual elements in particular, especially with regard to thinking about what it means to reflect on where one is now, what is happening in the world, what each person is going through and what it means to acknowledge those that have gone before us and those yet to come. Their meditations and sincere desire to take up the time and the space to breathe and think was felt. These different experiences rendered each intake to be a different experience, and within this I was challenged to appreciate the “ethics of attunement”, a perspective that claims that “ethics speaks by way of listening; and more specifically, it speaks by way of listening *for and to* the otherness of others” (Lispari, 2014, p. 176). By this I mean that methodologically, beyond the arts-based processes that sought to diversify the range of expression of what we know, my role across the different intakes became about being attentive or rather ‘attuned’ to the difference in being of each person – to listen for this and support it. More will be said on this in my broader reflections on methodology. First, however, I would like to share some of the Change Drivers perspectives. With each intake I asked the Change Drivers to assist the iterative process of learning by providing anonymous feedback that could help me reflect on the process. The questions asked for the feedback were simple:

1. What did we do together? What did this space offer you? (this vague question was designed to explore Change Drivers' understandings of what our time together actually meant for them).
2. What did you enjoy?
3. What did you struggle with?
4. What was your experience of the flow of the week?
5. What was missing or needed that we did not name?
6. What did you think of the facilitation?
7. What if anything did this space offer you?
8. Would you recommend this space to another Change Driver? Why? Why not?

Some of the highlights of their answers follow below. In response to questions about what we did together, one participant wrote: “the time together offered me peace, laughter, light, unlearning of the old and new learnings, connecting with myself, strong sense of belonging and that I am on the right path”. Another commented that our time together “offered me an opportunity to be a storyteller, a listener and an observer. It offered me comfort to be true to myself and those around me”. One more commented that “we came together to reflect meaningfully to reflect on what it means to be a Change Driver. In that process we tackled many topics relevant to our local, national and global politics. Lastly, we came here to learn, unlearn and relearn”.

When reflecting on what they enjoyed, participants spoke of the experience of “space, away from real life to push pause... and push play in new relationships. I have learnt so much from each person who was here. I have found it helpful, for going forward, track my personal journey through the lens of a Change Driver. I loved seeing the correlations and corollaries with other people’s stories – I never expected this.” Another mentioned that “they enjoyed all the thought-provoking conversations and exchanges”.

In terms of what they struggled with, an overwhelming majority spoke of their struggle with co-defining the “common good” One participant said “I struggled with the common good definition, I couldn’t get it out of my head, I think I also struggled to reconcile with what I know, my assumptions and the new ways of thinking I was learning”. Another echoed that “I struggled with defining the concept of the common good”. Others articulated struggles came from understanding the project as a whole and what would happen after this time we had

together, for example: “I struggled with an understandable explanation of the project as a whole”. Another asked specific questions about the project as a whole: “How will we keep the fire burning? How will we make sure we stay aligned to Not yet Uhuru aims and objectives?” Others needed more clarification on their role going forward: “I struggled to understand my role in the project, obviously I contributed in discussions and sessions but I believe my role could be better defined”. Another reflection similar to this was: “I believe we covered the basics of the project, however we could have outlined the objectives of the project better and hear what the expectations were”. Lastly, “Perhaps it would be ideal during the last session to reflect on what the work seeks to achieve and on how the vision of the Not Yet Uhuru project can be contextualised within respective communities and work of participants”.

When it came to their experience of the flow of the week, one participant noted that it “was a relief that it was not a go go go!” Others described the flow as “smooth and very flexible and accommodative and natural”. Another commented that: “It was like a dance – the week started with very very high energies and intense activities, gradually, the energies all descended as the activities concluded”.

When it came to what was missing, insights were shared including: “assumptions about language”. Some pointed to the need to “get practical” with the work. Others suggested that we “visit a local community as part of the project”. These suggestions also included the desire to take this project “into schools to allow children in the mainstream schools to discover their spirit and their inner being”. Another echoed this point by saying that: “This work should go into our different spaces and it should become an everyday conversation instead of a special retreat”.

Comments on the facilitation included that it was “authentic and allowed the free flow of energy”. One said “I loved the artistic facilitation “because it “allowed me to express myself”. This note also included encouragement to “continue the way that you work, continue to evolve”. Another shared “9 out of 10 for me– the one missing is the part that we are still new and there was some level of being unsure”. One participant claimed to have enjoyed the facilitation because “it was not teaching”. Other aspects of the facilitation were also commented on: “I loved being in a space where we co-created together, ever being and becoming. Thank you for always inviting the opportunity for emergent learning. This itself is

a transgression of the boundary of learning... the notion that learning is about going through the motions, thanks for disrupting 'learning injustice' in this space". Lastly, one said that "the fact that our mind bodies and souls were engaged in this entire process was really fantastic".

Finally, the question around whether this space would be recommended to other Change Drivers yielded a positive response including comments such as: "Yes! For those that are willing to allow themselves to be taught and those that are willing to tell their truth and not be caught up in the status quo". Another said: "I would recommend the space to other people – not only activators because it is an honest space and as leaders we need this space so we can establish our role as leaders". One person offered that: "Reflecting on the work that we do is a crucial process. The space especially offers a different way of looking at Change Driving compared to a lot of people's perspectives after Activate training. It's a spiritually elevated experience – I recommend it to Change Drivers".

As a result of critical feedback received from the Change Drivers, I was able to compile a summary of responses that emerged through this process. The document is shared in Appendix 4 on the online google platform⁵². This document helped further orientate the participants around what they could expect in the future from this project. It is worth mentioning that I clearly did not manage to explain enough that this was different to the projects they were used to mostly because its purpose was simply to hear from Change Drivers about what was important to them. For many of those who participated, the idea of a project usually includes doing something tangible for a community, not the sharing of ideas and stories that we did. As such, the work felt incomplete for many of those present as they were waiting and anticipating a more immediate and broader implementation of the project in other contexts. In retrospect, perhaps calling this a "project" obscured the aspect of it being primarily a PhD study. Thus I found that in this document, it was important to again clarify the objectives of the project especially the fact that it was attached to a PhD that would take a lot of time (years ultimately!) to crystalise its findings and share back to a broader community in useful co-created ways.

⁵² Access to all appendices are available via email: Please email Injairu@sheddingskins.co.za for access.

As a way of further reflecting on what the workshop methodology offered to my thinking around decoloniality and surfacing the sacred, the erotic and the embodied knowledge of Change Drivers, I offer in the next section a modified version of a reflection about methodology. This piece of writing in section 5.7 below was prompted by an invitation from the collective of transgressive scholars of which I am a part to share the methodologies we used in our respective projects. I remember taking a long time to respond to the question of methodology simply because I could not find the right way to speak about what the workshop experience had brought out. I had not wanted to speak about the methodologies. I felt that this would obscure the meaning of what our time together was about, and what it was able to do. In this reflective piece I began to explain why.

5.7 Postscript on Workshop Methodology: Moving through Methodologies Fostering Decolonial Sensibilities in Our Own Rite(s)

It is tricky to try and talk about methods or methodologies in transgressive learning. Simply because in my experience it is not the tangible activities that give the work life. It is not the cartographies that we created or the walks that we took, or the body maps we made that generated the depth of engagement that we had. There is a broader ‘holding’ that precedes the act of making cartographies. At best there is a depth of articulation that we step into as a result of pushing up against or immersing ourselves into those cartographies that possibly helped us be more honest about what really matters for us. Instead of talking about methodologies, it feels more appropriate to talk about ‘sensibilities’ that can be catalysed through creative processes.

Perhaps it makes sense for me to start at the beginning by speaking about what it was like to try and generate the kind of framing that could help us ask questions about how we can re-imagine what transgressive decolonial pedagogies could look like in contemporary Africa. It took months of unlearning for myself as a practitioner to be able to live into a space where we could ask these questions together. It required something very different of me; it required that I hold the questions that generated this research project in way that allowed others to in turn generate their own questions. This was certainly about seeing my role as a practitioner in a very different way. I found that as part of this process I was bumping into old muscle-memory that has taught me how to contain workshop space within ways that invite less uncertainty on the part of those that I have been co-conspiring with. I had to work on opening

the activities up in a way that could help co-conspirers touch down to their own intuitive questions, especially when these intuitive questions or responses sat outside the prescriptions of a particular performance of the methodology being used.

In retrospect, the overarching methodology was one which aspired to invite each soul to show up in their own way. A space where there is enough stillness and quietness for people to drop into the present. I have done work in the past that required us to be present, but this was different. It required a different sensibility, one that understands that what we are doing is creating a space where people's expression, realities and experiences should be able to emerge unperturbed by any resignations to be anything else than what we are. That through this process it is our 'us-ness' that we are looking for and that is enough. This is a space where we can take what we know seriously and be given the time to colour our articulations of our experiences AND further step into them with a greater audacity (Gqola, 2011).

This is not a method that I could just "TICK", and say that THIS is the methodology.... I don't feel like what we achieved was what we did through methodologies. I feel that what came out of this was rather a process of scratching into what should be done going forward. Our experience together was a pedagogical opening, it was an intuitive 'figuring out' with others in a dialogical way.

I could speak about working creatively as a method, but to be honest what was more useful and more interesting was what a struggle it was to work creatively! I was so aware of the problematic ways in which creativity in itself is packaged and given to us as activities that fall short of really inviting the unsaid or the uncertain to emerge. It felt like a huge part of this methodology is a way of re-claiming and re-leasing creativity.

It was about the re-leasing our creative intuitive actions as a way of re-remembering ourselves. This feels like a significant journey into fostering our decolonial sensibilities. Painting one's cartographic journeys or making a body map of one's reality and desires was not the point. We could 'perform' these tasks in that moment but that would not serve us going forward. So, the activities are not the 'ends' of the experiment, they are *a way* in which we can *sink deeper into our intuitive knowings* so that we can *later grapple to express them* in ways that feel comfortable, in ways that can integrate them into our living world. It was a sense of presencing that the methodology pointed to – sometimes successfully and sometimes

unsuccessfully. It is a way of practising the fullness of our belonging in the world, so as to give credence to the interesting questions that we hold at the edge of our praxis. An important part of this is working with what is unresolved and ambiguous... and being able to meet these questions in ourselves.

What is emerging is exploring an “ethics of attunement” (Lispari, 2014). This means working with what is grey, what is ambiguous and what’s unresolved. The richest discussions that we had together were about this; the critical questions that were lingering on the edge of people’s meaning-making. It also means nurturing the sensibilities that can enable one to discern what is emerging within the spirit of each person’s offering, who it is that they are choosing to be within each offering, and why this is relevant to what we are exploring together.

This is significant for regenerating and re-imagining transgressive decolonial pedagogies in Africa and elsewhere. Through this way of working it feels like we are genuinely responding to the pedagogical underpinnings of the history of ‘development’ work in Africa in an important way. Methodology in this perspective needs to be re-leased from the way in which it can co-opt the energy and drive of young people through its performative requirements. It is about undoing the ‘civilising’ project that youth development often perpetuates (Kelley, Tuck and Yang, 2014, p. 89). The only creativity that should count is the one in which we can gain deep insight into what we intuitively know, and what we are truly grappling with. That we are able to see into ourselves and listen to ourselves in this way is the source of our transgressive gold.

I am seeing these experiences more as ‘space-making’ processes that draw from creative methods but most importantly, encourage and inspire intuitive processes to emerge. It’s about co- conspirers feeling invited enough to share what is deepest, ambiguous and critical and uncertain for them and the openings that emerge from those impulses. That is the only thing worth paying attention to. And the expressions of these things should be able to transgress the limits or parameters that methodologies offer us. A focus on methods themselves might distract us from opening up spaces into this intuitive grappling, but also paradoxically without offering some kind of imperfect methodology, we might not get close to this kind of grappling.

I have many books around me about methods, but there is something I can’t access in these books, that is the struggle to get those methods to live, and the understanding of what needs

to be deeply honoured to make those methods a trampoline from which we can better see and hear ourselves. This is about seeing uncertainty as a decolonial methodology that can invite pluriversal responses to the subject at hand. I believe the quality of our interactions was dependent on our ability to be uncertain. This forgoes what we have been wired to perform in colonial ways, as practitioners, academics and Change Drivers. *It makes us much more human*, about what we are facing, what we are trying to do, in ways that allow us to speak more directly even in our ambiguity, I felt very moved that we could do that together.

Ndlovu- Gatsheni spoke to us about a presentation that Anna James and Priya Vallabh and I did at the South African Education Research Association (SAERA) conference in 2017. He spoke about how we managed to speak about decoloniality without an obsession with clarity and fully formed ideas. That we could grapple with what we are uncertain about and in so doing create more space for it to arrive as an evolving idea that is consciously being put into conversation with how the world functions, whilst consistently finding a way to step outside of its grip. I am also remembering the monograph that Heila, Million and Mutizwa wrote on Social Learning, and the conversation that they had there about ‘ontological collapse’ (Lotz-Sisitka et al.2012). The caution that stayed with me was ...let’s not talk about methodology in ways that reduce it to an object. In ways that fool us into believing that the methodology produced change.

We need to find ways of seeing into the webs of sensibilities within and without that help us move *through* methodologies in ways that help us better reach into ourselves and amplify our intuitive understandings in meaningful ways. If the methodology does not help with that, then it itself can be a tyranny obscuring us away from ourselves. Conversely, we can also still be encouraged to try these ‘methodologies’ whilst listening to what parts of ourselves get left behind, and in turn find the ways to invite these necessary exiles into the space. In this way, methodologies can be an imperfect part of the conversation towards what we really want to get to, rather than being a panacea or conduit towards where we think we need to get to. Methodologies ought to provide the space for us to access the wisdom that is already within us and in the absence of the methodology in itself the way of seeing or being that is offered through it should be able to live on by itself. The cartography gives me a way of continually seeing that which I choose to live into at every moment, and perhaps sharpens my reflexive resources as I continue to move in my life. This canvas becomes part of my inner resources. The body map gives me the space to really think about what I am feeling now or desiring for

the future; it helps me theorise for myself how I can begin to make those moves. It is a way of sinking into my own intuitive knowings and growing into them going forward.

I continually find myself coming back to the idea of a nomadic way of being as a part of this. One commitment that is being made through this work is a commitment to keep moving, to find ‘new coordinates’ each time in response to the trappings of the neo-liberal world order (Braidotti, 2011, pp. 286, 288). Uncertainty as a pedagogy helps us reflexively refine the dexterity of these nomadic movements. If we recognise that “the sustainability of the future rests on our ability to mobilize, actualize, and deploy cognitive, affective and ethical forces that [have] not been activated thus far”, then our methodologies have to help us reach into these sensibilities that we have otherwise not lived into (ibid.). And because we have not lived into them before, we need our uncertainty as a guide towards what enquiries into our humanity we need to expand into through our learning. There is a moral imperative for us to explore an expanded understanding of this humanity as we continue to navigate terrible iterations of colonialism in our waking worlds. In this way, the only way to navigate ourselves beyond an anthropocentric worldview is to expand the affective decolonial sensibilities of what it means to be human.

Lastly, there are some certain values and sensibilities in this work that cannot be articulated. They are invisible but palpable. If they are not there you can feel it. But even if you name them, you can scare those things away. Parker Palmer (2004) reminds us that the soul is a shy thing. It needs to be gently coaxed to show up in a space. And when it does show up it slips something into the space creating a reverence that is impossible to conjure out of our own volition. We need the patience and the sensibilities to layer the space with elements that allow this way of being to be the place that we move from together. A part of this layering might be about bringing a spiritual vibe into the space without calling it that. I sometimes struggle when the spiritual aspect of this work arrives because of the constructions of secular work in academia and the paucity of language around including the spiritual as part of our research. My friend Dr Makgathi Mokwena who is an expressive art therapist amongst many other wonderful things reminds me that we do not have to call these things names, otherwise people could easily freak out. However, if you create a space for love, people feel it, if you create a space for empathy, they will feel it, if you create the space for reverence and respect they will respond (Mokwena, 2017).

These are layers of ‘methodology’ that are difficult to name, but their charge is felt. I am learning to not look at these elements directly or call them out. They are too elusive, happily uncertain and ambiguous. It is only by looking at them with peripheral vision that they can live into the field generated in the space. Steve Biko quotes Dr Kaunda in his seminal text ‘I Write What I Like’:

Africans being a pre-scientific people do not recognise any conceptual cleavage between the natural and the supernatural. They experience a situation rather than face a problem. By this I mean they allow both the rational and non-rational elements to make an impact upon them, and any action they may take could be described more as a response of the total personality of the situation than the result of some mental exercise. (Biko, 2009, p. 48)

It is this sense of experiencing a situation (and I would add experiencing ourselves, each other and other sentient beings) rather than ‘solving a problem’ that I think should be one of the primary functions of methodology within transgressive learning. It gives us a way to address the urgency that we are feeling in these times, through a slow and perceptive sensibility that offers us insight into the different dimensions playing out. There is a sense of discernment that comes with this that humanises us, and emboldens our ability to insist that we belong here, and we deserve to find ways to see ourselves through what we are experiencing. Kaplan and Davidhoff share that:

... so many assumptions creep into our seeing, that we may begin – inadvertently, unknowingly – to inherit a world that has been given to us by others, rather than see a world that is being created through our intentional participation in each moment. (2014, p. 10)

I feel that it this capacity to see into ourselves, others and the earth is what transgressive learning methodologies should at best foster. But beyond this, I believe that methodologies should foster our ability to create and assert our own rites into the creation of a future worthy of our longing (Rushdie, 1999). By this I mean, let us create spaces where new methodologies around how to stay close to what has meaning for us can emerge, especially when it departs from the script of what we should be doing. As a way of concluding, I offer the words of Ronald Rose-Antoinette who states that:

your method is useless unless you disseminate interest, curiosity, pleasure, unless you value (anexactly, and yet rigorously), the unmeasurable, the rhythms that pressure beyond the threshold of sense- perception. (Rose-Antoinette, 2015, p.125)

My understanding of this is that methodology is useless unless it can arouse those that are participating to be enlivened and pay attention enough to enact sensibilities that sit beyond

the threshold of what is often expressed. In this way, methodology becomes a gateway to those hidden rhythms inside you that desire expression and actualisation.

5.8 Taking the Next Steps?

Full of the learnings gained from the encounters that we had in these workshops and my deliberations about what this means for pedagogical practice, I found myself in a completely different space in the study. The ‘post-fieldwork’ stage in the research project challenged me significantly because everything I was gearing up towards with these workshops had taken place, and I was left sitting with a massive range of resources consisting both of the artistic materials that we created together as part of the process, and those that were documented through film. The big question at this point was: what now? What do I do with all of these resources? And, how do I begin to tell a story about what transpired, how can I draw out the insights gathered in a way that could begin to attend to the research questions?

I knew for certain that the depth and richness of the offerings made by each individual would be a focal point of what I would have to digest. The fact that these offerings were encased in video clips made this the place where I began to look into what our time together had evoked. I must admit that my imagination at that point was mostly captured with sheer excitement by the prospects of what kind of larger film we could create from our time together. By working with Bart and Roger, many conversations ensued about what we could do with all the film footage we had created together and how we could share this with the world. Unbeknown to me, engaging in the language of film started to create a relationship with the resources that was not useful at that stage of the study. This was because thinking about what film we could create immediately put me into a conversation about what and how to edit the material that we had gathered. An important period of learning for me at this point was how the language and practice of editing is inherently a very violent one, simply because it requires that one makes decisions about what matters and what does not. It asks you to cut up material in ways that can tell a story of your own choosing. At this point, I experienced a very strong aversion to editing towards a small film clip. I had to stop for a while and consider what exactly the next steps in the research project should be, and what would help me honour the quality of work that we had produced together.

I remember one day climbing a mountain in Cape Town with a friend and sharing my frustration with suddenly being immersed in the language of film production, something that was new to me, and in many ways relied on a different ethic than that I had been trying to

build in the research thus far. I told her I had worked carefully to be attentive to what we were creating at this point, and that the excitement around the film was producing another ethic that was eclipsing what I needed to be paying attention to in the research. The focus on production was premature and I needed to spend time really looking at what we had created without that pressure. My friend Carly listened carefully to what I had to say and shared some of her insights around what it means to really see what is in front of you, and how much time and devotion is needed in order for what you see to begin to share itself intimately with you. Carly was studying Goethe's observation of nature at the time, and what she shared with me about taking the time to look was very useful in getting me to slow down and appreciate the offerings that each Change Driver had gifted to the project. So, as a way of reclaiming the research journey, I went back to the resources gathered and began a different process of taking stock and being steeped in what was emerging there. I tasked myself with the art of listening for over four months. I spent one full day with each offering that was captured and listened to it in very different ways, just listening, without any impulse to edit, summarise, or code what was emerging. I listened to each recording three times; once with my eyes open, once with my eyes closed and once out loud without my headphones on. The result of this was that I got steeped into the contours of each person's journey as they had shared it. After listening to each offering, I tasked myself to 'free write' my thoughts about what I had heard. I allowed myself to be a part of the story that I had heard by writing down without looking up what I was hearing. The free writing exercises seemed to continue the narrative that I had listened to in each offering. I found myself writing as if I was continuing the logic of the phenomena that I had witnessed, a logic that continued to spell out the gesture that each person was embodying. This gesture was based on their attitude, their stance, what they were saying, their body language, their use of language and basically anything that I could gauge and read from their offering. At the end of each freewriting exercise, the thoughts that had accumulated began to organise themselves into a kind of rough poetry that was beginning to crystallise what I had witnessed. For the four months of this repetitive process, I kept a book that chronicled all my free writing and the snippets of poetry that started to arrive. Having collected all these thoughts, I was still not sure about what to do with them, and I shut this book for a long time as I continued to think through what to do next.

Before I had kicked off the process described above,⁵³ an opportunity to write a paper for a special issue journal on collective learning and change agency provided a very useful learning opportunity for me in terms of how to begin to think about working with all that was gathered. The timing of the writing of this paper was key because it was the first piece of writing that could start to work with and experiment with some of the emerging results. The experience that I had with Change Drivers brought up questions for me about ‘intersectional resonance’ – essentially why we need to learn in ways that can foster a sense of ‘intersectional resonance’ between and amongst Change Drivers in a polarised world. See Appendix 5 on the online google platform⁵⁴ that accompanies this thesis for a full copy of the journal article. I spent a considerable amount of time thinking about the particular form the paper would take, and how I would intentionally weave in the perspectives and context related questions of the four chosen Change Drivers included in the paper. I experimented with how I could lay out the think piece in ways that could firstly share the questions the paper wanted to engage with, the political context of South Africa, and thirdly a brief but descriptive account of each of the four Change Drivers – how they locate the work they do, some of the critical questions that accompany their meaning-making in the world and what it means to transgress for them. I wanted to prioritise these elements before I began to connect what I was seeing there to theoretical questions about what collective learning and change agency needs to engage in South Africa. As part of this process I invited each Change Driver to review what I had written in terms of accounting for each person, their politics, and the questions they held going forward. Each participant responded positively to the summary that was written, in some instances adding useful detail. I felt reassured by this process and the representations made. I was however unprepared for the process of owning my own voice as a researcher that writing the think-piece required of me. The think-piece required that I make meaning of what these very different perspectives on life and struggle have to do with the need for intersectional resonance. I was drawn into a mode of analysis in the later stages of the paper that really challenged me for several reasons: 1) In order to come to some analysis of the dynamics at play I ran the risk of summarising each person’s offerings in ways that could minimise the complexity of what they represented. 2) My voice or authority as a

⁵³ It seems to make sense to tell this story in a non-linear way because there were so many overlapping experiences happening at the same time. As such you will notice that the narrative goes back and forth. What is important however is to name the different experiences that had an impact on my understanding of methodology in the second half of the thesis.

⁵⁴ Access to all appendices are available via email: Please email Injairu@sheddingskins.co.za for access.

researcher positioned me as having the last word on what was pertinent about the study. This is of course part of what one must do in a research project – and I had to struggle to practise how I would choose to do this. In the words of Helen Kara, some of the dilemmas that I was struggling with included the fact that in order

to share the experience with others, for mutual learning, I must depict and explore it using words. Each word I assign to the topic reduces and categorises in an unhelpful way, and yet some reductionism and categorisation is essential. (Kara, 2017, p. 290)

How then could I conceptualise sharing the experience without too much reductionism even as I understood that I must indeed say something of what I thought and felt as a researcher. I thought that getting feedback from the Change Drivers about what I had written would help with this. Perhaps I could gain some useful feedback from them that would balance what I had written. I contacted the four Change Drivers again after I had drafted the whole paper with an email that highlighted both my trepidation in writing the paper, and the hope for some critical engagement:

Dear Sanele, Judith, Motsatsi and Kristi,

I have the paper to share with you that held some of the stories that you offered as part of this research project. I really want to thank you for the spirit with which you shared your deep learnings. And when we look at what all of you brought up together a very interesting picture of the country starts to develop, which gives us an extraordinary opportunity to think about what education should look like if these are the diverse experiences of Change Drivers.

I want to encourage you to look at what you shared as *archetypes* in those moments. I know our experiences have shifted a lot at that time, and I have had conversations with you Kristi and Judith about that as I shared those summary paragraphs with you. I ask you to try and appreciate what that point of view in that moment helps us understand about where we have been and what is needed going forward. The huge value of all the perspectives is that I know for sure they represent what many many young people have felt or continue to feel in this South Africa. Thank you for offering these voices. Trust me, I know it's courageous work. They are helping us find our way through. This paper is just one example of how the project wanted to put all the 21 voices that arrived in conversation with each other so that we can ask questions about what this means for education for social change in contemporary South Africa and Africa. We hope the film will do more work of sharing diverse perspectives. Slowly and surely its happening...

Lastly, as a paper my voice as a researcher is interacting with your stories. I have had to learn to own that voice and also share it. Please read it and tell me what you think about what I am thinking. I hope it is not tooo academic I tried to share what I think the best I could whilst adding the voices of other academics in the field as I am required to. Holla if you need to unpack this more.

My hope is that all the stories gathered can help us be more strategic about the spaces that we need to create. In this instance your stories made me ask questions about what it means to drive change across race, class, gender in authentic (intersectional) ways. And how easily our struggles can be fragmented. I think this is an important question to flag in SA right now.
Ok I've said so much!

Please read this as soon as you can. I will be sending it to the network of 21 change drivers for comment by the end of the week – I just wanted to give you guys as the contributing participants a chance to see it first. So read it!

Love! Injairu
28 May 2018

Motsatsi was the first to respond. But I was very unsettled by the kind of response I got because I felt it did not actually respond to the questions I held but rather was symbolic of its own kind of appreciation:

Leadership
I hope your well and I am also well. My tears dropped after reading your email. I'm touched and inspired at the same time.
Lots of love
Motsatsi
28 May 2018

I was confused by the brevity and vagueness of the email. In as much as it seemed like positive response, I wondered about the level of engagement within it and any critical feedback that might be omitted. This had me spiraling into the questions about the overtly academic nature of the paper and if its overall argument was accessible or interesting enough for Motsatsi to want to grapple with. I wondered if in trying to write an academic paper I had alienated her in some way. As I was digesting this, I received mail from Kristi who was in fact responding not to the prompt to give me feedback for the paper, but to a video clip that I had shared with the group after I was interviewed about what decoloniality means for a television programme in South Africa. Her response to the paper was tucked away as a P.S. note at the end of her response to the video. It reads in full as follows:

Hi Injairu
So rich to hear from you twice this past few weeks.
Some of below is what's new for me, that im still chewing on, and other parts that im grateful for the words you've given to some of my heart murmurings....
And so Decoloniality is a celebration, a very raw celebration, that we are STILL here, that people are still here...

There are so many different ways of being and ways of knowing that have been left in exile...

The myth of trickling down just doesn't happen...

We sometimes move into the how and the problem solving (breath in) i feel like we need a lil more introspection about the situation itself...

Working with the knowledge that is relevant...

Education in the service of a future worthy of our longing... Yaaaaas.

Sister, thank you for this very public offering - some snippets of your emergent, transgressive journey of going & being farther out and deeper in - to yourself, to our places in space and particularly to spaces that interest themselves with education (in its broadest sense). Maybe you should just move into a house with those 4 in order to rub off a lil and so that, maybe in time, the actual questions being asked will shift, change, develop, seek to transgress. Wow, you have another level of bodymind depth, and the skill to express these headheart things so that the person walking by can engage.

Thank you, teacher.

K.

Ps i read and reread your article for publication. I journalled about it, sought out bell hooks' Teaching to Transgress and somehow wasn't brave enough to respond back to you, so I see that my head went into the sand on that one. Will return to it during the holidays coming up now now.

21 June 2018

Kristi's tucked away response heightened my anxiety. She never got back to me after the holidays. I was wondering what it must have felt like to "not feel brave enough to respond" or to put one's "head into the sand" as a way of processing what was written there. I was particularly aware of this because as the *only* white women who volunteered to be a part of this research project, I am well aware of the shaming that comes with not always knowing the right thing to do or say or whether one can talk or not. In the paper I spoke about Kristi's own grappling with privilege – I wondered if it came across as judgmental. I was secretly mortified that a process that went to ends to allow each person to be who they are, share their erotic knowledge, could result in publication that would make someone want to put their head in the sand. What was going on here? Was this not the ultimate undoing of what we had struggled to create?

Casual communication with Sanele gave the overall impression that he was OK with the paper even though he did not engage it or respond to my email. I tried to send emails that could get me some more responses but none were forthcoming. See an example below:

Hey good people,

I am waiting on feedback on this paper please... and a sense of if i can share with the larger Not Yet Uhuru group so that it can help have deeper conversations as a group. I know that it is an imperfect offering but i am wondering if you feel it is useful to share?

Please let me know what you think.

Humbly,

Injairu

2 July 2018

Despite the hiatus in communication I did receive one last email that was very very late. This email really confirmed for me what was missing or needed in the paper. The deadline of the paper had loomed before these key insights. The same week that I received this response it went into print. This is what the email said:

Hey

Sorry for the Late Reply My comments are probably too late but here they are anyways. I just watched your interview and finished reading your paper earlier in the week and I think they are both really well thought out and your approach is very nuanced. I agree with everything said in Both the Paper and in the Interview.

The only thing that I really want to add is that I think the paper could have done more in its presenting of the intersectional axis dilemma as one that not only occurs within movements where people from different backgrounds are interacting but also as something that can happen within a person who has multiple identities (As we all do). I think seeing how an individual whose various identities can struggle against each other would have been a good way to further get to the point that you were making. Seeing an individual being placed in positions where they have to choose which part of them-self is more important when our solutions are not Intersectional is something that I would liked to have seen in the paper. I just felt that the four characters used were too polarized against each other and seeing some Identity over-lap would have been an interesting addition to the article. Otherwise I loved this paper and agree with what you are saying.

Love

Judith

26 July 2018

Out of the four Change Drivers that I engaged with in this paper, Judith was the one that was best positioned to respond with this depth of engagement. This is because her work as an academic and gender activist has been rooted in studies around intersectionality. She had astutely pointed to the polarisation the paper insidiously perpetuated – even as it tried speak about the need for intersectionality. She had noticed its inability to deal with the additional layer of the complexity and intersectional crosslines that each individual navigates as well as the inner dynamics of what it means for each person to try and attend to social issues in society. What I was left with was that the way I had worked with everyone's stories in this

paper possibly was written in ways that 1) not everyone could grapple with the terms and meaning-making and languaging that I engaged with there, 2) those that did engage felt somewhat intimidated by what I had made of their intersecting stories so much so that courage was needed to respond, and 3) what I had written and coded in their stories pitched the Change Drivers against each other, but more importantly, it did not carry sufficient language to honour the tensions they were navigating *both* within themselves and across their poles. So even though the paper was driven by the desire for intersectional resonance, perhaps it moved too quickly into a cross-case analysis without appreciating the complexity embedded in each case, that is, its particular essence and how these fit together or overlap as a whole.

There is also an underlying ‘judgemental-ness’ that underwrites cross-case discussion held there that potentially excluded some of the Change Drivers from being a part of the meaning made there going forward. I had to think carefully about whether this is what I wanted for this project, that the meaning made from it might be considered rigorous enough for an outside audience whilst it sat uncomfortably or unresponsively for those who I was journeying with. I knew that not everyone responds to the request for feedback and a lack of response or a short response cannot always be seen as judgement of the work. It is also important to say that I would not have considered this paper a success if everyone had simply said ‘yes we agree’. What I was troubled with were questions about the discursive form employed in the paper, and what it enabled and disabled in terms of a conversation going forward. I would have been okay with and interested in how Change Drivers would potentially disagree with the meaning I made as a researcher, because that is the job that I signed up for by taking up a PhD. I would have preferred that *the level of engagement* through which potential critical discussions could emerge could afford the opportunity for all involved to look into, understand, be challenged by and discuss what was emerging there and what it meant for us without fear or favour. The feedback that Motsatsi, Kristi and Judith gave (and what Sanele did not give) was a good ‘wake-up call’ in terms of what it means to represent or ‘analyse’ the stories embedded in each person’s offerings. It sent me into another reflective space in the study and had me asking questions about what I wanted to achieve in the second half of the thesis. It was an important time to acknowledge that:

There are limits to participants’ power, even within democratically co-produced research...Co-produced research is not always the unmitigated delight that many textbooks would like us to believe. (Kara, 2017, p. 290)

And so I sat and thought about the learning that writing this paper timeously afforded me, and the practice it gave me in terms of thinking through what I can and will do with my voice as a researcher, and how this practice could be expanded to better live into the epistemic openness and ontological diversity that I had spent the first half of the thesis struggling to demonstrate. How could the thesis potentially end this way? It did not make sense. How could I both honour the rigour required of me as a researcher, and open up forms of engagement within this that would radically democratise access to and the production of knowledge? These were ethical questions that accompanied me into the decisions that I would make around representation in the second part of this study.

5.9 Coming Back to the Meaning: Beyond Analytical Reduction towards Seeking the Essence offered in each Interaction

When one looks at the journey that I had been on with the resources generated by the workshops it becomes interesting to note the ways in which I initially resisted the production-based outlook of working raised by the film aspect of the project for me. Working with the paper on intersectional resonance seemed to intensify the process for me by helping me grapple with what I did not want to do with the resources gathered. Consequently, I found I appreciated the value of engaging in a slower more meaningful way of being with the offerings by taking the time to listen and be immersed in what each person had to say. What I was cumulatively producing there, and the learning that it afforded me, left me with the desire to think strategically about the modes of representation I would use in the second half of the thesis. I would like to add a layer of theoretical discussion to what I was learning as a part of these different experiences and consider how this affected the chosen route towards representation and the production of knowledge that this project willfully engaged in the end.

To start off with, I will discuss what it felt like to free write responses to the offerings that I listened to over and over again. Recent methodological research has distinguished the difference between a researcher working on the ‘data’ to ‘produce results’, and a process of enjoying experimental processes where one can

[Seek] ways for the data to become more of a ‘constitutive force, working upon the researcher [potentially] as much as the researcher works upon the data . (Hutzman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010, in Levy, Halse and Wright, 2016, p. 186)

My experience of this ‘free writing’ process echoes what is captured here, because the exercise instinctively moved with the questions and gestures each Change Driver evoked in their offerings. I was energised by moving with the flow and meaning-making process of each Change Driver. Through listening to them over and over again I managed to somehow slip into the frames of thought that were emanating from their thinking. This was a different relationship with the ‘data’ to what I had experienced before. The quote below resonates with this kind of alternative way of working with data:

Through this process, we found ourselves ‘being used by thought’ (Lather, 2013, p. 639), rather than having to do the thinking in order to make meaning. Being used by thought meant having to resist succumbing to our established ways of framing, viewing, analyzing and theorizing research data; it meant being prepared to yield to the discomforts that accompanied ‘not knowing’ and ‘not understanding’; it meant opening ourselves to the prospect of certain meanings, even truth, being hidden or entangled within fragments of data that had not revealed themselves using our established methodological tools...(Levy, Halse and Wright, 2016, pp. 193-194)

I came to understand “being used by thought” as a way of working that let go of taking the lead in creating the links between the stories presented to me. Instead, I was driven to trust the offerings to play a more revelatory role in my psyche as a researcher. My intention was not to create a binary between the two (because there must be an interaction here in which one way of working informs the other) but rather to acknowledge what it felt like to let what was emerging take the lead. Put in another way, the practice I gained from ‘free writing’ emotive co-conspirational accompaniments to what was emerging in each offering encouraged me to ask the following questions of myself as a researcher:

What is informing this phenomenon? We could of course advance many ideas, based on sociological, psychological, organizational, economic, political theories. But can we really try to get under the skin of this phenomenon, as it were, to discover the ‘narrative thread’, the ‘whole story’, that ‘more’ to which we referred above? Can we read the gesture of this phenomenon to get at the intrinsic energy, or formative idea, emerging as the phenomenon? Can we portray in all complexity, rather than attempt to explain, which must always reduce. Instead of interposing theory in between ourselves and the phenomenon, can we see it directly, on its own ground? (Kaplan, 2005, p. 8)

This quote contains so much and seems to meet what I was faced with regard to how to move forward in this study with a rigorousness that was generative instead of simply being reductive. Firstly, to begin with the way it ends, Kaplan asks us to consider the ways in which meaning-making can be done in a way that does not create an analytical distance between what one is observing and oneself. Reflecting again on Judith’s comments about the paper,

she might have also been commenting on the particular stance that I took as researcher, and additionally the way the paper seemed to pitch one experience against another. Perhaps analysis of this nature runs the risk of creating a distance between what is being looked upon and who is looking. This inspired me to try and live into another way of *moving with* the offerings of Change Drivers, another way of imbibing the experiences there and letting them shape the content of what was needed going forward.

Gaining a greater complexity of each perspective on its own grounds, would be an alternative way of engaging with what was emerging there, without quickly moving to a way of working that sought to create meaning across very diverse experiences. The complexity or the narrative threads and contradictions in each offering could easily be diminished in this way of seeing. For me, this was an invitation to start again with the resources gathered, and to go back to the richness of the ‘trying to get under the skin’ of each phenomena⁵⁵ that the free writing process seemed to encourage. This felt like a more honest way to ask the offerings how they wanted to be worked with. At the end of the free writing process, I intimated that some semblance of poetry started to emerge as I endeavoured to stay close to the phenomena under observation. It felt like the writing I was engaged with was going through a process of distillation in which I grappled to refine and acknowledge the gesture captured by each Change Driver.

Many months after I had done the work of freewriting, I must confess that I closed the book with all its content and ignored the scratchings I had written there. This came from an anxiety about not really knowing what I was doing there and what it meant. The traditional aspects of coding and summarising that are a part of my institutional memory as a scholar were nowhere to be found in that erratic jumble of words captured haphazardly. What was I going to do with what I had created there? My anxieties were heightened by the fact that I am not a poet! I did not have the confidence to continue refining what was emerging as poetry and in addition, I was not sure that poetry would adequately capture the essence of what I hungrily wrote down as accompaniment for each offering. I called for an intervention amongst my critical friends, opened up my book, showed them the writing I had engaged in and asked them: “what does this look like to you?” My friends Carly and Leanne were immediately

⁵⁵ Kaplan’s thinking draws on Goethe’s observation and phenomenological roots. I will further engage how I worked with this intellectual history at a later stage.

struck by the visceral charge of the words I had written, and how it seemed to echo and bring depth of feeling and emotion to the contradictions and meaning-making each individual shared. It was intimate and charged as if trying to bear witness to the “intrinsic energy” of each interaction. My critical friends did not know what it was either, except that it screamed when it needed to, and shouted out the questions embroiled in each perspective, that it committed itself to being bold and expressive about the hard work each person willfully engaged with in their praxis.

More months passed, as I tried to think about what was naturally emerging out of the study. During this time I attended a meeting and conference in Japan. My colleagues, knowing that I am a singer, encouraged me to bring in the language of song into the spaces that we were in. It is always a daunting thing to introduce the language of song into a place where academic rigour and analysis takes precedence, but as part of this experience I started to yield to this desire, knowing that in each instance using song provided such relief and immediacy to what was being communicated. Music always seemed to equalise the space, to invite the soul to participate, to create a space where what is being grappled with can be worked with in a different way, in a different language. It was not until two friends, Jamie Alexander and Lena Weber, separately sent me a link to a song (on the same day!), insisting that I had to listen to the song by Hozier featuring Mavis Staples entitled ‘Nina Cried Power’, that the dots started to connect. In this song, Hozier, an Irish musician wrote a song for Irish activists in honour of their struggle over decades of work (Hozier, 2018). He did this whilst simultaneously honouring the role that Nina Simone, an iconic jazz singer, played in the civil rights movement. ‘Nina Cried Power’ was at once an acknowledgement of the role that music plays in liberation struggles and a homage to the struggles that Irish activists were facing in contemporary times. In the music video of this song, Hozier plays this song to the activists he sought to honour for the first time. In it you can see their open faces digesting the power of the song written for them with various shades of emotion. Please watch the video below⁵⁶, my descriptions here do not do it justice.

It struck me while watching this video that what I was writing in that emotionally charged haphazard language, within the ‘intrinsic energy’ that I tried to capture for each individual, were in fact song lines of the rising cultures each Change Driver was advancing. I was writing songs that honoured the specific journey each Change Driver was going through.

⁵⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2YgDua2gpk>

These songs allowed me to stay close to the phenomena emerging while commenting on the contours I found there. This was a way of working that harmonised (pun intended) the concerns I was grappling with. It allowed me to express and reach for a kind of essence of what was emerging, as truthful and layered representation of the whole as I could muster, without dividing or fragmenting what was useful into a coded analytical framework that ran the risk of reducing complexity. Only through song could I find the way to simultaneously honour the struggle, the courage, the vulnerability, the daring, the exhaustion and the contradictions that Change Drivers embody. Writing songs became a way of activating “an epistemology of seeing” into these different interfaces of experience at the same time as it helped me go further into seeing the life worlds presented by each Change Driver through their offerings (Santos, 2014, p.162). Finally, writing songs from what was emerging allowed me to be engaged in work that for me represented generating “activities of care” as part of fostering a “sociology of emergences” (Santos, 2014, p.182). It felt like a way to respect the devotion embedded in each struggle, while simultaneously teasing out the prickly questions and frustrations that accompanied them. In writing songs, I felt like my journey with Change Drivers was articulated with integrity, because I knew that whatever I captured there was as rigorous as it was expressive, as nuanced in the detail it captured as it was committed to getting a whole picture of each person at the time. I was encouraged also by the proliferation of writing around decoloniality that strategically used the word “gesture” – this word was a useful resource. In particular, one collective of decolonial practitioners named their website *Gesturing towards Decolonial Futures* – their work included thinking around “pedagogies of attunement” as well as creating “social cartographies” that can help us find our way forward (decolonialfutures.net). The resonances found there emboldened what I was slowly working myself into, that is: if there was any way that I was going to produce ‘results’ of some sort, I was/am happy that they take the form of song because I can work within my craft to get as close as possible to the phenomena being observed. In the end the message shared both in the research going forward and to those that I have journeyed with is that my role as an educator is to listen attentively, to imbibe and sing out the rising cultures of the Change Drivers on this continent as a way of understanding the broader social context we are called to work into. This is another kind of phenomenological work that was not only about observing something phenomenologically, but attempting to “listen phenomenologically” to the life worlds embedded in Change Drivers’ experiences (Lispari, 2014, p. 55).

This research project seeks to advance the ethics and pedagogies of “attunement” (Lispari, 2004; Lotz- Sisitka, 2018; decolonial futures.net). In response to the offerings of each Change Driver, I can offer a song as a reflection back. This song perhaps serves as a form of accompaniment, or reflection and response to the call they had shared in their offerings. Song works as a way of opening up a different, relevant and multisensory renditions of knowledge production. In doing this, I hoped to create a different medium through which the rich discussions could continue to work with the research questions. I am hoping that in doing this, I can continue to create a space for an experience with Change Drivers where we can listen together to what is emerging, and what this means for the future.

5.10 Songs as an Epistemological Tool that aspires to a Decolonial Vision for Research

As a way of recapping the waves of thinking that have influenced the methodological outlook of this study, I now show how the production of songs addresses the varying concerns explored in this chapter. My research journey challenged me to consider earnestly my initial concerns about the way methodology “produces realities” and the way that it ultimately asks questions about the types of people “that we want to be” (Law, 2004, p. 10; Le Grange, 2015). In the face of my ‘muscle memory’ as a scholar and the ontological slippage that could be reproduced in the representational forms chosen, I have had to practise what it means to work with data in ‘otherwise’ ways, especially if the intention is to “forge a shared, necessarily provisional world” (Erasmus, 2017, p. 103). The word ‘share’ here is important, because it infers that the learning that emanates from this study seeks to radically democratise the production of knowledge in ways that can offer useful ‘translations’ around what is important across the borders of different “ecologies of knowledges” (Santos, 2014, p. 234). The commitment to translate between knowledges comes from the desire to:

... create cognitive justice. The aim of translation between practices and their agents is to create the conditions of global social justice from the standpoint of the democratic imagination. The work of translation creates the conditions for concrete social groups in a present whose injustice is legitimated on the basis of a massive waste of experience. (De Sousa Santos, 2014, p. 234)

In particular, this study as a whole seeks to alchemise “the waste of experience” in hegemonic meaning-making towards an agenda for decolonial pedagogies driven by the transgressive impulses of Change Drivers. As such, the work of finding accessible and

rigorous ways to co-conspire with and accompany their questions at the edge of the praxis is essential. The role of arts-based processes such as song in developing conspiratorial conversations which can create “a communion of agents engaged in exploratory discussions about possible and desirable worlds” has been argued as relevant in this study (Barone, 2008, in Fendler, 2013, p. 788). It is suggested that the writing and sharing of song can form a part of this communion by giving us a medium through which our conversations can move forward together. Lotz- Sisitka shares a vision of what the work and ethics of attunement entails and in it the value of song in the production of new knowledge. In this process, we:

... tune our ears to the beauty of song. We sense the rhythms of each other’s visions. We attune ourselves to the darkness of narrations that require healing, to pain, suffering and the ragged edges of contradiction and power. We attune to fringe theories, marginal voices and lost creatures that have not made it into the mainstream, listening out for what they might offer...

We attune to the stories blaring in our heads about the worlds’ wounds....

With this, become singer and listener...

Be the singing ‘wild creature’ storied being of Ben Okri – one who holds on to wildness in order to hear and give joy. Make terrifying noises. Attune sensitively. Sharpen acoustic reflexes. Seek out better frequency resolution. Hear seismic vibrations of immanent pain and extinction.

Hear each other’s clicks, squeals, pain and rhythms above the blaring of the stories in our heads. Above institutional impact measures. (Lotz-Sisitka, 2018, p. 1)

The second half of this study seeks to aspire to the call above, and to see this as what contemporary educators seeking to revitalise their praxis ought to do. The use of song challenges us to accede to other visions for research, beyond the traditional thinking around what a ‘thesis’ is. The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy describes a thesis as: “a proposition especially: 1. an axiom or a theorem of a formal system, 2. a proposition presented for purposes of truth, or for consideration...” (Mautner, 2000, p. 564). Instead of proposing an axiom or theorem, this study seeks to invite us to consider other ways in which the production of knowledge can happen. Fendler assures us of what this might look like:

... in addition to arguing for (or against) a thesis, research can also be modelled as an exegesis, diegesis, or mimesis. These three options – a critical interpretation, a narration/retelling, or a showing, respectively – provide new answers to the questions: What does research achieve and what shape does it take? (Fendler, 2013, p. 788)

The creation of song sits somewhere between Fendler’s three options. In acknowledging my role as a researcher, the songs serve as critical interpretation, or better still critical ‘inter-views’ between myself and the Change Drivers (Kouritzin, 2009, p. 77). The word ‘inter-view’ builds on the understanding that ‘inter-view’ is an honest description of our interactions, because it contains within it the notion of “negotiated glimpses (views)”

between those that participated (Kouritzin, 2009, p. 77). These negotiated glimpses refer to the perspective offered by each Change Driver and my engagements with these through each song. The songs also hold an element of narration within them as they trace an understanding of the life worlds charted by Change Drivers. The emotive aspect of song also has the propensity to show us so much through the range of its expression. These three examples of the purpose of research beyond a thesis have been experimental accompaniments that are helping me explore the value of song in the production of knowledge.

It is important to also consider how working the offerings of Change Drivers through a phenomenology of listening accords with an “ethics and pedagogy of attunement” (Lispari, 2014, p. 55; Lotz-Sisitka, 2018, p. 1). This includes questions about how I see the nature of this collaboration, and some of the important theoretical boundaries associated with the ethical implications of this work. To begin with, the concept of phenomenology needs to be grappled with, especially as it relates to the kind of knowledge produced by this outlook and the varying ontological roots presented in this work. Here are some introductory remarks about what phenomenology brings to qualitative education-based research:

General education research has embraced phenomenology based on what seems to be a realization that this mode of qualitative research allows the researcher to retain what is most meaningful about the particular phenomena being examined differently than is the case with various quantitative strategies for examining similar phenomena...

Phenomenology ... as seen in these studies... is a useful methodology for conveying meaning of actual lived experience in the world of participants... In every case, the research results not only increased the sense of what was known about the phenomenon to the specific field ... but they also helped each of the research participants talk and work through what the phenomenon meant to them. The strengths of this methodology, as illustrated by these studies, is the almost immediate accessibility of the results for both the scholar and the practitioner. (Randles, 2012, pp.12-14)

Many aspects of the value of phenomenology are evident in this quote. First is its ability to share meanings about the lived experience. This is valuable to this research project because it gives us a methodology that can help us zoom into the ‘lifeworlds’ of Change Drivers in ways that help us appreciate the knowledge there. Secondly and of critical importance is the usefulness of the knowledge that is generated here, both for the research going forward and also for those who co-conspired in the study. From the onset of this project my desire has been to generate a reflective space where Change Drivers can look to and appreciate significant aspects of their journey thus far. The study hopes to build on the reflections they

had as part of the workshop experience by working with their offerings in ways that can in turn provide an additional layer of reflection and engagement for us all. My experience of writing the paper on collective resonance taught me valuable lessons about the limitations of some kinds of sharing, which ultimately inspired me to renegotiate the way that sharing can be done through song. It is the immediate accessibility of the research and its continued rigour that this project yearns for.

My deliberations in the use of this methodology have required that I engage historically with its roots and formulate an understanding for myself about how I can work in this way whilst not betraying the emancipatory, decolonial and pluriversal ethic that underpins this study.

Some of the implications of working in this way are shared below:

Phenomenology is an interpretive mode of inquiry that offers a complex method for understanding complex experience, relying more on “interpretive sensitivity, inventive thoughtfulness, scholarly tact, and the writing talent of the human science researcher (van Manen, 1990, p. 34) than on some arbitrary measure of consistency and uniformity. Consequently, a researcher is personally available to the interchange in a way that highlights the meaning making process of the phenomenon, reflecting a driving and fundamental curiosity about the phenomenon...

The researcher must decipher the essential description of the contents and the particular underlying structure that relates the elements into a united experiential whole. The end result of phenomenological research is to arrive at a nonreductive structure that unites the invariant elements of an experience into a description of the experience reflecting the core elements shared by the participants. (Conklin, 2007, pp. 276, 277)

The use of song lends itself well to a distilled multi-sensory description that can give a feeling of the unique elements of the experience relayed, as well as a sense of the experiential whole of which it is a part. There are many schools of thought that describe how a researcher can go about creating this kind of work. For the purposes of this study it is useful to distinguish between the roots of phenomenology and articulations of hermeneutic phenomenology. According to Husserl’s notions of phenomenology, the researcher could attain a sense of “transcendental consciousness” that would aid in the understanding of the phenomena under study (Lavery, 2003, p. 23). As part of gaining this transcendental perspective, Husserl “proposed that one needed to bracket out the outer world as well as individual biases in order to successfully achieve contact with [the] essences” under study (Lavery, 2003, p. 23). This is perhaps where Mignolo’s critique of Husserl comes in again, because the understanding of a “transcendental consciousness” is inextricably tied to “a

coloniality of knowing” through its “pretense of universal fiction” (Mignolo, 2018, p. 372). It is a critique of the ability of one to arrive in one way or another at a ‘pure’ and ‘unbiased’ way of seeing into the life world of the subject under study. Conklin has explored the quandaries of this particular mode of thinking:

Another concern about the transcendental attitude and its relation to authenticity has to do with the presentation of self. If attitude intends our collection of values and beliefs, or habit of making sense of the world, in essence our way of knowing and being vis-à-vis the world, then there are, ostensibly, multiple “ways” available to us as we are capable of holding multiple and divergent attitudes simultaneously and concerning various circumstances...

All of this to say that apprehending a transcendental attitude seems a slippery process, one fraught with uncertainty and doubt about our real capacity for acquisition. (Conklin, 2007, pp. 283, 284)

In line with what I understand to be a pluriversal way of acknowledging the confluences of ways of being and seeing that are within us as individuals and the veritable “ecologies of knowledges” that exist out there in the world, it is far more productive for the purposes of this study to engage with the more hermeneutical variations on phenomenology that better appreciate how implicated we always are in the meanings that we make. Hermeneutical variations of phenomenology are an ontological turn within the practice that were led by the alternative directions of Heidegger. The difference between the two branches of phenomenology are described below:

While Husserl focused more on the epistemological question of the relationship between the knower and the object of study, Heidegger moved to the ontological question of the nature of reality and ‘Being’ in the world... Both Husserl and Heidegger took exception to the Cartesian split between mind and body (Jones, 1975). Husserl believed that while such a sharp distinction does not exist, individuals were capable of a direct grasping of consciousness, the essences of whose structures could be seen in intentionally bracketing (Polkinghorne, 1983). Heidegger, on the other hand, further erased any distinction between the individual and experience, interpreting them as co-constituting each other and unable to exist without the other. From this perspective, he saw bracketing as impossible, as one cannot stand outside the pre-understandings and historicity of one’s experience. (Lavery, 2003, pp. 26-27)

Admitting that phenomenological work in the hermeneutical tradition essentially consists of ‘inter-views’ is useful, because it does not seek to erase or problematise my interaction (as a researcher) with the offerings of Change Drivers, but actually regarded this interaction as part of the work of creating songs. In this way, the study reiterates the point made in qualitative research that:

The notion of value-free research has been challenged as questionable and it is believed that attempts to attain such a stance have resulted in the loss of certain kinds of knowledge about human experience, such as meaning making. (Lavery, 2003, p. 26)

Instead, the compounded relationship between researcher and those participating in the study is seen as a potential strength because it could possibly enable the generation of rich results “that might not be obtainable in any other way” (Randles, 2012, p.18). The ethical implications of this relationship still need to be considered. I found that the hermeneutical tradition of phenomenology requires that the thoroughness through which knowledge is produced be fortified. Thinking around the necessity of a hermeneutical circle between researcher and research participants help to clarify this point:

Hermeneutic phenomenology might take a different approach to data analysis. This process involved one of co-construction of the data with the participant[s] as they engage in a hermeneutical circle of understanding. The researcher and the participant[s] worked together to bring life to the experience being explored through the use of imagination, the hermeneutic circle invites participants into an ongoing conversation, but does not prove a set methodology. Understanding occurs through a fusion of horizons, which is a dialectic between the pre-understandings of the research process, the interpretive framework and the sources of information. (Lavery, 2003, p. 30)

Working with a hermeneutical circle means for me acknowledging the many ways in which we reflected together, artistically, as part of the workshops at Stanford Valley. It means acknowledging the dialectics embedded in that process, and the offerings that emerged. These offerings were in many ways a co-constructed synthesis of what matters the most to each Change Driver. I stress the aspect of co-construction of meaning here in order to acknowledge the role I played within the offering, the one I have alluded to in writing about how some Change Drivers needed a bit of guidance and prompting in what they shared whilst others were happy to share what was foremost in their minds (see Appendix 6 for greater detail on how this played out). But the sense of co-construction in this research goes even further and is evident in the way I worked these offerings into songs which provided another instance of the ‘inter-view’ between what they shared, and me ‘listening phenomenologically’ to the contours of the gestures made by each person in the offerings (Lispari, 2014, p. 55; Lotz-Sisitka, 2018, p. 1). Finally, these songs were shared again with Change Drivers to get a sense of answers to these four questions:

1. What happened for them when they listened to the song created as an accompanying response to the experiences that they shared in their offerings?

2. Do they recognise themselves and their experiences in the song?
3. Was the account of their story accurate regarding what they said and meant?
4. What was their experience of reading/hearing another's rendition of their experience?

(Conklin, 2007, p. 281)

I leave my deliberations about methodology at this point, with a sense of what work the next chapter will explore. It is time now to share the offerings that each Change Drivers made through the presentation of their cartographies and the video recorded clips of their thinking. The song written for each participant in response to this offering is also shared in the next section, as well as the responses of the co-conspirers to watching the film clips of themselves sharing their offerings and what was distilled from this into the songs.

Please take the time to absorb these interrelated works presented in the next chapter because they are the heart of what this study has been able to produce. Audio and visual accompaniments to the text can be found on the online platform for the reader of the text and are labelled as Appendices 8 and 9 respectively⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ Access to all appendices are available via email: Please email Injairu@sheddingskins.co.za for access.

Chapter 6: Tuning Into and Singing Out Rising Cultures amongst Change Drivers in South Africa



Figure 7.1: Miriam Makeba (Source: SA History Online)⁵⁸

6.1 Introduction

Where are those songs?

Where are those songs
my mother and yours
always sang
fitting rhythms
to the whole
vast span of life?

What was it again
they sang
harvesting maize, threshing millet, storing the grain...

⁵⁸ <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/miriam-makeba-activist-two-fronts-connor-kirkpatrick>

What did they sing
bathing us, rocking us to sleep...
and the one they sang
stirring the pot
(swallowed in parts by choking smoke)?

What was it
the woods echoed
as in long file
my mother and yours and all the women on our ridge
beat out the rhythms
trudging gaily
as they carried
piles of wood
through those forests
miles from home
What song was it?

And the row of bending women
hoeing our fields
to what beat
did they
break the stubborn ground
as they weeded
our shambas?

What did they sing
at the ceremonies
child-birth
child-naming
second birth
initiation...?
how did they trill *ngemi*
what was the warrior's song?
how did the wedding song go?
sing me
the funeral song.
What do you remember?

Sing
I have forgotten
my mother's song
my children
will never know.
This I remember:
Mother always said
sing child sing
make a song
and sing
beat out your own rhythms
and rhythms of your life
but make the song soulful
and make life sing

Sing daughter sing
around you are
unaccountable tunes
some sung
others unsung
sing them

to your rhythms
observe
listen
absorb
soak yourself
bathe
in the stream of life
and then sing
sing
simple songs
for the people
for all to hear
and learn
and sing
with you .

(Micere Githae Mugo, 1992, p. 551).

This poem outlines the aspirations of the second part of this study and describes what it seeks to experiment with. It starts with an acknowledgement of the knowledge that sits in the past that is forgotten; the songs that the poet's mother and peers sang in her village. It traces the way in which song perforated so much of their lives in the village, and how in these times the choruses they used to sing out, are silent. The poem then takes a turn asking us to retrieve the possibilities of the present, by putting our attention on the 'unaccountable tunes' that lie within it. Chapter 6 of this research seeks to dig into this potential by acknowledging the songs that are here but still remain unsung. It accedes to the poem's invitation to sing out the rising cultures that are very much a part of the questions and meaning-making of Change Drivers in these times.

The fact that a part of the title of this study 'Not Yet Uhuru!' draws its inspiration from a song written by Letta Mbulu who was affirming the message embedded in Oginga Odinga's historical memoir of the same title seems prodigious at this point. It points to the importance of song as a historical accompaniment through the struggles of the time, wherever they might be. In Frank Tenaille's iconic book *Music is the Weapon of the Future* (2002), we are reminded of the important role that music has played within the emancipatory struggles on the continent and elsewhere. It has been a space where the expression of "political and cultural courage" has been inscribed with great rigour, care and funk (Tenaille, 2002, p. xiii). Within this text, music is understood as "the ideal popular vehicle for the hopes, sorrows, and contradictions of a modern Africa said to have started off on the wrong foot" (Tenaille, 2002, p. xiii). The value and potency of this medium and those who have strategically occupied its expression is described below:

These travelling showmen have captured in music the torments, hopes and disappointments of the century. Their words are as pale as a shroud, as red as spilled blood, as black as the mine, as green as the forest, and, when reflecting happy times, as multicoloured as the peoples of Africa themselves. Their notes exhale the sweat of toil, the musk of passion, and the fragrance of festival. Their tempos are as languid as an evening in the village, or as speedy as the late-night 'drugstore' where you can drown your fate in drink.

These singers and musicians have thus become invaluable chroniclers. Between the tom-tom and the Internet, these present-day griots have been the witnesses to a convulsive era, the ferry captains of memory, the clown parodists of tradition. This, their saga – of the red dirt lanes and corrugated metal roofs of ghettos, of pandemic wars, of people's swindled out of grand collective hopes – quietly traces the path of a broad cluster of lives swept along the wind's four courses... (Tenaille, 2002, p. xiv)

The intention of this chapter is to do the alternative 'chronicling' outlined in this quote by singing out the rising cultures presented by Change Drivers through their knowings, their work and experiences. Firoze Manji expresses the value of music as the conduit through which emancipatory cultures can be grown:

As the writings of both Cabral and Saro-Wiwa show, culture is not a mere artefact or expression of aesthetics, custom or tradition. It is a means by which people assert their opposition to domination, a means to proclaim and invent their humanity, a means to assert agency and the capacity to make history. In a word, culture is one of the fundamental tools of the struggle for emancipation. (Manji, 2018, p.23)

As a song writer I am evoking the power of song as part of the creation of emancipatory cultures. Songs in this perspective serve as a mirror for the cultures that are already underway in the present moment that need more ways to see the choices they choose to make. In other words, it is not only the creation of song that this chapter seeks to celebrate, but rather the iterative learning that came from reflecting on the culminative knowledge explored during our art-based workshop process. The songs serve as an additional reflective tool that allowed us to engage retrospectively into the meaning each person made there. Each song is thus a form of distillation that seeks to capture the essence of the knowledge each person contributed.

Each page in this chapter is a representation of the whole iterative journey undertaken in the second part of this study. First, as an introduction, there is a picture of each co-conspirer, taken during our time together. This is followed by a short biography to give the reader a greater feeling of who they are in their own words. Below this is a painted cartography created by each person as part of our time together. The cartography was part of the arts-

based reflective process designed to trace their transgressive learning over time. Readers are then given access to each person's film offering where they speak in greater depth about what matters to them. These are included on the online google platform that accompanies this thesis as part of Appendices 8 and 9⁵⁹. These offerings also show the prompting questions I asked in order to elicit some of what emerged as important to them during our time together.

The decision to include these offerings as a part of the study comes from a deep desire to share participants' voices with their own integrity and depth. This research project understands that if it is indeed about legitimising the meaning-making of Change Drivers in this contemporary moment, it must find ways for those faces and voices to arrive with full integrity. This necessitated creating a visual platform in which Change Drivers could take time to articulate what was important to them in their own words. In doing so, this research project sought to minimise the gap between how young people are stereotypically represented in the media, and what young people actually think, feel and know. This is the only way we can begin to "alter the terms of recognition" that sit within the cultural context we are in (Appadurai, 2013, p. 186). Using film as part of this research project also subverts "the symbolic violence of the academy" where I as a researcher can simply use my voice and positionality to speak for young people. bell hooks summarises this practice through this poignant quote:

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. (hooks In Tuck and Yang, 2014, p. 343)

Instead, this research project insists that we need to find ways to help concerned members of the public to come into close proximity with the careful deliberations of young people. Film gives us a medium in which their experiences can gain real proximity to our current social imaginations. Film has the power to bring us intimately closer and make us complicit in what we hear and see, even if only temporarily. The hope is that this sense of complicity can help sustain the conversations that young are people having in South Africa across the continent and the world.

⁵⁹ Access to all appendices are available via email: Please email Injairu@sheddingskins.co.za for access.

It is the depth of what they offered in these short films that lent themselves to the further reflections and forms that are worked with through song. In this way, the songs are a second layer of analysis that sought to follow the detailed movements and cartographic choices of each person. The creation of the songs was another distanced layer of listening to what had emerged during our time together. They form a charting of the territories of each individual co-conspirer and the questions they have going forward. As intimated in the chapter before this took over four months to listen to and move with the rising cultures that were emerging from each person's offering. The free writing of phenomenological traces of movement each person was charting found a way to organise themselves through the non-linear and emotive language of song in ways that are useful to describe. It took almost a year to work all of the writings into songs.

I found that in the first verse of a song, the context of the praxis of each individual came to the fore. The first verse thus became a way to lay out the broader terrain from which their questions emerged; the landscape they perceived their work to emanate from. The chorus of a song became that which they were actively seeking or that which they had committed themselves to wholeheartedly as part of their journey. The chorus became that which was resounding in their experience as the sum of what they shared and the place in which their current praxis rests. The chorus can be a rallying cry of sorts or the meaning to which they keep returning. This emerged in a different emotional language for each individual depending on the feelings underpinning their chosen praxis.

With the second verse mostly came a second layer of meaning-making, this time not solely about the context or history of the work, but rather a more nuanced laying out of the choices made within this. The second verse often prioritised the specific movement of the individual in that context and the shape of their praxis in that space. There are often bridges within the songs which confer or share something unresolved and heightened within the experience that challenges the person. Often the bridge contains critical information that serves as a very important compass for the choices the person is making. The context each person comes from, what they actively seek to reify in their praxis, and the choices they choose to make are kept on track by holding a critical question or perspective that gives their praxis its edge. The bridge is almost like the aspect of the issue that cannot be compromised in their perspective that gives their work the edge it needs to continue. What each song holds, varies from experience to experience.

A recording of each song is also available on the online Google platform that accompanies this thesis as part of Appendices 8 and 9⁶⁰. The song link appears on the bottom left hand corner adjacent to the film clip of their offering. The lyrics of each song can be found in the chapter as well as translations for words sung in different languages as a footnote. To encourage and support a nuanced understanding of why each song emerged a short “Why this song?” accompanies each song. The aim was to demystify the choices made around each song, in ways that could speak both about the emotional overlays that produce each song, as well as my understanding of the pedagogies that each co-conspirer brought forth within their offering. These written pieces were my direct way of highlighting the learning gained from each perspective that was worked into song. This was a way of naming the trajectories I understood as emerging from each offering. In some cases I have also referred to the cartography created by each individual as part of this meaning-making as a way of bringing into conversation all the different pieces in each profile.

Finally, at the end of all of these pieces there is a response from each co-conspirer. The complete package as presented (i.e. the picture, self- written biography, cartography, film number, song number, explanation of why this song etc. was presented to each co-conspirer in the same way as depicted on these pages. This complete package was sent to them almost two years after they had recorded their offerings. Each person was invited to respond to the package and its content using the following questions modified from Conklin’s work (Conklin, 2007, p. 281):

1. What happened for you when you listened to the video clip of the offering you made over two years ago? What reflections did you have on your own thoughts?
2. What happened for you when you listened to the song created as an accompanying response to the experiences that you shared in your offering? What was your experience of reading/hearing another’s rendition of your experience?
3. How do you feel about my (Injairu’s) understanding of your offering that is shared in the song? What did you recognise within the song? What didn’t you recognise or what might have been missing for you? What came up for you when you listened?

⁶⁰ Access to all appendices are available via email: Please email Injairu@sheddingskins.co.za for access.

4. Is there any part of the lyrics that you feel you can change to help make it more accurate to your experience at that time?
5. Is there anything else you would like to express right now to reconcile the different perspectives that have been shared (i.e. the offering you made two years ago, the song I wrote for you, and what you are experiencing and transgressing right now, in the present moment)? What are you feeling right now that you might like to add? In other words: Is what transgressing meant for you at the time you gave your offering the same as it is now? What (if anything) has changed (or been added) in your way of being and seeing now? What does it mean for you to transgress now?
6. Please would you give me a brief bio of yourself that I could use to accompany your offering in my PhD submission. I would love to share who you are, what you love to do, what you are currently working on. Would you be open to this? This would also be useful so people know more about who you are and what you are into in your own words.

These questions opened a way for each co-conspirer to reflect on what they said was important to them two years ago. They produced a space where they could each reflect on their own meaning-making and what this brought up for them in 2019. The song was also a space for member checking what I had understood about what they had said. In each case they were invited to interact with what I had created there, shifting what they felt was necessary or at least flagging what they might change. Lastly, each co-conspirer was invited to reflect on what transgression meant for them at the time they had made their offering and what it meant for them now. This was asked as a way of inviting a glimpse into how they have been moving since they made their offerings. Because movement is such an important part of the conceptualisation of this study, I wanted to create the space in which some sense of their movements could be perceived to enrich our imaginations of what was underway in the present moment. Co-conspirers responded to these questions with as much depth or brevity as they chose. My role was to provide the space for them to reflect. I was aware of the amount of time I was asking of each of them, to reflect on themselves, the songs and their current movements. My sense was that after receiving some of their reflections they may require considerable time and reflection. The different ways each person responded are presented as part of their profile. I did not write back to ask participants for more after they had shared as I felt like we had done enough for this particular body of work and that any more experiments could form part of something new following this research project.

6.2 The Profiles and Rising Cultures of Change Drivers in South Africa

Please take time to immerse yourself in what is presented in this section and the meaning made through the paintings, films, songs, explanations and responses to questions. For ease of reading and to avoid repetition, the reflective questions are not included in each person's profile. Instead there are paragraphs of responses to the reflective questions (see the previous section) so each person's response can be read as a whole.

Guiding instructions to navigate the many resources follow:

1. Take the time to meet the person in each profile through their picture and biography.
2. Observe their cartography.
3. Listen to their film offering included as part of Appendix 6 on the accompanying online platform. Please email Injairu@sheddingskins.co.za for access to this platform.
4. Read the lyrics of the song created.
5. Listen to the song created in response to their offering as part of Appendix 7 on the accompanying online platform.
6. Read my explanations around how the song emerged.
7. Read each participant's reflection on his/her film offering and the song written as a response to this.

6.2.1 Gcobani Jombile



Gcobani Jombile is a young change driver and black feminist living in Cape Town. Professionally I work in the education and training space, training community development practitioners. The rest of the time I am working on being more present in life and finding opportunities to be bright in every corner.



*Usini Leteye!*⁶¹



I have nothing to give you.
You see, history took so much...
And the present continues to be
so extractive,
cornering to commodify.

And these ancestral lines
watch in defiance
the abstractions of black pain.

And all of the while
you ask me to arrive “neatly”
to perform “rationally”
For your scrutiny

Usini Leteye!
Wacha mi na mwenzangu
to jenge to ku enda mbele,
To make our sacred place
Wewe! Usini Leteye⁶²!

I have nothing to convince you
I’m tired of performing being
free
This deeper call for land is no
rhetoric
and feminism is no fashion to me

And I keep discerning
watching and learning
Knowing it’s enough to feel what
I feel

I only want to speak the truth of
what has meaning
and potential healing
for my people

Wewe! Usini Leteye
Wacha mi na watu wangu
to jenge ku enda mbele
To make our sacred place
Wewe! Usini Leteye

We know that you know
You just do not care
We know that you know
How unbalanced unfair
and still you persist
to be shocked I
exist

Why should I engage

When conversation is outplayed
Why should I engage
when you’re just trying to tame
the frustration being named
and I’m done, I’m done, I’m
done

Oh my people!
My people
It’s not your fault don’t you
believe it
History made it

Oh my people!
My people
I save my energy
for what has meaning
and potential healing
for my people

⁶¹ Ki Swahili slang for ‘Don’t even try it, or don’t even try and bring me that...’ (this is a warning)

⁶² Ki Swahili for ‘Leave me and my companions to build ourselves in ways that we can go forward, to make our sacred place, You! Don’t even bring me that/ don’t even try it!’



Why this song?

When listening to Gcobani's offering I was struck by where she was speaking from. Her voice is paced and drags through like the sound of gravel on a road. The sense of tiredness, reluctance and unwillingness to present herself other than how she actually feels is palpable. She takes her time to state the frustration that she feels, knowing fully well that there are many that might wish her to perform her anger and frustration in other ways or at least explain it to them. She refuses to give energy to those requests because it is enough for her to be with what she is feeling. She owns that space as an expression of what it means to transgress for her.

Her song "Usini Leteye" hopes to express and echo Gcobani's desire to willfully remove herself from playing into engagements that somehow always seem to ask her to "perform" or explain her frustration and pain. The song is a warning, a signal to back off, whilst also taking its time to express the frustration that lies underneath the protective impulse she demonstrates. She is protective of herself and the black community that continues to bear the brunt of the historical legacy of racism and socio-economic disenfranchisement. The song tries to capture the gesture of her strategically turning away from a discourse that will endlessly have her explaining why she is so angry, why a feminist lens is so important for her, and why we need to go deeper into the conversation about land expropriation without compensation. She signals a disinvestment from discourse that continually asks her to explain herself and rather seeks to do work that has meaning and healing for the majority of black people whose experiences are not validated. She seeks to do the kind of work that helps them understand they are not alone and that what they are experiencing psychologically and economically is not their fault – they should not take this on as a marker of their own inferiority in an unjust world.

Despite speaking directly to her frustration and the turn towards work that affirms and acknowledges the black experience in South Africa, the song is measured and takes its time. It does not rush. It hopes to give the listener a sense of the depth of feeling that sits at the heart of her frustration. In other words, whilst many might see an expression of frustration and anger as a very dominating cacophony of relentless sound, this song seeks to honour the measured intelligence and historical memory that comes with her anger. It rather acknowledges the pain of generations and the reclaiming of boundaries by younger

generations about what is acceptable and what cannot persist. The song is a form of boundary making. It is a warning that her experience and that of other black people who have gone through this history is not something to be played with through discourses that undermine the legitimacy of what people feel. The boundary made is one that turns away from that gaze, and seeks to create healing spaces for black people sitting with this frustration.

She makes an instinctual turn from a discourse of debate, argument and convincing another why what she thinks matters towards the protection of what she and others feels. This speaks to a pedagogy of exhaustion, as well as one that is discerning about where to invest one's energy. Instead of trying to explain herself to those who might think she is somewhat strange, angry or misguided, she affirms what she knows about her experience and those of others like her. She protects that space in her gesture and asks that whoever comes towards them be issued warning in terms of what they will further endure as they work through that particular moment. This is a pedagogy of divestment of a discourse that is built on contestation and debate as proof of one's worthiness. The song seeks to honour the turning of her ship in this way as a symbolic affirmation of her desire to not have to be considered legitimate in the eyes of others in order to exist fully.



Gcobani's Response

1. It was interesting listening to my views from two years ago because I think I have changed a bit. I could feel my frustration as I spoke. As I was watching, I was struck by how much more cynical about people's intentions I was. But I think I was at a point where I had learned the language to articulate my experiences, had been involved in activism spaces and was exhausted from the emotional labour that comes with engaging about race and gender in activist spaces and also hostile environments. I was also just tired from observing and experiencing a lot of the injustice that is in the world.
2. It was interesting to hear my frustration being mirrored back at me, I was not even that aware of how frustrated I was with everything. But I do recognise myself in the song, if that makes sense, I recognise the Gcobani I was then.
3. I recognised the 'no nonsense' black woman 😊. I also recognise a lot of frustrations and some anger which perfectly captures the headspace I was in during that time.

4. There's nothing I would change, I think it does depict my experience at that time.
5. I think two years ago I was quite protective over how the social justice movements were being commodified or were trendy, and over the years I have relaxed about that because people have different experiences of feminism and such. The more mainstream topics around social justice become, the more people it reaches and that is another way to drive change. If I had to rewrite the song based on where I am right now, I think there would be more of an expression of hope but the "Usini Leteye" is still there.

I think the meaning for transgressing for me is still pretty much the same: it's active citizenship, it's changing and being involved in communities; it's speaking truth to power; it's calling out oppressive behaviours and norms; fighting against oppression with small and big actions; and learning to live in a way that is free and true to you and allows others to be free and be their true selves.

6.2.2 Kristi Jooste



My name is Kristi Rose Jooste. Rose I receive from my mother, Rosemary – someone who remains the wisest woman I have the privilege of knowing, and the one who has chosen to guide me at times, walk in my wake at others, but more often than not, someone who has consistently offered me her example of walking alongside a child. Jooste is my father's surname – a man who, amongst many other memories, encouraged me to be curious, taught me to interrogate, showed me how to ask, and set the example of working hard. I am from a family of four children, which now has grown far beyond these bounds in heart ties. I am currently a primary school teacher at Floreat Primary in Steenberg, Cape Town. As an introvert who fakes extroverting for a living, I am feeling a great sense of joy in a classroom watching the

beauty of socio-dynamics unfold, and especially when we go beyond the 4 walls and it's ceiling. I have learnt from and taught children from age 2-21, in various corners of the globe. The more I engage in learning and teaching, the more I'm reminded that I probably don't know how much we still don't yet know; sometimes I'm ok with this. I also love to move my body in nature, and I have been known to be most happy when I am either warm in the outside cold, or sitting with a pair of goggles beyond the wave backline, or snuggled up in an afternoon nap. I am engaged to be married to a man who walks, laughs and cries with me, who sees me and offers me grace when it's hard. I am here.



Belonging



I need to seek out what I can't see
I need to know what I was taught to never care about
Won't you unprotect from the shield we use to keep it out?
I need to seek out what I can't see

Won't you bathe me in that bigger world?
Help me learn a language that knows true humility
Won't you unmake the exception in me?

Belonging
This far now
I'm finding what's precious
Is owning my own responsibility

Belonging
This far now
I'm finding essential
outgrowing that old white fragility

I really wonder what means "community"?
When I had to break out my space to really know it
When I had to learn so much from those who don't have so much ⁶³

There's a generosity
that would be lost to me
if you didn't receive me there

Thank you for reminding me
My role is to come back here
and build a sense of my own

Belonging
This far now
I'm finding what's precious
Is owning my own responsibility

Belonging
This far now
I'm finding essential
outgrowing that old white fragility

And I'm learning to teach
in ways that befriend
a spirit of humanity
I'm learning to be a friend
to a child's humanity
To be
To know
in my presence you are whole
I want you to be
and to know
that you are always home

⁶³ This line is revised in its final form to reflect Kristi's suggestion. It now reads as "When I had to learn so much from those who gave me so much".



Why this song?

Kristi's presence within the group is one that always reminded me of the parameters of what it feels like to grapple with being welcome in a space as a white person. She has demonstrated over years her desire to work on and undo the layers of privilege that accompany the identity of being a white person in South Africa by taking on the responsibility to put herself in spaces where she would have to learn how to exist within the space. She has struggled to take responsibility and navigate the vulnerabilities that inevitable play out as a part of this. This sense of constant unsettlement and the ongoing work of listening that she demonstrates is what the song "Belonging" sought to express.

In the first instance it is a call to veer off the track that she has been on. To learn and to be exposed to what she does not know. To have the protective layers of privilege that might have shielded her be removed so she can begin to feel herself as part of something bigger. This is a call to make the layers of privilege strange. To question what it is that gives a person that kind of sense of security in a world where there are so many vulnerabilities that many others face.

The first verse is like prayer to forego the trappings that make one unable to appreciate one's own full humanity and that of others. It is a prayer to see anew with eyes that can better appreciate the dynamics that can be witnessed in society, dynamics that one is a part of. The song is taut with a tension that denotes the struggle to navigate that space even as one calls for it.

The chorus is breathless and fierce demonstrating how absorbing, disturbing and stretching this work has been, and the commitment to keep learning in this way. The chorus highlights the commitment to take on her own responsibility even when the answers are not clear – even when her sense of looking for or wanting to create community within where she lives in Cape Town continues to elude her.

The acknowledgement of the amount of learning she gained in the Eastern Cape is heartfelt and given cognisance in the song. There is an appreciation about how that journey was a big turning point for her around questions of where she belongs – and where she should be driving change.

Kristi also spoke about her own fragility, and how at the end of her journey in the Eastern Cape something in her “broke”. The concept ‘white fragility’ becomes key here, and in her own way she has sought the kind of learning that continues to help her face the interface between her responsibility and the sense of fragility she encounters and acknowledges. These two big learnings are captured in her chorus. They are not problematised; they are simply an essential and precious part of what the work has been for her. Hers is a pedagogy of courage that sees her through her unsettlement. It also speaks to a pedagogy of willful vulnerability that happens when one begins to understand how one’s ways of being, learnt over time, can contribute to power dynamics especially around race and socio-economic injustice that are at the heart of an unequal society. Her way of moving understands the unlearning and learning one needs undergo in order to better be in the service of a more equitable and just vision for the future.

Finally, and I think this is key in Kristi’s offering, is her role as an educator that really benefits from her learning over the years. Her determination to work with children in ways that can acknowledge their wholeness and humanity is the challenge she sets herself as an educator. This impulse and drive is seen as the action she chooses to take the position she chooses to face, the way in which she reinvests her learning into the world. Even though she has in her own way been taking up the struggle around what it means to belong as a white person in South Africa, she tries to create a classroom space where each person can belong. The song ends on this note as a way of honouring her commitment to shaping a different world with others. She dutifully watches over what is happening for younger generations as part of her praxis.



Kristi's Response

Thank you for these encouragements (in the paragraph in purple)

UTTERANCES OF APOLOGIES and NERVOUSNESS in the video

I feel Im moving towards becoming a change driver

To some degree

Maybe, maybe not

Colour of my skin (facial expressions)

..what whiteness looks like, means and ja.

Naïve move

I didn't explain why I wanted to learn language

Sometimes I still feel like im discovering it

Facial expressions after that

"protection, so to speak"

Im probably going beyond the question

So its maybe the teacher in me

Slowly but surely facial expressions

Im tentative to share this

I think it's important but..

It wasn't a noble, now go save the white people

"Anyway"

Ja, so

Picking facial expression

I'm petrified of writing

"try see things in a new light"

I don't know still what that means

That's where I happen to find myself now

Im sure there are people who know a lot more, but

Im sure Im not going to explain it properly

Whatever that means

"..For me.."

JARGON USED:

Space/s 111111

Whiteness 111

Narrative 1

Soooo.. 1111

Injustices 111

Friends of colour 1111

"That's not ok" 1

Privilege/d 111

Middle class 111

Community 1111111111

Radical 11
Fragile/ness/ility 1111
Disrupt 1111
Mandate 1
Engage 111111111
White person 11111
Confirmation bias 1
Talk and act 11
(I don't know) what it Looks like 1
System 111
Supremacy 1
Personal racism 1
Microaggressions 1
Prejudice + power = racism 1
Systemic 1
Conversation111
Reimagine 1111
Knowledge injustices 1
Developmentalism, linear 1
Problematic 1
Foreground 11
Intra-action 1

Belonging (Song)

I need to seek out what I can't see
I need to know what I was taught to never care about
Won't you unprotect from the shield we use to keep it out?
I need to seek out what I can't see

Won't you bathe me in that bigger world?
Help me learn a language that knows true humility
Won't you unmake the exception in me?

Belonging
This far now
I'm finding what's precious
Is owning my own responsibility

Belonging
This far now
I'm finding essential
outgrowing that old white fragility

I really wonder what means "community"?

When I had to break out my space to really know it
When I had to learn so much from those who don't have too much

There's a generosity
that would be lost to me
if you didn't receive me there

Thank you for reminding me
My role is to come back here
and build a sense of my own

Belonging
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And I'm learning to teach
in ways that befriend
a spirit of humanity
I'm learning to be a friend
to a child's humanity
To be
To know
in my presence you are whole
I want you to be
and to know
that you are always home

I was curious about what I had said. I also felt uncomfortably squirmishly embarrassed as I watched it alone, and then with my partner, and then again on my own – embarrassed at my use of current jargon (see list above), my seeming confidence to make truisms for things that are not necessarily true for all, and my apologetic interjections (see in blue in list above) and facial expressions (see list above). Deeper than this, I am still intrigued that far more of my interview was centred around race, and specifically my place in the racial fabric of the country, rather than education. I was at the end of my first year at a school situated in a socio-cultural context that I had previously not worked in, so the context that I was navigating at the time involved a mesh of learning about education in this socioeconomic context. It has been interesting for me to think on why I did not bring more of myself as an educator to the shared Not Yet Uhuru space. I wonder whether it doesn't have something to do with my association of the other participants as Activators, Injairu as an Activator facilitator, but

also what others brought – or in this case, did not bring – and perhaps (to a lesser degree) geographic location. Though it was Injairu’s framing of this space as one about working out what education for social change looks like, had been what most attracted me, to be the only paid teacher in the room meant that I chose to background that part of me and foreground what was more common to the space. Interesting, and I think definitely worth more picking apart for me as I continue to learn new aspects of how I am in diverse spaces with 1 common thread across those in the room.

Preamble: For 3 weeks I didn’t realize that there was a written piece to the background of the song – so I listened to it without having read Injairu’s written piece first.

1. I was struck by Injairu’s strong, soul-full voice; also I found my heart rate increasing at the fast, almost frantic tempo in some parts.

2. Even as I sit here, the song feels more like some of my sentiments than my interview; or perhaps it is just that I like to see myself in ways similar to what was described in the song rather than video.

3. & 4. The 4th time I listened to the song, I highlighted words or phrases that resonated with me (in yellow above). There were many. Almost every line captured something of my journey. This is beauty-filled, and creative genius! I was pleasantly surprised that the heading captured a consistent deep desire of mine regularly, I had a knee jerk at the phrases (highlighted in green):

from those who don’t have too much – as I didn’t feel comfortable with this string of words for the people I stayed with who had so much and gave so much to me beyond monetary things. old white fragility – this is not old, I am still white - though I prefer to use the term beige now – and this is a political word, and I felt myself feeling very uncomfortable throughout the video with my use of jargon, so this stuck a bit like dry toast in my throat.

At the end, I found myself, after 2.5 years, still feeling unsatisfied with how little had been written about my journey as an educator. I remember feeling this straight after the interview, and on numerous occasions after those 4 days.

Perhaps rewording of “from those who don’t have too much”

However, not “white fragility” as those would have been the terms I would have used at that time. Old perhaps can be dropped or replaced.... Though maybe not, as I appreciate old also referring to the fact that these constructs have been around a long time before me.

Right now I would like to go back in time and re-speak, perhaps with a softer tone and with less ‘absolute’ confidence, more nuanced but less apologetic words, body language and tone. Gosh, that younger Kristi must’ve been quite a pain to listen to.

I’d like to have been pushed to explore some of those stock phrases that I rattled off, and which Injairu managed to question me on here and there. I don’t sound like me (or perhaps just a me that I would like to be seen as?!) but rather someone trying to closely resembling a carbon copy of a

young, overly confident “wokey” person speak. Arg, please no! haha (funny but not really funny... I still squirm when I think of my speaking on the video as I forced myself to watch it 5 times).

The background writing that Injairu wrote about my song is far more palatable and meaningful for me personally – I have enjoyed reading it and finding parts of myself that I still identify with (in green below). But perhaps it’s also the positive spin that someone else places in their biographical writing that makes me feel affirmed (in purple below), which is not existent in a monologue interview-type setting.

Kristi’s highlights from “why this song?”

Kristi’s presence within the group is one that always reminded me of the parameters of what it feels like to negotiate one’s space in the room as a white person. She has demonstrated over years her desire to work on and undo the layers of privilege that accompany the identity of being a white person in South Africa by taking on the responsibility to put herself in spaces where she would have to learn how to exist within the space, take responsibility and navigate the vulnerabilities that inevitable play out as a part of this. This sense of constant unsettlement and the ongoing work of listening to herself and others that she demonstrates is what the song on belonging sought to express.

The beginning of the song is a call to veer off the track that she has been on. To learn and to be exposed to what she doesn’t know. To have the protective layers that might have shielded her to be removed so she can begin to feel herself as part of something bigger. This a call to make the layers of privilege strange - to question what it is that gives a person that kind of sense of security in a world where there are so many vulnerabilities that many others face. The first verse is like prayer to forego the trappings that make one unable to appreciate one’s own full humanity and that of others around you. It is a prayer to see a newly with eyes that can better appreciate the dynamics that can be witnessed in society. Dynamics that you yourself can be a part of.

The song is taut with a tension that denotes the struggle to navigate that space even as one calls for it. The chorus is breathless basically demonstrating how absorbing, disturbing and stretching this work has been and what the commitment to keep learning is this way has needed. What is for sure on her journey which forms part of the chorus is the commitment to take her own responsibility even when the answers are not so clear. Even when her sense of looking for or wanting to create community within where she lives in Cape Town continues to elude her. The acknowledgement of the amount of learning she gained in the Eastern Cape is heartfelt and given cognisance in the song. There is an appreciation about how that journey was a part a big turning for her around questions of where she belongs- and where she should be driving change.

She also speaks about her own fragility on that journey and how at the end of her journey in the Eastern Cape something in her “broke”. Her definition white fragility becomes key here, and in her own way she has brushed up with the kind of learning that continues to help her face the interface between her responsibility and the sense of fragility that she encounters and acknowledges for herself. These two big learnings are captured as part of her chorus. They are not problematized, they are simply an essential and precious part of what the work has been for her. Hers is a pedagogy of courage in one’s unsettlement. It also speaks to a pedagogy of willful vulnerability that happens when one begins to understand how one’s ways of being learnt over time can contribute to power dynamics especially around race and socio- economic injustice that are at the heart of an unequal

society. One that understands that the unlearning and learning that one needs undergo themselves in order to better be in the service of a more equitable and just vision for the future.

Finally, and I think that this is key in Kristi's offering it is her role as an educator that really benefits from the learning that she has undergone over years. Her determination to work with children in ways that can acknowledge their wholeness and humanity is the challenge that she sets herself as an educator. This impulse and drive is seen as the action she chooses to take, the position she chooses to face, the way in which she reinvests her learning into the world. That even though she has in her own way taking up the struggle around what it means to belong as a white person in South Africa she lies to create a classroom space where each person can belong. The song ends on this note as a way of honouring the way in which her commitment to shaping a different world with others. She dutifully watches over what is happening for younger generations as part of her praxis.

5.As I think back, I first recognized transgression in my own life journey when I was not aware of a boundary altogether (example from childhood: as a 4 year old girl child with 9 out of 10 boys at my party ☺), and later on it meant to go through, to push past, or to go beyond a so-called 'norm'. In my video interview, as much as I spoke (4 times) of disruption, I don't think that I was really intentionally moving in the world in order to disrupt; I think it was more to just see whether the boundary was a real thing, or merely one that is constructed and imposed by another person, in which case it can be held more lightly, and perhaps even ignored altogether. My own curiosity, and being energized by what lies around the next corner, has often taken me to unexpected places. Even in my current life journeys, this still seems to be the case. In addition to the continued journeys in education and socio-political race/culture, in the past 3 years, my life path has taken me on journeys of relooking at genders and sexualities, and how it is perceived in real contexts, such as the church and my places of work. Perhaps I may well remain in a state of seeing (or ignoring) and subsequently transcending boundaries for the rest of my life.

Since 2016, as I have walked the twists and turns of my world, I have become more at home with my perspective about genders and sexualities – perspectives that transgress the hetero-normative cookie cutter of the church and a number of my social circles. More specifically, this inadvertent transgression centres around my discomfort with the lack of knowledge and understanding around the topics of gender identity, expression, biological sex and sexual orientation that causes pain to many as it encourages bigotry and exclusion which I don't think Jesus stood in favour of. Perhaps as someone who is trying to follow Jesus' example of choosing Love that conquers from the down-side up, I have chosen to remain a member of the church corporate even as it is largely still an entity that does not welcome all genders and sexualities other than the heteronormative cis-gendered cookie cutter, and further it causes a lot of pain for many people, even though there are many individuals who are on our own journeys with these core realities of human existence.

As I spend time reflecting on where I have come from, I tend towards the view that transgression of boundaries has more often been a mere side effect of living life that brings with it opportunities to transgress or not, rather than having a particular desire or drive to disrupt. And in addition, more recently as I move through my adult life, I note myself transgressing boundaries when I believe that it is hurtful to people I know and love, or when harm is being done by people within my circles. Right now I am appreciating the opportunity to reflect on where I have come from and the parts of my Johari Window that I can see. May these things change over time? I wouldn't be surprised if they do!

6.2.3 Motsatsi Mmola



I'm Motsatsi Mmola, 31 years old from Maruleng Municipality Enable Village Mopani District Limpopo. I'm an activist and a 2013 Activator who believes in change. If I can't drive change, who will?? I don't shift blame I take responsibility. I am an Activate station manager in my area. It's like a information centre. I help grade 12 learners with online universities applications. We give motivational talks and mentorship. We ran registrations and election campaigns and encourage ppl to register to vote especially youth. Our vote is our voice. One vote can bring a difference. I am unemployed but believing that God's timing is always right.



***Re Tlaba Gona!*⁶⁴**



If it's by grace
that the sun rises everyday
and we're given our daily bread
Ka mogau retlaba gona⁶⁵

If there's a need
To demonstrate what it means to lead,
To renew a spirit of service
Lord, let it be me.

I see how the world in man's image keeps forgetting
Our potential beyond the political mandates were getting
I ask how will this restore hope for a future that's different
And if the gift needed is audacity
then let me step in

Eh! Retlaba gona!
Ka mogau ea hao
Eh! Eh Retlaba gona!⁶⁶

So here I am
gaining a strength that you can't understand
Standing with second
big political parties on my back!

You said I'll suffer till I die
But I have community by my side
and we want to see a real future for our children

And yes!
Re tla e bona
Ka Mogau wa gago
Eh! Re tla e bona⁶⁷!

No one can change a bad beginning
but if we try to we can start something good
Let this be true...

⁶⁴ This song has lyrics in Sepedi. This means: "We will be there!"

⁶⁵ Then by grace we will be there.

⁶⁶ Eh! We will be there, by your grace, we will be there!

⁶⁷ And Yes! We will see it, by your grace, we will see it!



Why this song?

It was clear to me when listening to Motsatsi's offering how important the spiritual dimensions in her meaning-making are in the way that she moves in the world. It is the spiritual understandings of her work that root the transgressions she boldly makes. As an "unemployed" woman in a rural community, many would emphasise the vulnerability of this position; instead what we see here is an incredibly potent expression of her will, or I suppose in her perspective, the coming into being of God's will through her. The song "Re Tlaba Gona" seeks to express the leadership role she steps into from her spiritual grounding. For her, being a Change Driver is a calling, and so it seemed apt to foreground the role that grace has for her, that it is through the same grace that we live to see another day, or the grace in being able to have enough to feed one's family where she places her trust as she navigates her community. The repetitive phrase "Retla Tlaba Gona" or "we will be there" serves as a prayer, a reminder and an affirmation throughout the journey of the song. It is the faith in a greater will that propels her forward as she begins to define her role with her community.

She stands squarely set to face the manifestations of political interests gone wrong in her community, as an independent electoral candidate. In her offering she said that one day she just decided that it was about time that someone in her community stood up to the corrupt politics of the day that was compromising the future of their children. Against great odds she stood up to be that person, to renew what a spirit of service could look like in her community. This gesture gives a sense of what it means to move from a place where one's impact seems against the odds – like that underdog in a sea of challenges that no one really expects to move through to the next phase, and then next after that. The song seeks to honour this journey and the momentum she has galvanised as she takes up a very risky and contested role with her community. It seeks to highlight the way in which it is the moral issue that she takes up by seeking not to please man but rather to please God through her work. This is a pedagogy built on the ethical and spiritual dimensions of what is needed. It is a resilient stance to be audacious and demonstrate the very change one seeks to see. To enter the gap through purposeful action in service. And as she gathers strength, and grows her voice in her community, she demonstrates an alternative in a space in which the thought of standing up to powerful political players seldom happens and is very dangerous work. The threats that she has faced are referenced in the song as well as the undoubtable support she has from her

community, many of whom did not even know that somebody could even stand as independent candidate in a local election. The song escalates its desires in the last chorus by changing its tune from “we will be there” to “we will live to see a better future for our children”. This is an extension of the hope that Motsatsi and those she works with in her community represents. It is not only that they will live to see another day through grace, but also that through their efforts, will and desire, they will live to see a better future for their children. It is a mantra that hopes to bring into being that which is being sought for and fought for dearly by Motsatsi and her allies.



Motsatsi's response

1. I felt overwhelmed, happy, proud, favoured and blessed by God when I listened to the video clip. I said Ebenezer (God took me this far). I'm planning to taking everything and do one documentary so that I will be able to share with the coming generation.
 2. After I listened to the song, it made me realize that there are lot of strategies that we can use to pass messages to people especially through music. I couldn't stop listening to the song. The song was reminder of things I said in 2016. It made me realize how far I come from with activism. I felt very happy especially the words "REKAKGONA". It challenged me because Injairu knows my language and I don't know other language. I even struggle with English 😊😊. So I'm challenged. But it's never being late.
 3. & 4. The lyrics were superb. I'm more than satisfied. Wish it can have beats😊
 5. A lot of things changed on my side. I took part in 2016 local elections. But since Cyril Ramaphosa took over presidency I'm going to support him. In his leadership I believe. But I'm not sure of 2021 whether I will stand again or not. Challenging status quo is my passion. No one can change bad beginning but we can start now for a better future.
- Cyril is sober minded. He take decisions not in anger. He is focused and don't reshuffle cabinet overnight. Before he do something he thinks about economy first. He is accommodative and able to tolerate other ppl including those who mock him. He is the hope of hopeless. He brought stability and trust back to ANC.

6.2.4 Prince Charles



I am Prince Charles born in Komani in the Eastern Cape, I am regard myself to be a humanist, a social democrat and a civic nationalist. I love South Africa and Africa, I can sing 8 African national anthems. I am currently establishing a NPO called *Isizwe Sabantu* (A people's nation) which aims to promote a nation's frame of mind among South Africans. Academically I hold a junior degree in politics and sociology from the Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth.



Keep the Whole in Focus!



Let's stop and gain some perspective,
To bring in the thoughts we don't let in.
The way that I see it now,
Each one builds a place that's exclusional

We're receding into tribal lines
Happy to push people to the "other"-side
I ask what will this create?
Where's the nation in this state?

Whoa, whoa its political!
These parties they seem to just know it all.
Suffocating a space for a rational,
that doesn't play into their interests – oh yes!

I try to carefully explain,
there's so much more that is at stake.
Don't give into the game
flex, stretch
ask the questions you're not hearing yet.

I try to keep the whole in focus
I pray you keep the whole in focus
I try to keep the whole in focus
I pray you keep the whole in focus

I'm glad we've reached a space
where we can call on
the decolonial.
But tell me,
are we ready to see how this can be
abused in narrowly defined ways?
You'll see the miseducation
of one set of history,
One type of hero for all
Mind now, whose in exile now?

And while we keep talking 'bout
those that have and have not
information is the real currency in decline now
(it's who knows and who doesn't know)

Did you just call me anti-black?
Did you call me anti-black?
Is there something that I lack?
Because of all the questions I ask?

I try to carefully explain,
There's so much more that is at stake.
I try to carefully explain,
we can't build on what we evade.
I try to carefully say now,
it's the poorest of the poor that keep
getting framed.

I try to carefully say, if your work,
doesn't make sense to the poor,
then you're not driving change.

I try to keep the whole in focus
I pray you keep the whole in focus
I try to keep the whole in focus
Because something is missing here!
Something's missing here!
Something's missing here!



Why this song?

Prince's song pays homage to the way in which his thinking intuitively pays attention to the expressions and sentiments held within public discourse. He puts himself in conversation with this, each time acknowledging the current context he is sensing into, how people are moving and what they are saying. He persistently asks important questions that require a stretch in the logic that is held contemporarily. It is as if he watches silently and takes note of how people are responding currently while biding his time to ask the itchy question that might be unnamed in the space. It is important to note that within a very polarised society racially and economically some of the critical thinking that Prince offers can be seen as being on the margins of public discourse and when indeed voices like his emerge, they are often silenced and berated publicly especially through the use of social media. Within Prince's offering we then see a way of being that asks that we become much more nuanced about our responses to the current social climate by asking critical questions about what we are actually creating when we feed into popular political thinking in South Africa.

The song tries to emulate the natural way in which he teaches and opens up spaces for discussion in his relaxed and yet astute mode of engagement. It is written in a conversational tone as if in constant dialogue with another, signaling how for the most part the essence of his contribution is about the questions that he "carefully" tries to bring into public discourse and the reactions that he experiences when he does this. Whether it is be a conversation about race, decoloniality, land, the way the political usurps the public space, or justice, Prince transgresses by stepping outside of "group think" and asking questions about where this is going to. His is a pedagogy that is relentless in the way it demands that we give attention to what we are actually doing, saying and thinking right now and what that will create in the future. He will not let us off the hook even when he is dismissed as being "anti-black" or any other slurs that denote his inability to simply toe the line. The song tries to capture how he relentlessly demands that we be more nuanced in our thinking and questioning. He seems to do this whilst maintaining such a dignified stance, a gentle and genuine plea to think without a forced arrogance. The pursuit of the questions that he holds is done in a light and even humorous tone as portrayed in the song. This hopes to echo the maturity he displays in holding his own space, whilst asking important questions and ultimately also educating us. His gesture is generous even as it is provocative, it is sympathetic to the context, even whilst it asks us to think more broadly and carefully about what we are creating. This is a pedagogy

of integrity that emphasises the power of nuanced critical questioning as an essential part of creating a future that can surpass the paradigmatic pitfalls of the past and the present. He does not grant us the chance to stay comfortable especially when our perspectives are popularly held. The final stanza that repeats that “something’s missing here” speaks to his sense of healthy skepticism that helps navigate what he is hearing and experiencing in the country. He asks that we shake off the logical malaise that comes with popular political rhetoric and popular emancipatory thinking and asks if indeed what we say and the way we mobilise around it, will actually create something different. This is a call for integrity and that the ends that we seek truly echo the spirit of the means through which we try to get there.

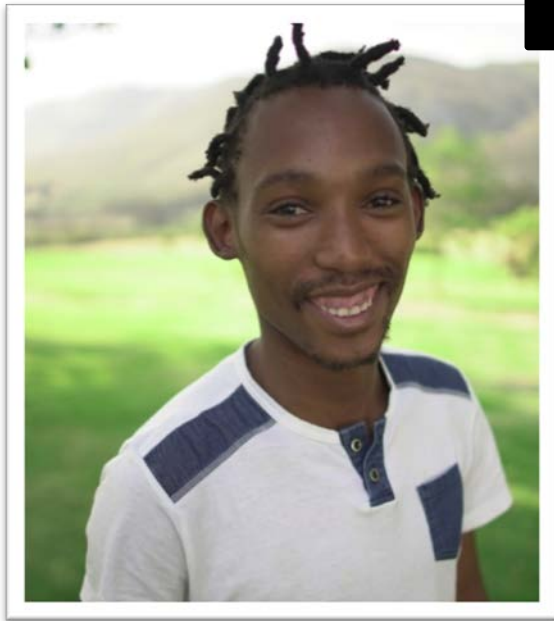


Prince's response

Thank you for the feedback and clip, totally amazing, I loved the song. The feedback is as follows:

1. I felt very motivated to hear my own views, particularly around the issues of nation building and how they have developed from that viewpoint, what I saw as a rise in nationalism that far back has developed into a fully fledged narrow nationalistic view which threatens to destabilise South Africa as a nation.
2. The song was amazing, I totally loved it and more importantly I was shocked that a song could be able to summarise ones' views, I really appreciated that very much. So I was filled with good emotions as I listened to the song, it gave me a glimpse of what Arthur Danto meant when he wrote that human beings are able to reflect the views of other either through song or prose.
3. I felt Injairu's understanding of my offering was very deep and very introspective, I recognised the labels in anti-black sentiment against some of my views, furthermore I recognised the sentiment that something more is at stake and lastly the capture of my view that if your work doesn't make sense to the poor it not driving change.
4. This is the most amazing part because I found the song to be in exact sync to my views, even after listening to it three times I am amazed by its ability to capture and encompass all my views in song.
5. I am not sure whether this is a reconciliation or me finding a middle ground between the contradictory reality my views find themselves in South Africa, I find myself reading more and more into political forgiveness and what it means and what it could mean for a nation like ours, I still find myself preoccupied with the concept of justice and whether or not the quest for justice can ever be realised in our lifetime or if the chaos is the norm.

6.2.5 Thabiso Motlakase



Thabiso Motlakase founder of CloudComSA currently working on a platform for creative minds.

He hold a title for African Global youth ambassador since 2017. He generally cares about things that threatens any human rights and mostly values education.

Thabiso is a very curious and feeds his curiosity mostly by reading or watching random documentaries.

Two of his favourite quotes are “If we do not change the status quo who should?” And who feels it know it”



Gone!



This road taught me a long, long time ago
that its promise and fruits need to be fought for.
Don't succumb to a downfall.

When you're trapped in the limits of a narrow waking world
you'll have to run through and don't you stop – no
prepare for a marathon.

Because that miseducation and poverty
will try and keep you in a stranglehold.

And he who feels it
knows it – oh!
We've got to keep moving on.

So, when they look for me I'm gone
What are you waiting for?
Don't negotiate with shadows – no!

When they look for me I'm gone
Braiding bridges of light in a storm
To elevate the young mind who doesn't know:
Somebody here remembers you.

And believe me they try to fix you
and make you their poster child,
because they don't know how to
bring change into our lives.

Yes believe me,
those corrupt institutions
will resurrect their shine
by clinging onto the light you hold inside.

So, when they look for me I'm gone
what are you waiting for?
Don't give them your power – no!

When they look for me I'm gone
Braiding bridges of light in a storm
to elevate the young mind who doesn't know:
Somebody here remembers you,
I know what you're going through,
I see you running too,
Somebody here remembers you.

Make a plan,
Make a mission,
Elevate a young mind!

What we have is sufficient
to weave in the light.
weave in the light!
weave in the light!



Why this song?

The tenacity and speed with which Thabiso moves through his context is the inspiration for the song “Gone”! It seeks to capture him in perpetual movement weaving and braiding through context in which he has intentionally decided to rely on himself because he does not want to be disappointed by the meddling influence of government institutions that could obstruct his work. His ventures are numerous and grow as he sees the need within his community. From creating a library to creating platforms for young people to debate and learn together, to helping those in need with decent clothing, food and supplies, he is always on the move. The song particularly tries to illustrate how this sense of being in perpetual motion was motivated by his own journey where he literally walked 67kms from the poor education he was receiving in order to enroll himself in another school that had better teaching as a young boy. The image of a young boy on the move running through a gauntlet – because he knows he is worth more – captured my imagination when writing this. The song turns to show how that movement forged out of necessity has become the driving force within his work too. He is driven to elevate young minds because he knows very well what it feels like to be in a situation where “miseducation and poverty” will try and “keep you in a stranglehold”. The song portrays his gesture as one that is quicker than people know how to look for. He is constantly braiding networks, resources, ideas in a storm and using them to bring a sense of hope within his community. This is a pedagogy of resourcefulness, persistence and keeping focused on what one can do to help elevate the mind of a young person. The built-up fast-paced can-barely-finish-all-the-words nature of the song portrays the sense of urgency, restlessness and relentless hope that his gesture holds. His very movement is a call to action. It is as if through what he is able to do in his community, he calls out and asks us all “what are you waiting for?” Let’s do this!

What is also interesting in Thabiso’s offering is the way he strategically moves away from being co-opted in his efforts or perhaps relying specifically on government institutions (or NGOs for that matter) to endorse his work. He is aware that corrupt institutions will try and put him under their wing so they can claim that the work he is doing is a part of them. He navigates the pitfalls of being used as ‘poster child’ for somebody else’s work. He curves a sharp path around such co-option and instead looks for the links, networks and resources to help build viable futures for the youth in his context. Swinging from links with people and places to opportunities that could be birthed is his particular gifting. He challenges us to

remember that when we work in community with others we might find that “what we have is sufficient”. This flies in the face of ways of working that often orientate young people into a kind of dependency and a way of thinking that may invite us to feel we need political or institutional endorsement to make a difference. I imagine him navigating his community with his backpack on – gone! – making plans with the many, many ideas that he holds. His surname means ‘electricity’ in Sesotho and I think the energy this brings to mind undergirds the feeling held in his song.



Thabiso's response

1. We are who we are today because we are shaped by our environment and situation. The reason I do what am doing today, listening to the video I released I valued education from a very young age I was 10 years when I ran away from home to get into a better school because village school could not provide that for me. Today I still value it and find means to promote it hence the book club, my movie Thursday. I acknowledge we learn differently. Others learn through visual, hence the movie Thursdays.

When I watched the teaser you sent first with videos of ‘fees must fall’ you can imagine how I felt that finally the barrier that keep people from learning some people are fighting to break them. They are couple of my favourite documentaries on YouTube about “the most dangerous way to school” very painful to watch but equally inspiring.

2. Reading through the lyrics, gets me emotional. I do believe firstly if the government can deliver this much while officials steals and misuse so much, imagine if they use all the resources for what it’s meant for, secondly parents understand their kids whether activist, partisan... that we can’t all keep our heads down, someone needs to speak up and fortunately in this case my child chose to. When I wanted to further my studies my parents didn’t support that because of number of times I had changed schools, I went to North West University without any financial support as this was a way for them to demoralize me into dropping university and going back home. I had to work and study to keep myself in university.

3. I think not sure that you could have been a rebellion for a good because cause obviously you captured my offering well.

4. No it is ok

5. Not much

6.2.6 Ashraf Kenny



I'm Ashraf Kenny. I'm a 27 year old, frustrated, young, Muslim, coloured male from a middle class community in the Southern Suburbs of Cape Town. I am currently employed as the Fundraising Manager at a local NGO. I live for moments of growth and improvement. I live for moments of introspection and realisation. I live for moments of engagement and constructive discussion. I am focused on helping my community understand the importance of civic awareness and engagement. Knowledge is power. And the knowledge and understanding of one's community and society helps to better navigate the roads we walk on every day.



Claim your Space in your Freedom



And how did I learn to see,
the hallmarks of inequality?
My father did show me.
But he left it up to me,
to choose who I was going to be,
my father did guide me,
to see what was right in front of me
to see...

Hidden in the guise of community,
hidden in our faith.
Apathy gives rise to complicity,
in the choice to abstain,
Apathy gives rise to complicity,
and then the world remains the same.

Could it be we've mistaken what
our faith really asks of us
it's in service,
in service,
in service,
that we are called.
Justice and peace will be lost,
without the will to connect the dots
and be in service,
in service,
in service ,
in service for the betterment of this land.

Time to cross that bridge, oh yes,
play a critical part in our own freedom.
Time to cross that bridge, oh yes
and claim your place,
in your own freedom.

So, I've been challenging myself,
and everywhere I go,
I put my hand up.
And I ask for the chance to lead,
I put my hand up,
and I try to bring
a critical engagement with me
to bring...

Breaking through these old conservative
lines,
into the questions of our times.
Breaking these old conservative lines,
to help my people fully arrive.

Could it be we've mistaken what,
our faith really asks of us
it's in service,
in service,
in service,
that we are called.

We don't get that we will be lost,
if we fail to connect the dots,
and be in service,
in service,
in service,
in service for the betterment of this land.

Time to cross that bridge, oh,
play a critical part in our own freedom.
Time to cross that bridge oh,
and claim your place,
claim your space,
claim your place,
in your own freedom.



Why this song?

Ashraf's offering speaks directly to the issues that he finds within the so-called 'coloured' or 'mixed race' communities in Cape Town. He comments specifically about his own journey in gaining consciousness about the broader societal issues of social justice within South Africa, and the incremental learning he gained through the guidance of his father. When he joined Activate he was suddenly aware of how involved and politicised Change Drivers from other communities were, and how little engagement around such issues he saw within his own community. His song 'Claim your space in your own freedom' comments specifically on the sense of apathy he has witnessed in his community and how some people practice and inculcate Islam in his community in ways that diminish a sense of responsibility in co-creating a more just vision for South Africa with others.

The song honours his concern about the lack of involvement of the mixed race communities in the politics of the day. It echoes his affirmation that far from having a soporific effect, a contemporary perspective on what Islam actually means ought to inspire his community to be "in service" for the betterment of the land. Taking a stance and working to create a better future with others should be what their faith asks of them. Ashraf speaks particularly about the sense of omission of mixed race conservative communities in the politics of the day and how in many ways how they think still replicates very old race-based patterns especially in the Western Cape. In a country where public discourse is still dominated by the continued contestations and inequality between 'black' people and 'white' people, he asks the mixed race community where they are essentially and whether they have "crossed the bridge" of freedom that started with the end of Apartheid in 1994. It is his wish that within his community people can start to consider what it would mean to claim their space in the ongoing conversation and "be a critical part of their own freedom".

The song surfaces his concerns and rhythmically reiterates the need to be "in service for the betterment" of South African society as a whole as opposed to a very enclaved perspective that distances itself from the ongoing political issues of the day. For Ashraf, transgressing in this space, especially as a young person, has come with literally "putting his hand up" and getting very involved in the local committees he has access to by virtue of the mosque or otherwise. He volunteers to be part of numerous associations that form part of the life of his community. He mentions how his abilities were doubted in the past – but how some elders

within the community asked that he be given a chance. And in the spaces that he is afforded he tries to bring a critical engagement with the issues that affect his community as well as those that relate to it in the broader political climate. The dexterity with which he uses every platform he can to invite a more critical conversation in his community is emphasised in the sense of conviction and determination portrayed in the song. In it the voice urges all those present to “claim their space” in their own vision of freedom. It claims it is time that this community “fully arrives” for the conversations and issues of their time. Whatever it is that produces indifference and apathy within their community needs to be challenged and transgressed. There is a sense of transcending into a larger conversation and mode of engagement that is needed here. Ashraf espouses a pedagogy that asks all those concerned to wake up to the meaning they make or do not make and consider how this affects the whole. It asks one to “connect the dots” and learn to see oneself and one’s struggle in a particular context as part of a whole. It is an invitation to a broader sense of consciousness about how what we do, or do not do, creates in the world and an affirmation that one’s apathy in many ways betrays the essence of what Islam requires.

Drawn forth from a historical perspective around how Muslim activists during Apartheid often had to leave their communities in order to serve the anti-apartheid struggle, Ashraf challenges and seeks to shake up what lies within these communities that continues to prevent their prioritisation of issues of social justice common to all. This is a pedagogy that guards against a sense of isolationism that narrowly seeks to ‘go about one’s own business’ whilst broader issues that affect us all continue to plague South Africa and go unchecked. His actions seek to provide moral incentive to be a part of ongoing struggles as a part of one’s expression of faith and also importantly as an expression of one’s belonging within South Africa. His hopes and his actions centre around what it would mean for his community to “claim their space” by engaging in conversations and tangible actions that forward the possibilities for equitable social justice in South Africa.



Ashraf's response

1. It added fuel to a fire that has been burning in me for years. My thoughts at the time reflect what I am actively working on right now as we draw closer to elections. In my immediate circles, I've seen some improvement but generally across the rest of the community, I see us slipping further away in this regard.
2. It was an accurate interpretation of me, my challenges and experiences. It was strange to read the lyrics and listen to the song knowing it was about my experiences, but it also made me more enthusiastic about challenging the status quo.
3. I say this honestly, it was accurate. There was nothing I myself could have added to make it more accurate. Thank you for capturing me and my experiences in such an accurate way.
4. No.
5. Right now, I think I feel significantly less despondent than I did two years ago. I see my community evolving in some ways. There is significant work to do still, but thus far it is encouraging that my community is moving in the right direction.

It has changed somewhat. It is less aggressive. I've learnt that people grow in different time frames and not always as quickly as we may want. Right now, for me to transgress means slowly and purposefully pushing the boundaries, influencing change in a less aggressive way than previously.

6.2.7 Funeka Molamo



Funeka is a freelancing content producer, make-up and stylist (Regal Dreams Productions), script writer and marketing and brand consultant (MK Tech Company) on a spiritual quest of its own making, trying to stay present and awake.



Wide Awake!



Don't call me a rebel
I don't play by the rules you've bound
I just slowly tend surely
to what's in me.
Don't call me a rebel
such words really shouldn't count
I just wholly, intend solely, to be me

I'm just wide awake,
to who I am becoming,
and the melodies that I hear inside,
help me to work it out.

And I reach out to see
the world revealed to me.
All these connections are pure directions
branching out through me.

And I look out for all the language we've been told,
and shake loose all the parts that have gotten old
to make a living word.

I'm just wide awake
to what comes through.
And I wanna be wide awake
to what calls you.

There will always be,
somewhere to start.
Some inkling of yourself,
that you can trace,
Some inner phase that must be transcended,
Some part of yourself you've been waiting to face.

So, let us always be, curious
about who we are becoming
and the melodies that we hear inside
that help us to work it out.

And keep wide awake to what calls you,
I'm gonna keep wide awake to what comes through.



Why this song?

During the exchanges with Funeka, I was always struck by how she guarded the space from receding into a conversation about some perceived ‘other’ and the impact this has on how we see ourselves as Change Drivers. Of all those there she was the one that kept asking us to consider in her own open way why it is that we let the labels that have been skillfully defined by others impact how we see ourselves and the next steps we should be taking. She challenged the resistance often implied in activist work by asking us to make more space for who we are, and what we hear within our internal dialogues with ourselves. The song ‘Wide Awake’ is testament to the sense of presence that her praxis embodies, a praxis that disentangles one’s own journey and what one is learning from oneself from the cacophony of noises that can disrupt the depth of that learning. Its melodic chorus seeks to demonstrate the expansiveness she hopes we could occupy in our learnings and questionings; it mimics the golden splendence her cartography generated around an embryonic seed that is in the process of becoming. From the onset Funeka even troubled the word “transgress” as the central thematic exploration of our time together. She questioned whether the emphasis on transgressing implied an oversensitisation towards what one ought not to do instead of willfully occupying a much more open approach to what one has reason to value. In her offering she states that she is not a rebel because in her understanding rebels try to break the rules. Instead of this label she affirms that she is much more interested in who she is becoming and the internal reflections she has with herself that help her to work it out.

The second verse of the song sings to this by describing how she shrewdly seeks out and challenges terminology that we have been told and endeavours to shake it free from the hidden assumptions within it that we can inadvertently hold ourselves ransom to. Rather than mistakenly taking on the banner of being a rebel and acting in ways that might have little to do with what calls you from inside, she challenges us to listen more carefully to what is happening inside us and the questions, inklings or curiosities that we hold as a tool that can help us chart our way forward.

The last two stanzas of the song rejoice in the fact that there is always somewhere to start or something that can provide a useful way towards one’s continual becoming. There is always “an inkling of yourself that you can trace” that could serve as a foundation for what is needed and what is longed for in the world and through the very act of being you. The song resounds

as a celebration of this, that the change that we seek out there can be found through what profoundly calls us.

Far from having an individualistic focus, Funeka's praxis also speaks to the power of relational learning along the way. She speaks particularly about the importance of the connections one makes and how these in turn help facilitate a greater understanding of who one is as well as what other people choose to follow, what is calling them in their own journeys. Through her offering, one gets the sense of the richness that each connection offers in the understanding and continual searching for oneself. The phrase "these connections are pure direction branching out in me" speaks to the way in which she grows and branches out in her choices through the connections she makes. The presence in listening to one's own journey is also demonstrated in the depth of listening and being with others. Funeka speaks about extending this praxis as part of the work that she does with women and other community members. In her telling of it one gets the sense of her paying attention to and inviting those she collaborates with to pay attention to what is emerging for them.

This is a pedagogy that emphasises connection with oneself and what is emerging as well as how this relates with one's environment including the other people around one. It is a pedagogy of presence that gently does the necessary work of listening, figuring out and creating who one is and what one is becoming in the world and what this ultimately serves. It does this whilst simultaneously valuing and learning from the questions that others hold as useful tools. She brings a vitality and 'slowed down' focus to the complexities of what it means to drive change by asking us to quietly consider and build on the cartographies mapped out through our intuition and in our inescapable connection with the earth and all sentient beings. She implores us to stay awake and to chart the curriculums formed through our inner yearnings and the possibilities they can continue to grow into.



Funeka's response

1. Listening to the clip was strange but also refreshing. I surprise myself in ways that I myself do not even understand or know how to explain. The funny part about listening to the clip is the fact that I felt I was hearing everything that was said for the very first time. It is almost

like someone else was speaking. I even asked myself how I even said all the things I said. I sound like I know what I am talking about (laughs). This experience was truly a gift.

2. It felt personal and comforting. It made me see myself and actually allow myself to listen more. It was eye opening. It's easy to get misunderstood and the fact that Injairu was able to make a rendition of the piece so truthfully and still keep the essence of the message is amazing.
3. What kept on coming up for me was how she recognised the importance of just being and being present during my becoming.
4. No, the lyrics are accurate.
5. I don't have anything to add to the perspectives that have been shared. Everything that was said two years ago still resonates with me; it's just that now after hearing everything I said I am more determined to be aware and present. I still feel the same way about the world but I also realise that for some people it might help them make sense of the bigger picture in some way.

6.2.8 Mojalefa Maloleka – “MJ”



MJ is a Free State based writer, a performing artist and a politician, born and raised in the Free State. He is now living in a rural place called Qwa Qwa.

He enjoys reading, travelling and he speaks Sesotho, Zulu, English other few African languages.

He is a member of the ANC Branch Executive Committee in his community and a member of Maluti A Phofung Compatriots. This is because he has passion for community development and would not only want to see change but be in the fore front when making change and this also allows him to make decisions that will later benefit his own community.

He forms part of National Dance and Theatre Advisory Committee. He is an Activator and part of many young people in South Africa who want to see innovative change and addressing issues of social cohesion and nation building. He is also a manager at Mabatha Theatre Production.



*Ema Pele!*⁶⁸ - STOP



The real knowledge of the pain,
that haunts our dreams for change,
will get you proceeding with caution,
calculating which way to sneak up on,
it'll keep you dancing on danger's edge.

When the cards that we can play,
can threaten or bring life,
you gamble if you are willing to fall,
if the sacrifice would be worth it all,
or what you can claim in high stakes.

Ho kotsi eh! Ho kotsi eh!⁶⁹
Ema pele. Ema pele – Stop⁷⁰
Ho kotsi eh! Ho kotsi eh!⁷¹
Ema pele, ke tsoantse ke eme pele - Stop!⁷²

Ke chechela moraho kwana,
ho kotsi ka distrateng tsa Qwaqwa,
ke hloka bonelo pele, ke hloka bonelo pele,
ha ke batle ho ea mo nkase hutleng teng.⁷³

Ke chechela moraho kwana,
ho kotsi ka di strateng tsa Qwaqwa,
ke hloka bonelo pele, ke hloka bonelo pele,
ke tla seeia batho baka le mang?⁷⁴

Ho kotsi eh! Ho kotsi eh!⁷⁵
Ema pele, ke tsoantse ke eme pele- Stop!⁷⁶

How to move, how to move,
at each turn,
knowing every step counts and many count
on me.
What to do?
at each turn,
knowing every dare counts and many count
on me.

If I move – to where? What it be life giving?
If I don't move – how will we be
progressing?
If I move – to where? What it be life giving?
What will come? What will become of us
all...

Ke chechela moraho kwana,
ho kotsi ka di strateng tsa Qwaqwa,
ke hloka bonelo pele, ke hloka bonelo pele,
ha ke batle ho ea mo nkase hutleng teng.⁷⁷

Ke chechela moraho kwana,
ho kotsi ka distrateng tsa Qwaqwa,
ke hloka bonelo pele, ke hloka bonelo pele,
ke tla seeia bana baka le mang?⁷⁸

Ho kotsi eh! Ho kotsi eh!⁷⁹
Ema pele, ke tsoantse ke eme pele- Stop!⁸⁰

⁶⁸ Some of the lyrics of this song are written in Sesotho. The title is translated as 'Wait a little bit!- STOP'

⁶⁹ Things are dangerous here!

⁷⁰ Wait a little bit, wait a little bit! – STOP

⁷¹ Things are dangerous here!

⁷² Wait a little bit, I need to wait a little bit! – STOP

⁷³ I turn around when I reach that place, it is dangerous in the streets of Qwa Qwa. I need foresight, I need foresight, I don't want to go where I cannot come back from..

⁷⁴ I turn around when I reach that place, it is dangerous in the streets of Qwa Qwa. I need foresight, I need foresight, who will I leave my people with?

⁷⁵ Things are dangerous here!

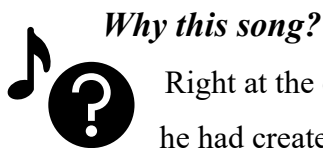
⁷⁶ Wait a little bit, I need to wait a little bit! – STOP

⁷⁷ I turn around when I reach that place, it is dangerous in the streets of Qwa Qwa. I need foresight, I need foresight, I don't want to go where I cannot come back from.

⁷⁸ I turn around when I reach that place, it is dangerous in the streets of Qwa Qwa. I need foresight, I need foresight, who will I leave my children with?

⁷⁹ Things are dangerous here!

⁸⁰ Wait a little bit, I need to wait a little bit!- STOP



Why this song?

Right at the end of the creation of his painting MJ felt compelled to give what he had created a title, something that could sum up the quandary he found himself in. You will see in the corner of his painting he called it ‘The beginning of the end’. The song “Ema pele – STOP!” seeks to honour the situation he found himself in at the time, one that emphasises the danger that he negotiates as part of his work as a Change Driver. The title “The beginning of the end” highlights the way in which he is aware that if he takes his political work further, if he continues to push in the direction that he has been going in, it could have serious implications for his own safety and of those who count on him, within his community including his direct family. “Ema Pele – STOP!” acknowledges the way that MJ understands the nature of the work that he is doing, and how ultimately despite the harsh political context he does not want to haphazardly step into a situation that he “cannot come back from”.

He is aware that some of his moves could single him out, expose him and put him a vulnerable position. In his offering, MJ speaks clearly about how “being a change driver is pain”. How pursuing a politics that creates more opportunities for young people in his community means getting one’s hands dirty in complicated matters. It means messing with powerful political factions and interests that don’t think twice about threatening your life for their ends. He mentions that one needs to put on blinkers and walk through many serious situations if that is the path one chooses. However, at the time of the offering MJ transgresses the propensity towards self-sacrifice as part of his work. He breaks with the image of the young black person who risks it all and is often harmed without much care. He refuses to throw himself into a space that will easily mangle him or take him down a path that he cannot come back from. The sense of caution and self-care demonstrated here is significant because it indicates a break from feeding into a game that after all has very little reverence for the lives and efforts of Change Drivers from poor communities. Here we see an example of a Change Driver that society often treats as disposable, thinking critically about what he can do within his power to ensure the livelihood and security of those that “count on him”.

The song builds on the anxiety that this experience provokes for MJ through the staccato pace it maintains building into its chorus in Sesotho. The song remains unfinished in that it does not seek to resolve itself; rather it gives expression to a heightened moment of uncertainty

that faces MJ in the impasse where he stops. His deliberations around “how to move, at each turn” acknowledges the burden of strategising both on the level of creative subsistence for this family as well as the desire that he has to do and be part of the difficult work of creating positive difference in his community. The struggle between these choices is an important one to flag in this work especially in conversations where there is extraordinary pressure for Change Drivers to exert influence in highly dangerous contexts.

There is an education in discernment underway here, that values life and seeks life giving options towards building a future for oneself, one’s family and one’s community. This works against the senseless self-sacrifice that has many young people caught at the helm of operating and being used by toxic local level politics. In his offering MJ is also thinking out loud about what paths that he can take, what other aspects of himself including the theatre maker and performer that he should activate rather than further immersing himself into the kind of politics that will put him in a difficult situation. It is reassuring to hear him wonder about this out loud because it signals that the nasty end he fears, and the new beginning at the end of his picture could indeed take on another form, one that enables him his family and his community to conceptualise what it would mean to thrive beyond the grueling demands of survival. This is a way of learning that asks important questions about sustenance and the dignity of one’s creative giftings as part of the desire to contribute meaningfully to the life of one’s community. It is an impulse that breaks the script about what constitutes meaningful action for positive change and instead of engaging in acts that trivialise one’s potential death as a part of it, challenges us to think through what it would mean to divest from these harmful terms and to champion life as a core strategy.



Mojalefa's response

1. I have realized that a lot has changed about me and some of the goals I have achieved and found ways to deal with the challenges that I had back then in an easy way, I have also realized that by speaking up about my situation and my inner feeling I was not only releasing the bird in me but I was also making a promise to myself that I had to change my approach to situations like those and also became my own role model which had made me more cautious about my surrounding, friends, family and environment.

Watching me speak there reminded me of me 2 years ago and made me realize now I am a better person and I am not in a hurry to try and be successful or anything like that. I have set up a goal and also I determine my own pace whether it takes long or what I know at the end I will get.

Within a year of this video I renovated my mom's house, I bought my first car, I shot a movie for M-Net channel on Mzansi Magic called "PALEHO" I got involved in cultural exchange programmes with the Americans and it has now become an annual thing where we take young people from very poor background and expose them to new experiences with the Americans. I am also hosting different theme bootcamps.

I am happy, doing and making money thru what I love and I have learned now that no one can take this from me because what I am doing has its own uniqueness. The video made me a little emotional because I think I saw how badly I wanted to change the world and having to realize that I am actually changing the world through "ripples and waves of change". Small things that we do can make a huge difference in other people's lives even when one cannot see this.

Finally I realized that it is not our choice if we are born and raised in a poor background but it is our full responsibility to get out of that.

The background music on the video does not represent Mojalefa Maloleka; it could have been reggae or just a drum beat.

2. Well I still think the song has a room for development artistically, there is too much story in it and maybe we could have taken or summarised the story and found words that would sum up the content.

On the other hand I am buying also into the idea of having to keep that song as frustrated as it is because it helps us see how frustrated I was back then before I have learned to narrow my thoughts and ideas to become manageable.

Maybe the tune could have had a reggae type of expression to actually represent the Mojalefa Maloleka character, I think the song was supposed to be angry as to show the anger that was in me back then about the situation in my community, myself, and my family and become a little sad towards the end

On the song I am not going to comment that much I am sorry.

3. I think Injairu fully understands where I was coming from even though I feel like as I was giving my offering, she imagined me on that story but with characters she saw when travelling somewhere in Africa and in her head she tried to create her own picture but then it became more sadder, I recognized that maybe she needed to be near me when singing the song so that I could assist with the translation of some words that would have depicted the story with more content in my own language. Nevertheless I maintain she did great work on the song.

I have also realized that if you listen to this song once it becomes very difficult to follow its content and think we missed the anger and sadness of the song but JUJU is a very talented musician and I know how difficult to create a song using someone's experience, as an artist I understand.

4. Yes but not today please (LOL) like I said I am happy with the song but if I had an opportunity I would really love to be with you in that studio and recreate it.

5. I have already spoke about what I am experiencing and I wouldn't want to find myself repeating because I think now even though I haven't achieved all that I wanted as they pile up every day, I AM HAPPY and I enjoy being challenged as it helps keep my body and mind fit.

6.2.9. Judith Kasese Mukuna



Judith Mukuna is originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Her family moved to South Africa when she was nine. Growing up as a refugee in South Africa and often feeling excluded, made her passionate about inclusivity and integration.

Her work and academic interest is focused on social, political and economic development. She has been involved in various academic and social projects in several different African countries over the years and has been part of a variety of initiatives relating to issues such as women's rights, refugee rights, youth development and education advocacy. Creating safe spaces for marginalised people is her ultimate passion.



Breathing Life Back



How did you not expect,
that we would remember ourselves,
when everything we built together,
required that we forget?

How did we get to that place,
when someone's long cry for freedom,
could form such a soundless echo,
that draws no effect?

Giving way,
always given away,
making way for your life,
while grappling with mine.

Giving way,
dreams given away,
making space for your life
while grappling for mine.

Na vuruta!⁸¹
I pull myself back to me.
We rudisha!⁸²
bring what's mine back to me,
Na kumbuka,⁸³
And I breathe in life
we're breaking the hold
to create the home
we've always sought.

And every being in exile,
from all the grasping abrasions,
and bending into shapes,
that marginalise.

Come forth now and find a way,
to be nourished by your own affirmations,
and watered in a love,
that truly knows no bounds.

Turn away,
disinvest and turn away.
Turn away from these visions
that give your life no space.

I say find a way,
come and make a place,
build a place where the human spirit can
be limitless.

Na vuruta,⁸⁴
I pull myself back to me.
We rudisha,⁸⁵
bring what's mine back to me,
Na kumbuka,⁸⁶
And I breathe in life
We're breaking the hold
to create the home
we've always sought.

We are here!
We are here!
We are here!

⁸¹ The song contains lyrics in kiSwahili Na vuruta means I am pulling

⁸² Bring it back

⁸³ I remember

⁸⁴ I am pulling

⁸⁵ Hey! Give it back.

⁸⁶ I remember!



Why this song?

What has always struck me the most during conversations with Judith even in her offering is the contradiction she embodies. She seems somehow delicate whilst being incredibly sharp and direct. When you watch her speak, you are immediately aware of how reserved she is perhaps to the point of shyness, but at the same time as I listen to her speak I am aware of how astute she is. This song tries to capture these different elements of her essence as seen in her offering. It is gentle and yet very clear and very fierce in its articulations. The careful calculations that her logic takes you through asks quietly and insistently: “How did you not expect that we would remember ourselves?” As if to say, “Isn’t this obvious, isn’t it obvious that at some point black women and members of the LGBTIAQ community would disinvest from visions for emancipation that give their life and thriving ‘no space’?”

Within her offering Judith speaks particularly about how the role of women in emancipatory struggles over time has often been one that requires the sacrificing of their own safety and needs for the benefit of the revolutionary struggle as a whole. The sense of “making way” for someone else’s life “while grappling” for one’s own is echoed in the song. This is a question that finds its voice at a particular point in an intergenerational struggle that did not always voice their concerns in this way. I see her asking questions that not only pertain to her experience as a black woman but also to those of the women and queer folk that have come before her. It is as if in her presence and through her watchful eye, this particular dynamic becomes queried and is seen as strange. She makes strange that which has been taken for granted. Her countenance in her offering asks why this should be so? Why should black women “give themselves away”? Why should they especially when levels of gender-based violence and the burdens of white supremacist patriarchy elicit so much trauma for them in their daily lives? Why is it that “the long cries for freedom” mobilised for by black women and LGBTIAQ people can afford to go unheard, can really “draw no effect” for so many who hear them. As if these cries have become a backdrop, a sound track to the emancipatory struggles that have become so commonplace that one cannot hear the urgency calling within them anymore. They are losing their ability to arouse the hearer to respond. This becomes in some way an expected level of burden they should shoulder.

The song “Breathing life back” pays tribute to the willful sewing together of oneself that Judith’s work embodies. It is interesting when looking at her cartography how separated the

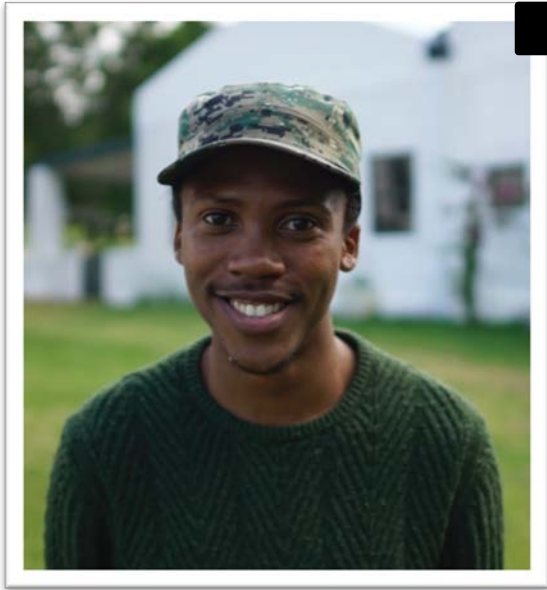
different elements are, as if they are separate events that do not easily reveal their relationships. It feels like in her work and life and through the questions she asks in this offering she reaches for a sense of coherence, not only in her lifetime, but across generations and with those yet to come. By strategically creating spaces where Black women and the LGBTIAQ community can resist and co-exist, she redraws the geography of emancipatory struggles in her community. Hers is a quest to retrieve from the margins, ways of being that have been “exiled” by dominant “ways of being”. The song takes its time to build itself up. The motion it elicits hopes to conjure the feeling of what it feels like to draw back to oneself the strength one needs. The psychosis of exile and its pain is acknowledged in this song through the long vocal refrains that try to capture just how long this struggle has been ongoing. The sense of “pulling” life back to oneself, the admonition to “bring what is mine back to me” and the work of “remembering” one’s fullness are celebrated here. This pedagogy of disinvestment is what it means to transgress for Judith and those that she co-conspires with. It is a refusal to continually submit to terms of reference that do not value or prioritise the health or well-being of anyone other than heterosexual patriarchal men. In addition to this, the impulse traced within her activities are those that seek to actively create alternative spaces. This is a pedagogy of alternative communion that seeks to “nourish” and “give life to” the chosen positive affirmations of black women and those that are queer. There is a dreaming and reassertion of what emancipation means if it is to respond to the needs of those who are “marginalised” and this dreaming asks us to consider how to imagine a world in which the “human spirit can be limitless” as opposed to emancipatory outlooks that confer the continuation of old identity based roles within society that are very much a part of a white, capitalist, patriarchal and heterosexual paradigm. Judith and her transgressions call into being the kind of organising that challenges these paradigms. She experiments with others at the fringes to create nurturing alternative communities in which those exiled can feel safe and attended to.



Judith's response

1. Watching/listening to myself is usually a difficult exercise for me since I tend to be overly critical of myself as an individual so my initial response was to be critical of my voice, body language, pauses and sentence structure before it became any sort of valuable reflective exercise. The second time watching I listened more and it was great to reaffirm some of my thoughts and beliefs while also recognising the changes in myself over the last two years.
2. Having to listen to a song written about me was slightly awkward since I tend to not claim space/ be the centre of attention; however listening to that song and reading both the lyrics and the explanation behind the song allowed me to get out of my own head and to finally examine not just what I put into the world but how it is seen and received by others.
3. Something I am able to recognise now from the song that I would not have been able to see two years ago was my own need to pull back into myself for strength and not just to focus on weaving spaces for others or finding my identity in a community before I found it as an individual. For me the song was a better representation of me today than it was of me two years ago when I made the initial offering. In the two years since the project I've done a lot more introspection and self-healing and have spent more of my time on myself because I have recognised that broken people cannot heal broken communities and that we need to heal ourselves before we can change our society.
4. I think when I offered the offering, in as much as I was starting to question the need to sacrifice yourself for a greater struggle, my mind was still set on a communal identity. I think even my cries for freedom were for a community and not necessarily for myself as an individual. For me the song feels like a representation of my current position and not where I was two years ago but I still think it is perfect and would not change any part of it.
5. I am really grateful for this experience. This project was a learning tool for me not just mentally but also spiritually and it really enabled me to find myself where I am right now. It really is a great honour and pleasure to be part of an academic project so revolutionary and transformative.
6. My view of transgression was very focused on community harm two years ago and I think I was willing to allow some level of individual hurt if it meant a greater good. I think right now I am more aware of how important the individual is as an entity in a community and my view of transgression now includes an offense not just to the community but also to an individual in a community.

6.2.10 Sanele Ntshingana



Sanele Ntshingana is a social activist, teacher and researcher based in Makhanda (formerly known as Grahamstown). He holds a Master of Arts degree in African languages, literatures and linguistics from Rhodes University. His research investigates the early conceptualisation and application of justice and law in the precolonial Xhosa society, how these have shifted over time, and how they are reflected and concealed in isiXhosa lexicon. His scholarship and activism work therefore boldly challenges the national as well as public education's discourse and canon that is used to think about the history, the present as well as the future. Sanele's activism and scholarly work seeks to find innovative, creative, decolonial and emancipatory ways of re-membering and re-imagining the future through centring the work done by the forgotten early African intellectuals of the nineteenth and twentieth century.



Transcend Yourself!



Let's play out our blackness,
and meet as the strangers we are.
We build our case from the fragments,
that centre the losses we prefer.

Siya cinezelana⁸⁷
Siya jikelana⁸⁸
noba siya sokola sonke ⁸⁹
siya cinezelana⁹⁰

Let's explore these fragments,
and mourn the remains of what has been done.
I hear a voice that names the damage,
in a way that excludes those around.

Siya cinezelana⁹¹
Siya jikelana⁹²
noba siya sokola sonke⁹³,
kutheni siya cinezelana?⁹⁴

How can this be about you,
when you don't have a clue?
Can you share the world
and reveal history's truths,
beyond what pertains to you?

And when did we learn to defend,
our own versions of hell,
without acknowledging,
what people go through,
beyond what pertains to you?

Siya cinezelana⁹⁵
Siya jikelana⁹⁶
noba siya sokola sonke,⁹⁷
kutheni sicinezelana?⁹⁸
Ask google you say,
when I can't hear what you are saying.
Communicate! I say,
so the people understand what you are saying.

Transcend yourself!
to not compete in the role that you are
playing,
free the language,
free the language,
help us move with what you are creating.

Kutheni sicinezelana?⁹⁹
Kutheni sijikelana so?¹⁰⁰
Noba siya sokola sonke,¹⁰¹
kutheni sicinezelana?¹⁰²

I wanna learn about that power,
that power that's not loud and aggressive,
that power that's unflinching and persistent,
that power, that power that knows how to
share something.

Won't you clarify
in ways that keep my truths alive.
Won't you clarify
in ways that leave my truths alive.

⁸⁷ The words of this song contain lyrics written in isi Xhosa. This means that we pull each other down.

⁸⁸ We betray each other

⁸⁹ Even though we are all struggling

⁹⁰ We pull each other down

⁹¹ We pull each other down

⁹² We betray each other

⁹³ Even though we are all struggling

⁹⁴ Why is it that we pull each other down?

⁹⁵ We pull each other down

⁹⁶ We betray each other

⁹⁷ Even though we are all struggling

⁹⁸ Why is it that we pull each other down?

⁹⁹ Why do we pull each other down?

¹⁰⁰ Why do we betray each other like this?

¹⁰¹ Even though we are all struggling

¹⁰² Why do we pull each other down?



Why this song?

Sanele's offering provides an incredibly nuanced analysis of the "fragments" or different positional politics within contemporary decolonial struggles in South Africa. As a student from a working-class background and a black male, he is all too familiar with the exclusions that occur as part of the articulations of decolonial struggles in South African universities. He tells the story of his journey into Rhodes University and the how invisible he has felt as part of this process. The class distinctions particularly between black young students are something that he has experienced acutely. And when the decolonial movement arrived at Rhodes University he comments quite carefully about the fragmentations around class and gender politics that he experienced.

"Transcend yourself!" is a rallying cry that interrogates the dynamics amongst particularly black students in their quest for decolonial futures. The song wryly comments on how "the strength of blackness" as he put it in his offering is fragmented. How what might have been an opportunity to assert or co-create a decolonial future turned into a loaded moment in which a particularly black queer female middle class voice asserted itself in ways that excluded and problematised other identities in the space. In his offering Sanele speaks in ways that acknowledge the struggles that particularly female and queer bodies experience in the space whilst also holding them accountable for the way in which they choose to use language on the struggle common to all. The first stanza speaks about the propensity of those present to fragment the agenda that is valued by all in the way that each group seems to "centre the losses they prefer". This means that what is articulated speaks specifically to the experience in their particular bodies with little regard for the struggles of the people outside that gender or class or age group. Whilst these gatherings create a space to "mourn" and explore the losses that those present have been experiencing over decades in 'Ivory Tower' institutions, he wonders out loud how the prevailing narratives around decolonizing the universities (and the broader struggle outside of this community that it promotes) can be largely driven by voices that centre themselves in a language inaccessible to many others. The central refrain comments on this: "we pull each other down, we betray each other", a sentiment that is critical of the inability to willfully co-create the terms and narratives within the struggle with other black people who are also struggling in the space.

The song asks those he feels usurped the agenda directly “how can this be about you?” when “you don’t have a clue of the struggles of other people beyond what pertains to you”. The song questions how people defend and uphold their “own versions of hell” whilst failing to clearly articulate what other people go through. He mentions particularly the struggles of rural women who don’t have the class distinction of middle class black women. In other words, he asks “how is what you are saying relevant to them or a grandmother in the township who is trying to understand the politics that young people across South Africa have vociferously championed?”

The song coughs up the experience he had when during one of the gatherings heavily academic language around Cis heterosexual identities was being used. When those present asked for an explanation they were told to “ask google”. He protests in his offering that he “can’t hear what they are saying”. He calls in his offering for people to “transcend themselves” and not “compete in the role that they are playing”. This lyric comments on the hierarchical politics within decolonial movements. It asserts his incredulity that some can feel like they are the “most oppressed” within very complex and layered iterations of the colonial matrix. His impulse to transgress calls for a movement from this. This is a pedagogy that seeks to acknowledge truly intersectional politics that see all present as mutually (albeit differently) constructed and abused by the colonial matrix of power. It thus also calls for a pedagogy of co-creation that is generous enough to invite all those affected to be patient and name the layers that underpin the experience of oppression. It is no wonder that Sanele’s cartography features the figure of a person superimposed with the map of the worlds and Africa. The lyric around sharing the world tries to speak to this, the ability to hold within oneself many aspects and experiences that encompass what it means to be human in these times.

Lastly and most importantly, Sanele’s offering calls for a pedagogy that creates and brings with it a clarity around language. The call to “free the language” is a desire for the use of vernacular languages and the accessible use of English to articulate the struggles of the day. This is a passion point of the song: a desire that those who are mobilising for change use accessible language that they can “explain clearly” what they mean so that others can move with them in what they are creating. The song turns in the end towards not only a critical analysis of what is wrong but what he is curious about. He is curious about longstanding struggles across time that might not be “loud and aggressive” but are rather “unflinching and

persistent”. This is the kind of power that can articulate itself in a way that those present can feel that something significant was said and that they understood it. His treatise asks Change Drivers to clarify and articulate the crux of their struggle in ways that do not diminish the “truths” of others but rather can engage and inspire them to co-create the kind of change that can impact the lives of the most vulnerable members of society.



Sanele's response

1. I thought “wow, time really flies! But less has changed”. I found it to be very interesting that I still resonate deeply with the views I held about two years ago. For example, I mention in the video that the things that matter the most to me are education and young people. I specifically make an example of how I am restless and concerned about the suffering and nervous conditions that young people of my community – the struggles they face every day as a result of historical legacy of colonialism and dispossession and the structural oppression they still face today. It is interesting that just a year and a half from that interview – working with a few activists from my community, we started an education initiative for young people in Makhanda that tackles some of these nervous conditions I speak of in the interview. This for me, shows the genuineness of my convictions and beliefs – that in 2016 I had a concern about a social issue in my community and in 2018, I seek to find a long-term and sustainable solution to it; for me, this is a true act of consistency and genuineness. I am actually proud of myself.
2. It was the most beautiful thing to hear someone else’s interpretation of my offering in an unconventional, rigorous and invoking format – in a form of a song – something that could communicate straight to my soul, mind and heart all at once. Thank you for this. There is something beautiful in throwing a ‘response offering’ to someone else’s offering in this way. For me, this represents vulnerability – the willingness to go an extra mile and say “What does this all mean to me? In what ways can I show my *genuine* (my emphasis) take on my co-conspirator’s offering?” This Injairu carefully thought about it very well, and because music is the most powerful way she can most express her thoughts and feelings she resorted to it, with carefulness and genuineness. I’ve always been suspicious of the conventional academic methods of analysis. I’ve always felt the gaze of the theory whenever people would analyse my offering – the discourse, ontological analysis, you name them. There is something uncomfortable, almost not natural, very laboratory in outlook and approach, almost reminiscent of colonial ways of collecting knowledge and making sense of it –

treating human beings only as subjects of analysis for the sake of confirming or disputing theoretical frameworks, and engaging less on how this can translate in other liberating formats like music, poetry or painting for that matter!

3. It was the most beautiful, creative and succinct way that summarises the 46 minutes of my offering into only 5 minutes song. The themes running through the song capture the running thread of my offering – *siyacinezelana* in the struggle – we pull each other down in the struggle, and we are not pausing for a moment to *listen* to one another. What was even more powerful for me is the title of the song Injairu composed: Transcend yourself. I could not have thought of a better title! This captures the distilled essence of my view (which I continue living and believing in) of life and daily struggles which I make reference to in the video – that the struggles are beyond our own individual concerns – that they are about many voices – the living and the living-dead – and that all of them matter and they need careful attention and mindfulness. I could not have done a better interpretation. I did not think there was anything missing or something I could not recognise in the song because my understanding is that, it was Injairu's interpretation of my offering and so she was in her right to make her own interpretation, which I liked very much.
4. No. The song is perfect as is.
5. I have observed that my analysis of the complexities that faced students' movements tends to focus sharply on 'class', perhaps for the lack of grammar. What I've come to learn over the years is how the grammars of suffering of Black people don't fit neatly into the epistemological frames explicated from the western theories. The view about the need to talk about 'class' is perhaps something that has changed over the years. I would now say, perhaps the conversation needs to be more about understanding the nuances of Blackness, considering the social and economic background amongst other things. These, for me, do not necessary imply 'class' as we know it. The class category as a unit of analysis becomes a bit tricky in understanding the African ontologies.

6.2.11 Lusanda Mfafa



My name is Lusanda Mfafa from a small town called De Aar in the Northern Cape who is 33 years old, I am a kind, enthusiastic, passionate, curious and friendly young woman, a mother of Axola who happens to dig deep in me. Through him I discovered the passion of looking out for those who live with disabilities that I have found a better word for to say UNABLE.

I am coming from a family of four where we were raised by a single mother. I am now serving in different structures enjoying to work with different people I believe in the value of TRUTH, LOVE, RESPECT.

Youth development is my passion be it opportunities or the way of thinking. I love developing young minds. Now my focus is on my son who needs my 100% attention.



Moving Through the Red



People like me in politics never survive,
A stand for truth and development
you'll hardly find.

While people are busy competing,
I try to turn the game around,
I let them use me discreetly,
to engage the youth that need so much.

He! Ke khale re sebetsa joalo,¹⁰³
Khale re ithuthe hore ho esta joang.¹⁰⁴
I step into the red – neutrally,
reaching for what may,
become real, become real opportunities.

Because I've found my capabilities and passion,
I pull them, so they can do the same.

My eyes are always open,
I listen more than I speak,
I'm brave in the softest ways,
I can disarm your resistance.

I am that different kind of leadership,
my power disguised in my joy,
I crack the code we're involved in,
subversion never looked so calm.

He! Ke khale re sebetsa joalo,¹⁰⁵
Khale re ithuthe hore ho esta joang.¹⁰⁶
I step into the red – neutrally,
reaching for what may,
become real, become real opportunities.

Because I've found my capabilities and passion,
I pull them, so they can do the same.

People need houses! People need food!
If you talk about education,
it's just no use.

These are people in poverty,
who are used to abuse,
they need a chance to make more of,
the hard life they did not choose.

He! Ke khale re sebetsa joalo,¹⁰⁷
Khale re ithuthe hore ho esta joang.¹⁰⁸
I step into the red – neutrally, reaching for what may, become real, become real opportunities.

¹⁰³ This song contains lyrics in Sesotho. This means. "He! It's been ages that we have been working like this".

¹⁰⁴ Ages ago we learnt what to do.

¹⁰⁵ He! It's been ages that we have been working like this.

¹⁰⁶ Ages ago we learnt what to do.

¹⁰⁷ He! It's been ages that we have been working like this.

¹⁰⁸ Ages ago we learnt what to do.



Why this song?

Lusanda always seems to astonish with the way she can hold a deep understanding of the social issues within her community and the political power play that laminates these issues whilst also keeping a keen eye on the opportunities that are available that, however small, could have an impact on the many young lives around her that need encouragement and support. Her cartography demonstrates what it means to keep moving through the red into that patch of green that she has painted in the top right corner. She identifies so many social ills that she is navigating as well as the personal risk that she endures as part of her continued involvement in the politics.

The song “Moving Through the Red” honours her ability to move in the way that she does. Constantly reading the space and trying to work it in ways that can make what is available useful for the many young people around her is an exercise in dexterity. The song begins by echoing the sentiments she shared when she spoke about “people who stand for truth” and development being a scarce and rare breed in government and politics as she has experienced it. Through this, she paints a picture of what it feels like to work and navigate in a space that feels devoid of values that should champion the needs of the most vulnerable in society. Instead, she speaks of the kind of competition between different factions and how ultimately politics becomes about amassing of resources to benefit oneself rather than the community one is meant to serve. But here Lusanda strategically places herself into the politics. She speaks of how she lets them “use her”, she lets the politics of the day invite her into the places where things are happening. She turns the “game around” by making sure whatever role she gets to play within that risky space is one that she can strategically think through how to involve others in ways that are big or small. She is “discreet” and non-threatening in the way she makes this happen; in many ways she shows that it is possible, that within what seems to be a closed space fraught with competing interests one can still think clearly about forms of engagement that are useful, that can plant a seed or make a small opportunity open for the many young people in her community.

The chorus of the song playfully animates the fact that the way that she moves is something learned from many many decades of understanding how local government actually works. The affirmation “ke khale re sebetsa joalo” helps us appreciate the fact that this sense of manoeuvring with local government has been happening for a long time, that they are

people with good intentions constantly navigating that space at great risk, constantly “moving through the red” in order to activate real possibilities in their communities. Embodied in her movement is a pedagogy of subversion that is bent on building useful opportunities or being a positive role model in her community. The second verse of the song pays homage to the contradictions she embodies that enable her to perform these positive subversions. She is someone who is always watching, “her eyes are always open”, she knows that to gain knowledge she needs to “listen more than” she “speaks”. Her bravery is not the kind that sees her aggressively taking up space; it is the kind of bravery that insidiously slips into the spaces where she knows she can be useful. She insinuates herself softly into spaces making herself indispensable to those so focused on power politics. She is a maverick of sorts who demonstrates a “different kind of leadership” in a space where many desire to create profit and benefit for themselves only. Her neutrality is her danger as she shrewdly describes it in her offering; she presents as someone incredibly talented yet non-threatening, a stance that enables her to look into and in some instances “crack the code” of what is going on around her. She is a walking contradiction, hidden publicly, often joyously humorously disarming and yet incredibly focused and driven to serve in ways that can provide a different example for the many young people who are watching her.

There is something about the contradictions that she has mastered that is a pedagogy in itself. Beyond the subversion she produces, Lusanda demonstrates a pedagogy of stealth that knows how to wear down the path of least resistance in ways that can yield results. She possesses the kinds of bird’s eye view of a situation that assesses the very real risks to herself and the possibilities that are open whilst owning the kind of courage that challenges her to step into the space and offer something of value in a way that often makes people around her look good. She allows them to take the credit for how brilliant she is because she does not play into the power politics of the ego – she has her eyes focused on what can truly be useful and inspiring in each engagement she has knowing that this is what constitutes a victory in that space. In her own language, her desire to “pull them”, to pull the young people around her into different spaces, is what drives her. The palpable confidence that she has in her own abilities and passions, in her own self-education is generative in that she knows that others can learn something and grow in many different unknown ways even within a context that is quite poor.

The last part of the song serves as a reminder of the urgency of her context. It is not the large overarching political narratives that she serves, but the immediate needs on the ground. She endeavours to speak and serve in ways that makes sense to the urgency of what people are facing on the ground. Her cross referencing the idea that education is important, which is foregrounded in the Not yet Uhuru project she is a part of, is a very interesting one. It is almost like she is saying we cannot talk about education in a context where people are struggling daily for a life of dignity. Lusanda is in touch and immersed with the pulse on the ground; hers is a pedagogy that emphasises the need for an uncompromising form of relevance that must resonate strongly with the needs and struggles of those she serves in her community. She burns a shortcut to these desires using whatever opportunities she can work open within the red.



Lusanda's response

1. I just cant believe we really come from that far and how things have changed even the way of thinking, should I have a chance to redo the video clip I would express the way things are now and how little my thoughts were then and how I have grown. Some programmes have collapsed; some better things came up.

2, 3, 4, 5 & 6

I have felt joy in my heart though there are changes.

All I can say ZIJKILE IZINTO¹⁰⁹ – well we have not yet landed but.

From then things have changed a lot – our Government now is dealing with corruption in our country and also it is not the same as then when people were still doing as they please and not account for their actions thanks to our current government who believe in people and service delivery being the priority.

Now we have leaders who understand the importance of people being taking people's testimony of the challenges we are faced with. Our Government is acting on them though slowly but it's taking initiatives assisting our people in any way it can help to make lives of our people comfortable. Well we will still have problems but things are getting there, having leadership that listens to masses that makes me more happy as I can voice out my thinking to sponsor in policies and to be listened to – that could not happen before.

¹⁰⁹ isiXhosa for: "Things have changed."

I am now more involved more of an activist than before – I occupy in other key sites of power. I serve in the School Governing Body as the treasurer, this came at the right time as one is approaching a stage of being an adult with responsibilities. I am a Youth Against Crime serving as the chairperson that makes me understand more the challenges our police are faced with and can assist in terms of having programmes to try and reduce the statistics of crime, also to form a relationship between community and the police in moving to the objective already mentioned. I am a treasurer of the Young Communist League where we believe in making Education fashionable, and our young people are studying and with our Government came to our rescue in terms of financial assistance. I am also playing a vital role in motivating youth to take responsibility in looking after what the Government has already offered to us, open businesses where we can all be busy and not have time to complain but work to better our lives. We also have young people now in the key positions who are having our best interests at heart. How can I forget I still inject our young minds to Activate for developments to sharpen their thinking also that can make one influential and building trust and leaders of tomorrow so that one day my name can never be forgotten for the good I do today.

ZIJIKILE IZINTO.¹¹⁰

YHOOOO things have changed for the better, people we elect are approachable and the principle of Batho Pele (transparency) does work. Now our people just need to be taught on how to give information to our citizens in the Society, so that people can have better knowledge of what is happening around them.

*“People like me in politics never survive,
a stand for truth and development
you’ll hardly find”*

There are more people like me now we are working hard and hand in hand to better the lives of our people. Where it matters the most we are there.

*“While people are busy competing,
I try to turn the game around,
I let them use me discreetly,
to engage the youth that need so much*

*People need houses!
people need food!
if you talk about education,
it’s just no use.”*

Our people need to be educated in taking good care of what they are offered.

Education is becoming fashionable, still we need to encourage more to go and study.

¹¹⁰ Things have changed.

6.2.12 Unathi Jacobs aka Lady Slice



Lady Slice is a dancehall vocalist and dancer who delivers her songs in a Singjay style – a combination of toasting and singing. She was born and raised in Gugulethu township in Cape Town.

She writes her own music, mainly reggae/dancehall with a touch of soul/hip hop and is now experimenting with Electro/Dubstep creating a unique sound with a distinct reggae feel.

She is an organiser of OYI (Outspoken Youth Initiative) that worked with orphanages around her community and Township Roots which is an after school programme that worked through arts based activities as well as mentoring young people in their school based needs. She has worked in recruitment and fundraising in youth development organisations as well as developing youth programmes and social entrepreneur platforms for young people in her community.



Dancing in the Lion's Mouth



I move everywhere,
I've been there,
dancing in the lion's mouth with my children. Oh oh

I know the light and dark inside here,
I am that walking medicine forged in the fire. Oh Oh

See me rising in this fallen kingdom,
the stature of royalty burning in my heart.

And while hope seems so far,
I bring an ancient urgency
that can do the work,
I can do the work.

But hey sana!¹¹¹
They make it hard,
hey sana!
to nourish ourselves and the lives of those
that I was born to serve.

It gets so hard, hey sana,
when the experts, hey sana,
they keep a hold of the resources
that you need to liberate the work.

And when I dare to make more space for myself,
the system won't forget the ways
I couldn't swim above – No.

The set a trap for poverty and violence
and then punish the youth,
caught in survival.

And when I reach into the heart of
madness
and pull out forgotten souls,
you tell me to wait?

Institutional validation,
hides what should be a revelation,
behind a massive gate,
behind a massive gate.

Hey sana, they block us out,
from nourishing ourselves
and the lives of those
that we were born to serve.

It gets so hard,
hey sana,

when the experts,
hey sana,
They keep you scratching for the support
that you need to truly make it work.

But through the sustenance of angels,
my qualifications may be lost in
translation,
but I know my worth
– Queen.

Through the sustenance of angels
beyond all these material tribulations,
only I, only I,
can teach you,
how to dance in the lion's mouth.

¹¹¹ This song contains lyrics in isiXhosa. 'Sana' is an affectionate term for a close friend.



Why this song?

During Unathi's offering she mentioned how her upbringing in Gugulethu has meant that she has experienced life on "both sides" of the tracks. She is as adept at navigating areas that are rough and struggle with gangsterism, drugs and crime and she is at home with the black middle class. She mentioned how her own experiences in life have also challenged her to operate within or outside of the law. This dual currency she holds inspires the opening lines of the song "dancing in the lion's mouth". This is a matter of fact acknowledgement that she can move everywhere, that there is nowhere in her community that she cannot move, that she cannot be bullied within any of these spaces because her reputation and history have made her so much a part of it all. So, she "knows the light and dark" of all these spaces, the deep problems that her community faces, as well as the possibilities for hope and redemption through the work that she has done as an artist and mediator.

The song draws on a reggae based rhythm to acknowledge the Rastafarian roots that have formed an important part of Unathi's ideological upbringing. As a famous dancehall queen in her community, it is both her swagger, rhythm and fierceness and autonomy of body (especially as a woman in her community) and mind that she brings to every situation. This is the walking medicine that she exemplifies, an audacity that truly has been "forged in the fire" of her own experiences in this community through time. The song acknowledges her knowledge and how the combination of her strengths form a potent combination that is easily recognisable in its attitude and strength. The song describes this as an "ancient urgency" that is committed "to do the work". But at this point in the song there is a change in trajectory, a turn that it takes to explore what she wishes to transgress in her life and work.

Through her painting Unathi shared the feeling of being choked or the feeling that she is always struggling to breathe and find ease along the way. In her offering, after sharing in great detail the kind of work she has done with youth at war with each other, she questioned what it means to get the proper kind of acknowledgement and sustenance to continue to do the work that needs to be done. The chorus of the song takes this on, by sharing deeply as one would to a dear friend how hard it is to "nourish oneself and those" she is "meant to serve". How difficult it is to care about the health of her community and try to sustain her family's needs as well. This is work that is often not supported adequately and if it is, it is spearheaded by "experts" who do not always have the lived experience, depth of care or knowledge to step into difficult spaces in her community in order to try to create something different. She is always operating with a deficit of "resources" needed for herself and those who need it the

most which challenges the ability of the work to flourish and create the kind of liberation needed.

This part of the song speaks to the frustration she feels by not being acknowledged within the NGO community for the work that she can do and has tried to do over decades. There is a sense of always being on the outside somehow, not being entrusted with the keys that she holds in her community. This snubbing is akin to a denial of the knowledge that she holds. There is a sense in which her knowledge and urgency are not prioritised by the stakeholders that do this work even though she knows she could help them to address the ongoing issue of gangsterism in her community. She reminds us that there needs to be a better way of talking about and seeing the value of young Change Drivers. A better language is needed for what their authority should be in the space. A different kind of prioritising needs to be created and affirmed that acknowledges what they actually hold for us all.

The second verse shows her turning to ways to provide a better livelihood for her children by seeking better job opportunities that are hard won. It refers to how, as mentioned in her offering, just when she thought she was out of the lion's mouth and successfully hustling for better work, an old police record of her arrest came up on the system which prevented her from getting the job. This is not only her experience but those of many young people in her community and in the country that get trapped in a "poverty and survival" and are "punished" for it in the future in an ongoing way. They are held hostage to different versions of themselves they may have transcended – but still they are not to be trusted, they still cannot genuinely make the most of themselves because of 'red mark' they have. To add to this, when she does work that tries to face the youth in her community lost in the "heart of madness" she is asked to wait in line and be subject to bureaucratic systems that should do the work she does in her community. There is a disconnect here and without proper "institutional validation", her work, which should be a "revelation" for practitioners involved in gang violence across Cape Town, is paused somehow. This is a "massive gate" that is a concern for what it means to learn and teach for decolonial futures. It shows us the need to find alternative forms of sustenance and collective validation for those who are consistently blocked out of the system at one turn or another.

Unathi's quest is uncompromising in its desire to sustain the kind of nourishment for her and her family whilst being able to do work that can also support her community. In her painting there is a black mess on the stomach of the figure she drew. Mobilizing around the enduring hunger (literal, spiritual, monetary and otherwise) is what her experience challenges us with.

It asks how those that do the work can better support themselves their families and communities as they drive change. This pedagogy of sustenance is crucial to consider.

The end of the song acknowledges that even though her worth is not seen or understood, even though her real “qualifications” (beyond formal education barometers) may be “lost in translation”, she remains a Queen. One can see the crown she drew on her cartography as a cross reference. She survives, she says in her offering, through “the sustenance of angels”. The last sentences mourn, in a sense, what we lose as a society when the competencies of someone like Unathi are exhausted by lack of sustenance and care, because ultimately only she can teach us all how to dance in the lion’s mouth and only she knows how to even try and begin to pull many young people like her out of it.



Unathi’s response

1. I feel like it’s a beautiful reminder of my journey and where I am currently as a Change Driver. The work that I have been involved in during the past 2 years and how it connects directly to what I said in the video clip. I am smiling because I know that I am still on the right path.
2. This just brought tears to my eyes. It’s an echo of my existence. I am definitely that “Walking medicine forged in the fire”. That line is everything. Also this is one of the most beautiful gifts anyone could create for you. The song is testimony to what I have been created to be in this world for through the challenges of the system.
3. I feel that Injairu truly gets it, she also has immense power of putting thoughts into words, I recognised. My journey and being within the song. Fully! I resonate completely.
4. Not at all. The lyrics are befitting, they are telling a true story and also giving hope simultaneously.
5. This whole exercise has been eye opening to me. I am now in the process of starting a new journey within the Youth Development space and it’s really great watching this and reflecting from that time until now how much I have grown within the space and the mission at hand. Honestly speaking, right now I am feeling Freedom. I have managed to work in a position where I had limited resources to work with youth from the same areas as the ones whom were involved in gangs. I have had an opportunity to expose these kids to other environments and opportunities through an organisation that employed me to create programmes for these kids. This is a full circle for me because the mission is still the same, and it also is growing me as an individual while making my passion a career.

6.2.13 Renier Louw



I am Renier Louw 30 years of age, I am a husband, father, activist and social entrepreneur. I have a Diploma in Public Administration and Project management. I have 10 years' experience in community development, facilitation, training and gender mainstreaming. I am volunteer on two NGO boards and a part-time radio host on Radio Overberg FM 101.8. Currently I am busy with community learning centres advocating for centres to implement non-formal educational programmes for unemployed and early school leavers.



This is How it Feels to Belong



The giving and sharing of power produces us.
Practising equality in every hour produces us.
It's the process and not the content,
learning together is the main purpose,
we journey to a collective vision of progress where we all must serve.

Curious experimentation challenges us.
A generous and open invitation challenges us.
We draw in those who want to try,
and create the space where we can aspire,
to visions of ourselves that uphold the change that we require.

This is how it feels to belong,
it's the feeling one gets
when a 14-year-old,
can take the mayor on,
because she knows this is her home,
so she unleashes all her gifts to protect us all.

Re-reading history together produces us.
intergenerational ways to remember produces us.
Forgotten spaces come alive,
surfacing the knowledge that resides,
in the history unspoken that lives beside us in every stride.

A dedication to sharing all kinds of knowledge challenges us.
Knowing that there is no-one coming to save us challenges us.
We know we need to regenerate,
the values that will help us "make it",
we can only build a future through the qualities we can demonstrate.

This is how it feels to belong,
it's the feeling one gets
when a 14-year-old,
can take the mayor on,
because she knows this is her home,
so she unleashes all her gifts to protect us all.

Here and now we activate our highest selves in the service of what we need,
Here and now we learning ourselves open to release,
there is no future for which to delay
our actions need to speak now for today,
Here and now we believe it can happen – so let it be.



Why this song?

From the onset of his offering it was clear that Renier was incredibly aware of the work that is happening in the Overberg region. The lessons and learnings gathered there roll off his tongue with such surety. He is not in a mode of analysis when he tells us what is particular about the context he is working in. He does not wrestle with his thoughts or try to argue for some theoretical outlook in the way he explains it. He speaks from a place that is assured from the embodied learning that has already taken place. He simply shares what they have been learning together and how he is a product of this. The song “This is How it Feels to Belong” echoes his open clear and generous way of talking by in turn trying to distil the clarity of the wisdom learnt along the way through the song. It narrates some of the key elements that he highlighted as being important aspects of their collective learning as simply as possible.

Right from the beginning, their praxis signals a discursive shift that seeks to “give and share power” as part of their strategy rather than holding on to it as part of their local governance structure. This sounds very easy and straightforward even as he tells us about it; however it is remarkable to note what a powerfully transgressive gesture this is when one considers how local politics often play out. The song goes on to explain the desire to practise what equality means within their organisation and within their community as an important aspect that produces them. The way in which they seek to create a space where each person is challenged to lead stands out as an important praxis-based strategy. Renier assures us that even within this “it is the process and not the content” that is the “main purpose”. Learning together is what they know to be the most transformative thing they can do for their community. The wisdom in action demonstrated here is powerful; he is not speaking of concepts here – he is speaking of what they struggle to make possible through their actions. Creating a culture where each person feels responsible to “serve” comes out as an important overriding ethic in the work they do together; this means that everyone’s input and contribution is seen as vital. They are not espousing an ethic that glorifies the efforts of one special leader; they are inculcating an ethic of collective leadership as pedagogical praxis.

The second stanza speaks of a positive approach towards “curious experimentation” and the importance of consistently sharing an “open and generous invitation” as a way of welcoming participation within their community. Here the strategy is to appeal to those “who want to

try”, especially young members of the community that are at a point in their lives where their natural experimentation could lead them down many roads. This is a preemptive strike to move with the natural curiosities that young people have, and to see this as a regenerative asset.

The chorus of this very simple yet ‘packed’ song culminates in boldly celebrating the example that Renier gave of a 14-year-old being able to take the mayor on as testament to the work they are doing together. It struck me while writing the song that despite the different elements of praxis he highlights, what they are actually doing together is creating a space in their community where people can feel like they truly belong. And when I write of belonging this time, I am not only speaking about the identity-based struggles that can be so much a part of this. I am writing about a sense of belonging that comes when one knows and experiences that one is valuable in the society, that one’s contributions help to create something bigger than oneself that is worth protecting. In the example given in the chorus, the 14-year-old girl is aware of what this place means for her right now and in the future, and so in this present moment she has the audacity to “unleash all of her gifts to protect us all”. This speaks to how, in that moment of taking the mayor on, she does not wait, she does not postpone her involvement but sees herself as an integral part of her community that can offer something even at her young age. There is something remarkable about this, something akin to a pedagogy that stimulates the response-ability and purpose of community members as a part of their praxis, and there is a great sensitivity stepping out of the way on the part of the leadership that Renier is a part of to enable this. This ethic resonates strongly with the in-between space marked on his cartography that holds the centre of his page. There seems to be a focus on that space of trying, figuring things out with each other in a way that holds so much potential and ultimately leads to so much knowledge, opportunities, spiritual renewal and growth. I see his own journey echoed in the way that he and many others work with their fellow community members. This kind of invitation allows each person interested to traverse that in-between space of learning openly together.

The second stanza speaks to the historical work they do together in their community and what it produces. Creating intergenerational conversations, gatherings and feasts that celebrate the heritage of Bredasdorp facilitates so much communion as it helps many understand the historical relevance of the spaces they walk through every day. There is a sense of connection with the land and the diversity of people that have over generations made it there, no matter

how separately they might live (with the continuation of the separate ‘white area’ and the ‘coloured/black area’), these gatherings have a way of creating a way to face their history and acknowledge how it is that they came to be there. This ethic is important in a historically fraught society – the need to make inroads to face history together is also a pedagogical imperative that is foregrounded in their work.

The desire to share and acknowledge different types of knowledge is highlighted as something that positively challenges their work. Renier spoke in the end about how powerful informal education has been for him. In this way he has learnt so much about himself and others and later on he is part of creating more spaces like this in his community. This openness to learning sincerely from the skills sets and knowledge of diverse peoples seems to flow like a currency of exchange within this community. This and the fact that these exchanges create relationships that are solidified through the learning is key. In other words, creating the space for collective learning is a massive catalyst in itself that yields many gifts for the community.

Ultimately, this community benefits from the understanding that nobody is going “to save them” and that the only way to create the future they desire is to regenerate and demonstrate in real time the values they will need to make it. This is praxis-based leadership that builds the competencies and capability that it needs as it walks the road. It is a dedication to the “here and now” that challenges the leadership to be their best selves and learn themselves “open” at every turn. They challenge themselves to ethically sort themselves out every day, through their chosen actions. This is an inspiring example of how putting learning together first in a community can create so much.



Renier's response

1. Watching this, I felt very proud of myself for having come this far, secondly I realised I never make time to sit and reflect about the work I am involved in and listening to myself I realised that I need to improve in certain areas. I realised that my learning came from all the people whom I work and worked with.

I am very practical person and I need to focus on deepening my understanding on certain topics, theorise more and sharpen the saw which will allow me to be a valuable resource to my community and the country. I have also shifted from being hands-on to behind-the-scenes focusing on stakeholder relations and supporting struggling organisations to grow and function properly. The two years went quickly and yet so many things I discussed in the video are still a burden in my community, such as the race politics, the division between certain communities and the economy still being in the hands of the minority.

2. I did not expect that, I really loved the song and the writing. As a leader you are so used to giving that you sometimes forget to take also. I almost cried reading your rendition of my experience, you captured it so beautifully. I can't recall anyone who has described our work the way you did. I am smiling as I am writing this because I feel valued, part of something bigger than myself. I wish the mayor could see this.

3. I recognise the legacy that we busy creating, I recognise the painful process that we going through, I recognise the next generation stepping forward to lead, I recognise how confidence can shake the earth and shift the atmosphere, I recognise the change we busy making. Listening to the song, firstly you need to start recording and selling, you have an angelic voice. What came up for me is a project where we write about how we see other people and share with them their experience through our eyes.

4. No it is perfect.

5. At this moment I feel like an oxymoron. I feel strong and weak at the same time, I feel happy yet so sad when I drive through the street and still see so much work to be done, I feel like I am running with patience (don't know if I make sense) but it feels like we moving, also stuck at the same time.

6.2.14 Mkhusele Madiba



Mkhusele Madiba is an accomplished community development practitioner and social entrepreneur with 10 years' experience in human capacity building and community development. He has worked in rural and urban South African communities and has worked internationally, including in Canada, Ghana, Philippines and Italy. Mkhusele's recent posts include being a Community Consultant for Freedom House on their 2016-2017 Social Cohesion Programme and working for Activate Leadership as an Educator for Social Change. Mkhusele now works for ALPS as the Community Outreach Manager, implementing the People to People Dialogues and Zwelihle, Hermanus projects, which seek to foster social cohesion and building healthy and sustainable relationships between refugees, migrants and South African citizens.

I See Your Spirit in Bloom



I've come to slowly, slowly know myself,
this path creates work that's testament,
it's true,
that my soul was here.

In a world where
we are defined
by what were told,
there's a need to ignite
what is possible,
hanging in the wings,
we breathe new life
into our ways of seeing.

Don't let them fool you,
that time is late – or not yet ready,
It's all happening right now,
It's all happening right now.

We can reach for all,
we were taught never to touch,
'cause all of this is for us,
all of this is for us.

It's true,
and I wanna see you,
I see your spirit in bloom,
I see your spirit in bloom.

So many of us have compromised our
soul,
to reach an idea of success,
that will never feed the whole,
that hunger rages on...

I want to infiltrate that space
with what I've learned about,
peacefully belonging to oneself
and how to meet the world,
fashion all actions,
to come from your core.

So, don't let them tell you,
that time is late or not yet ready,
It's all happening right now,
It's all happening right now.

We can reach for all,
that's waiting to be unmasked
'cause all of this is for us,
all of this is for us.

It's true,
and I wanna see you,
I see your spirit in bloom,
I see your spirit in bloom.

But don't think this won't,
challenge you to lead,
in ways that are uncomfortable.

Can't you feel the loss,
of voices once so clear,
and principled in what we're striving for?

Pain and selfishness
will never create,
who-we-need-to-be-together,
in order to bring,
a vision of freedom,
that's worthy of our dreams.

And don't think you won't,
be called to compromise,
in the bringing of this future.

In learning to build,
a different kind of world,
we choose to stay responsible.

We must rewire our hearts
to grow alternatives,
inch by inch,
inside the belly of the beast.
We can't run away from this,
this is the discipline we need.

Remember
don't let them tell you,
that time is late or not yet ready,
It's all happening right now,
It's all happening right now.

We can reach for all,
That's waiting to be unmasked
'cause all of this is for us,
all of this is for us.

It's true,
and I wanna see you,
I see your spirit in bloom,
I see your spirit in bloom.



Why this song?

Mkhuseli's countenance and demeanour has always required that one acknowledge him as a spiritual being first on a journey of discovery that seeks to share what he has been learning along the way. Even on his cartography, what keeps resurfacing is the spiritual aspects of the way he chooses to trace his journey. The signs are there: the Christian cross takes centre place as well as a verse from Proverbs 29:18 that simply states: "Where there is no vision the people perish". The song "I See your Spirit in Bloom" seeks to honour the spiritual quest that Mkhuseli's work is a part of, whilst also calling for leaders who have the courage to hold a clear vision of what they are trying to create.

The first stanza of the song starts slowly by acknowledging his own journey of movement as he explains it, whilst also speaking about the desire that he holds to create the kind of work that can in humble and real ways create a legacy of some sort or be a "testament" that his "soul was here" and that his life has had some sort of impact. The second stanza moves on to define some of the contours of the work he does with young people across communities. As part of the Township Youth Movement his work as a guide or facilitator has been about creating the kind of spaces that young people can explore who they are beyond the particular messaging they have accumulated over time. He seeks to inspire and encourage youth to gently move beyond the definitions of themselves they have inherited over time towards a space where they can think carefully about who they are, and perhaps begin to recognise the shape of their own spirit. The work seeks to "breathe new life" into young people's ways of seeing, to open the trajectories of who they are, their purpose and what their offerings could be.

The chorus is a reminder of what is possible "right now". The narrative that it is too "late" or that we are "not yet ready" masks the possibilities that can be activated right now. There is a sense of ownership in the present moment that seeks to challenge and invite young people to be aware of "what they were taught never to touch" or in other words, what they have never dared to dream for themselves and their communities or what they have been taught to be become accustomed to as their lot. This is about shedding a culture of limitations in order to affirm their greater sense of belonging in the world. The chorus reveals the broader desire of the work he does, a desire to see young people's "spirits' in bloom" meaning to see according

to their highest expression of themselves in this time – regardless of what constrains and obstacles they find in their waking world. The second verse builds on this by being clear about how the work seeks to respond and regenerate an idea of what “success” looks like. It seeks to interrogate the aspirations that many “compromise their souls” to gain, and what is left out or that continues to “hunger” within this kind of vision. His response is then to create the kind of spaces that transgress these norms and invite those present to feel the “peace of belonging to oneself” as a precursor for the work they do in the world. This is another way of being that asks each person to “fashion” the “actions” they choose to come from the “core” of their integral self. This is a praxis-based exploration around allowing their work in the world to be guided by the questions they hold and trusting this as an important place to start from. This pedagogy is about surfacing the power of one’s internal compass and reclaiming that in a context that overplays limited aspirational roles for township youth.

We meet the chorus again as a reminder to take note of the present moment but straight after this, the song takes another turn. Here we move from the conversation about the self-realisation journey that each person must make out of their own choosing towards a call for principled leadership and vision amongst those that seek to create a future worthy of their longing. The song laminates the meanings made in Mkhusele’s offering by saying, “Yes there is a lot of work you must do on yourself but that is just the half of it. Yes, we are here to help you accede to your own version of yourself but that is not the end goal. What you learn about yourself in turn needs to be put in the service of the future and this will require even more work from you.” It is a gentle caution to not think one has arrived just because one has a sense of self, that to truly lead you will still be challenged to push through this and have to face many impasses that might make you feel uncomfortable. This point is substantiated by Mkhusele’s comment in his offering about the dearth of principled clear leadership in these times where once South Africans were led by thinkers like Steve Biko who were so clear about what kind of society it was they were “striving for”. They knew how to draw the boundaries around this and to challenge even their own people through their words and actions to remember and learn in ways that prepared them to live in a non-racial society, something they themselves had not experienced over generations.

The verse then calls out “pain and selfishness” as being something present in our communities that on their own will not create the kind of community needed to build a future. The idea of compromise comes up again in his offering but this time with a different twist.

Instead of the compromise away from the soul intimated earlier, he speaks about how people have to compromise every day in order to live. He does not understand why in leadership the idea of compromise in these times is something that some feel they can avoid. This is connected with the idea of principled, clear leadership that understands where it is going and what along the way can help it get there. It is a statement that in my mind tries to marry one's vision to practical things to be done every day in order to get there. His words seem to gently caution around the sloganeering one can encounter even within issues like the call for land that do not work or communicate "responsibly" and with "discipline" towards how this can be created. This is a pedagogical imperative to move the conversation from the banner of what we need towards clearly articulating and carefully working out what will help us get there. This shift in conversation is an important one that needs to be owned, and perhaps the loss of voices in leadership that can do this is what is being mourned in the earlier verse. Biko was not afraid to tell those he was working with off if he felt they were veering off the mark, and perhaps in this day and age this sense of accountability in leadership is missing. Mkhuseleli reminds us that to truly transgress, we need to build within ourselves the capacity to "rewire ourselves" in our learning and doings in ways that can capacitate us to build "alternatives"... "inch by inch inside the belly of the beast". We can't get away from this work.

What I find interesting about this last piece that he shares in his offering is that it asks us to take responsibility for the power we have now. It is not a treatise to seize the governance structures, it is rather an invitation to think about how we can build and reseed a different ethic in the world despite the big whirlpools of motion that suck us into the system. Our choices can start to give life to alternative relationships and ways of organising between us. This is about creating counter-hegemonic cultures as part of our work as a pedagogical imperative "in spite of the times" (Braidotti, 2011, p. 295). The possibilities of what this might be are opened as endless in his reasoning.

Mkhuseleli's work holds us accountable in the present to what we are creating, it asks us to consider carefully what we enable through our work and how we can become more clear, principled, courageous and ultimately articulate in the way we mobilise towards the future of our longing. He asks for integrity in that which we say we are about as part of transgressive moves towards freedom and the courage to observe the trajectory of our actions in the present, and to question if indeed these will lead to where we want to go.



Mkhuseli's response

1. Yho Injairu, thank you sis wam (my sister) I am overwhelmed and emotional at the same time, because this is too much to internalise and appreciate. You keep saying “your offering” I can’t believe it, the video is like a mirror a reminiscing moment of what underpins me as a human being. I am totally in an awe state and I also feel good about myself, because I have not shifted from my core self. I still see things how I saw them then, but now I have evolved, and I have found more meaningful spaces in communities to share this through actions not just words. I feel proud of myself and my offering and I am taking this all in, for me to own it! I am inspired by my own words. For the first time, I am not shy to watch myself or listen to myself – this is powerful and I am feeling empowered just by watching myself. Yho enkosi kakhulu (thank you very much). This I am going to show my mom 😊
2. As I was listening to the song, I started reflecting on the lyrics – first part “my soul was here” truly reflects me and just having a song got me excited and overwhelmed to know that there is a song about my offering. You know I always have times where I doubt myself or my perspectives – this song has given me a sense of being content and affirmed what I stand for. This song and video of me is giving confidence of who I am and the leader I am. It brings back a sense of purpose and affirming where I come from, my present and where I am heading. I have no more words but to thank you Injairu for being so creative and creating this beauty that reflects my soul and what is inside of me. I love the song and I love the video – I am already sharing with people around me and they are blown away by my offering, they are also appreciative that I can invite them into my inner-being, because my offering is my inner expression.
3. I think I have answered some part of this question above. You have captured me Injairu, I am amazed by your ability to deeply listen not only to what I was saying but also the deeper underlying voice behind my thoughts. I remember I was shy for the camera but when I watch the video and your questions, you were able to make me open up and express myself. You made me feel comfortable to share my truth and you have captured the essence of who I am. The title of the song itself is a true reflection of who I am. I can feel and hear myself in the song. The song and video captures what I always tell people and nothing in the song is new of who I am.
4. Not at all, you have truly captured me and this is a classical song a reflective and soulful song I will always listen to and also make other ponder on ‘cause it is indeed me!
5. I think in my offering I am quite optimistic that it is all happening today and I am currently doing field work in different communities across 4 provinces in the country and as I engage

with community members – I can see community members being self-reliant in one community (Zwelihle) community members have opened their own Political Party (Land Party). To experience such inspires me and makes me be hopeful of the future as I have expressed in my offering. For me it is good to know that I am not dreaming but I am positive and whatever the situation we find ourselves as a country and continent, I still believe the people have what it takes to stand up and take charge. I still believe the spirit inside of us needs to be expressed to drive change. Though, I still see the rise in violence and crime, I am still hopeful and I am playing a part in being the change I want to see. The song and video have given me more strength and a reminder of what I stand for and affirm that I should not give up, because “the time is now”.

6.2.15 Kgotso Sothoane



Kgotso Sothoane is a social activist and community development practitioner born and bred in Kroonstad in the Free State. Kgotso is also a social sciences graduate from the University of the Free State with a keen interest in African Studies, Sociology, Community Development, Gender Studies, Communication and Philosophy among other disciplines. Kgotso has also participated in various leadership training programmes including the ACTIVATE! Change Drivers and the Young African Leaders Initiative Regional Leadership training programmes. Kgotso has extensive experience as a community facilitator having consulted for various organisations including the Department of Sports and Recreation, Health Systems Trust and Livity Africa. The core of his professional career has been around advancing youth development within communities across South Africa. Kgotso is currently working as a Project Coordinator at ACTIVATE! Change Drivers and is pursuing further studies in community development.



*Re tla fihla joang?*¹¹²



We do not make history,
out of our own liking,
We make history,
out of the circumstance we're in.

I'm gathering that knowledge inside me.

Waves and waves of history,
comes shared in the stories,
of wise women and men,
who rose up against the tide.

I'm gathering their wisdom inside me.

Oh, yes, yes, there's shelter in those trees,
wisdom waiving in the breeze,
Oh yes, there's shelter in those trees.

And they keep telling me...

How to walk this long walk,
how to be worthy of those that have come before?
*Re tla fihla joang?*¹¹³
Unless we grab hold of our young ones in love?
*Re tla fihla joang?*¹¹⁴
How can it be that they'll never reach their possibilities?
Our ancestors will never let us be,
till we respond to the call to teach.

I've been coughed out the system,
so many times 'cause I believed,
that it would bring me a good living.

So many brilliant minds are trapped inside it.

Instead of insisting,
I turned to a yearning to recognise,
and liberate young minds.

My soul is enriched by the light in their
eyes.

Oh, yes, yes, Africa's alive,
and dignified I reach out to guide it,
the spirit of Africa is alive.

And it keeps showing me...

How to walk this long walk,
how to be worthy of those that have come
before?
*Re tla fihla joang?*¹¹⁵
Unless we grab hold of our young ones in
love?
*Re tla fihla joang?*¹¹⁶
How will they know they full
possibilities?
Our ancestors will never let us be,
till we respond to the call to teach.

¹¹² This song has lyrics in Sesotho. This means: "How will we get there?"

¹¹³ How will we get there?

¹¹⁴ How will we get there?

¹¹⁵ How will we get there?

¹¹⁶ How will we get there?



Why this song?

History and how those who have come before us managed to overcome the struggles of their times is embedded in Kgotso's thinking. This is the way that he himself found his way back towards an affirmation of his wholeness when he became conscious of what the system of Apartheid had created in society. It is through the careful reading of history that Kgotso finds sustenance, particularly the history of struggle in South Africa and the continent as a whole. His cartography centres around images of this continent and questions around politics, spirituality, knowledge, meaning and truth. The traditional colours of the African National Congress (ANC) deliberately feature as part of his cartography because this is an indelible part of the history he studies so carefully. The song "Re Tla Fihla Joang" affirms history as a vital resource that has led him to an expression of work and service that feels like it honours those who have come before him. The question "Re tla fihla joang?" / *How will we get there?* is a persistent question filled with longing and anguish about how we keep ourselves on the path towards the freedoms so bitterly fought for by those who came before us.

The first stanza echoes the words that Kgotso shared "we do not make history out of our own liking", but rather out of the "circumstances we are in". This is an invitation to really look around at the present and ask important questions about what it means to be of service of an emancipatory future in these times. These are questions that Kgotso has been considering by reading texts written by historical figures such as Oliver Tambo, Robert Sobukwe and others who managed to "rise up against the tide". His gesture is one of receiving the wisdom there and finding "shelter" in the great "trees" of those who have gone before him. It is as if the knowledge he found there encouraged him to steer himself out of trying to "insist" on being included in an economic and educational system that has consistently spat him out. This system has "so many brilliant minds" trapped inside it that do not have the space to live fully according to their innate talents and purpose. His dream of being a lawyer has been unattainable, but somewhere in the cycle of not being relevant to a system that he kept trying to enter, an alternative image emerged about where he could put his energy. As someone who is an avid reader who takes the resource of cultural heritage and intergenerational struggle very seriously, his efforts towards doing work that has meaning both for himself and in society has led him to consider what is to become of the millions of young people on this continent still being born into a colonial matrix with few inroads to encourage their own

possibilities. In the same way as his previous ambitions have been frustrated through an epic journey to access education, his work anticipates the struggles facing future generations due to limits in their education. His focus on both boy and girl children is the culmination of his desire to, in turn, become a worthy ancestor.

The chorus of the song asks many questions: How will we walk this long walk? (building on Mandela's metaphor of the long walk to freedom) How will we get there if we cannot "grab hold of our youth with love?" "How can it be that they will never reach their possibilities?" "How can we be simply watching as millions of young African arrive stranded in this place?" This question in particular hangs with a melancholy fervour throughout his offering. It is a sincere question about where we are going if we cannot reseed the knowledge that comes from those before us for the young. It is a call to take seriously the work of teaching as a core emancipatory tool. Kgotso's gestural turn is about being a bridge for regenerative renewal and taking seriously the sharing of a legacy and heritage of struggle with the young so as to reseed the possibility that we will be strong enough to move forward generationally. As a way of affirming his own dignity and that of young people who may not have had care or guidance, he has chosen to teach to honour the legacies that have nourished his own journey to consciousness.



Kgotso's response

1. Being part of the "Not Yet Uhuru" project has been transformative for my professional and personal life and watching and listening to my offering to this project two years after it was first made allowed me to deeply reflect on the journey I've travelled so far. Among the thoughts that resonated strongly with me from this offering is the honour of being able to share my passion for youth development and community development with those involved with the "Not Yet Uhuru" project. My articulation of this passion and how I am making an effort to contribute towards driving meaningful change in my community in this offering is clearly informed by the circumstances I found myself in at the time of the recording. In this respect, it is interesting to note that my thoughts around the marginalisation of youth from decision-making processes and structures in society have not changed much. I still believe there is a need to build the capacity of youth to contribute meaningfully and positively into the public realm. Moreover, reflections in this video about my journey to some form of

consciousness and what helped shape my offering was most likely shaped by the robust and enabling environment created at Stanford Valley during the course of the workshop. On my own, I do not believe I could reflect so deeply about what shaped me as a person and as a Change Driver.

2. One of my passions in life besides politics and history is music. Music has played an important role in the liberation struggle of South Africa in the form of raising awareness and provoking action from the masses of our people. Listening to the song created as an accompanying response to the experiences I shared in my offering was such a powerful experience. Being able to tell a story through music is such an incredible gift and this song has been able to beautifully capture the essence of my experience.
3. Firstly, the title of the song “Re tla fihla joang?” essentially speaks of a journey. This is reflective of the journey we have travelled and where we still need to go. This accurately captures the sentiments of my offering in this project insofar as it narrates the story of my coming into consciousness and the realisation of the role I need to play in the transformation of my community. Moreover, the song also draws from the ideas shared in my offering, particularly around the emancipatory role of history in shaping our contribution in society. More importantly, the song reflects the need to reflect on our social circumstances in order to respond meaningfully to the challenges that are affecting us as society.
4. “We ought to transgress, We ought to transgress”
5. Transgressing for me today also means unlearning. This is especially true when you consider the role of colonialism and eurocentrism in shaping our beliefs about what is true, what is good and what is right. Having been brought up under a system that characterised everything black as false, bad and wrong, it is important for me to deeply reflect on the manifestations of this false narrative on how we view our indigenous knowledge systems, our spirituality and our education as black people. It is important to note that I have also avoided describing our people as African, because even this notion I consider Eurocentric. This is part of my journey to self-discovery and consciousness.

6.2.16 Happy Phaleng



Happy Phaleng is the Peer Outreach Coordinator for OUT LGBTI Well Being Organisation. Happy has previously worked for Love Life Organisation as a Groundbreaker playing a role of influencing behaviour change in community among adolescents and youth. He is a co-founder of a youth-led organisation Khula Youth Network and a LEAD SA Hero for June 2016 and was nominated and selected as a Hero for standing for LGBTI rights in his community in Hammanskraal through creating social safe space.



Diversity within Diversity



I don't need your approval,
and I don't wanna tell you what to think.
I don't need understanding
I know that I already exist.

And though we live in a difficult world,
we don't surrender to its roles.
I remember when I was young,
the sexualities imposed.

Now I bring a ground-breaking conversation,
for all to hear these hidden truths.

Hearts open to see who's coming through the door,
desiring to feel free.
Someone so different to what I claim,
as my identity.
But still we need to be sharp enough,
to witness and make space,
for a diversity within diversity.

Remember an injury to one,
is an injury to all.
To accept the worth of one person,
honour the complexity of all.

And we must never come to assume,
that we know it all.
Or our own assertions of freedom become hierarchical.
This work calls dignity, equality, peace and justice for all...

Hearts open to see who's coming through the door,
Affirming they are free.
Someone who's always been a vital part,
of this community.
But still we need to be open enough,
to witness and make sense,
of a diversity within diversity.
we need to open up the space
that knows the human spirit is limitless.



Why this song?

Despite being involved on the ground level in conversations about sexuality and gender that are extremely challenging, Happy is incredibly cool, calm and collected. He holds the facts firmly in the work that he does and does not allow himself to be dragged into conversations that try to deny the existence of a LGBTIAQ+¹¹⁷ community in his context. His work arrives ready to have the ‘groundbreaking’ conversations that are often denied their space – conversations that ‘affirm’ the presence of non-heteronormative sexualities and gender-based identities. This song, with its lilting jazzy swagger and ease, seeks to honour the way that Happy and his colleagues do this important work in difficult contexts with such equanimity, resolve and determination. There is a fierceness in this, but is it not confrontational or brash; it simply seeks to acknowledge who is present within different communities despite people’s attempts to invisibilise and violently oppress people who are LGBTIAQ+.

The first stanza of the song sings out what I understood as being behind his very grounded demeanour. When he steps out to have these conversations he is not going out there to convince “people what to think” or to gain their “approval”. It is not validation that his work seeks, it is rather the fact that he and many others are *already there* that he seeks to affirm. This work seeks to extend the imaginations around who belongs in the community by simply acknowledging who is already there. It is an affirmation that whether or not people acknowledge their presence of LGBTIAQ+ people, they are a “vital part of the community” (and always have been) and cannot be seen as being outside it. The song acknowledges that things are “difficult” within the world when it comes to accepting people who do not conform to normative roles, but despite this there is a resolution to not “surrender to the roles” imposed by other people. This is not for discussion, or debate: there are people here who are different and there is a need for conversations that can speak to this reality. Happy’s life experience of having normative sexualities imposed upon him becomes part of the deep learning that steers him towards creating the space for other young people to grow up not feeling like they have to conform to the roles ascribed to them. He does this in a matter of fact way, so that those who are not exposed to conversations of this nature can hear clearly “the hidden truths” concealed within different contexts.

¹¹⁷ This refers to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Intersex, Transgender, Asexual as well as other unnamed “+” communities.

The chorus of the song swings open like a wide door celebrating the spirit behind the work that he does. “Hearts open to see who’s coming through the door affirming they are free” offers a warm welcome for those who do not conform to normative gender and sexualities to come through and feel safe. It is also an invitation for everyone else to witness and acknowledge those within their communities who are different. The open door leads to a place for learning, to remove the stigma around difference so that those who are uneducated or prejudiced against LGBTIAQ+ orientations can be educated openly about who they share their community with. The lyrics “someone so different to what I claim for my identity” leaves space for wonder. There is a sense of curiosity and awe that someone is present in the here and now who is so different to me and yet also simply human like me too. This is a celebration of diversity.

But the chorus does not stop there, it holds within it a caution, that even as we celebrate diversity we need to be careful to not exclude other people from our visions of gender and sexual diversity. In his offering Happy noted that even within the LGBTIAQ+ community there can be disagreements about who belongs and who does not. This is what he was grappling with at the edge of his praxis: how to build diversity within diversity, that is how to leave the space radically open in order to work with all those who show up with equanimity. This is about transgressing normative assumptions about what diversity looks like both outside of and within LGBTIAQ+ spaces – a significant challenge. In his painting we see a man walking strongly and openly with his own sun blazing in glory above him. This is a person comfortable simply being himself. On the left is another circle with many coloured beads clustered together and a dark mark around it perhaps signifying the ongoing struggle to meet the diversity within that circle. How can that circle also be at ease with itself? The spirit of his work holds these questions at the fore.

The second verse of the song speaks to the deepening of the praxis around this. There is a need to acknowledge the “humanity of all” as part of a vision towards equality, justice and peace. This is a positive challenge posed both to communities that do not want to acknowledge the humanity of LGBTIAQ+ members as well as the LGBTIAQ+ people to be generous to each other in their various struggles. It reflects a desire to not simplify the complexity of each person. This a pedagogy that is radically open and sees wonder in each incarnation present. This is radical humanism in motion. Happy and those he works with seek

to create a space where there will be no hierarchies around who deserves “equality, justice and peace”. Instead, the work challenges all to engage with a vision of freedom that does not rely on oppressing someone else. It is a challenge to accede to a vision of “humanity that it limitless”, to push open the boundaries about who belongs and who does not.



Happy's response

1. This came as a shock to me personally and first thought was the progress I made since and how I have improved in terms of how I am articulating issues, and I feel this was a space that energized and my perspective changed on all levels.
2. Word! I never thought words that I said would turn into such a beautiful tune that carries so much power and also it's a song that need to be listened to carefully and with a certain understanding.
3. I would say you payed attention to detail and you even further added expressions to the words I said musically and that actually makes me happy that there was a common understanding between us. It took me back to the space and also realised that sometimes we can use music as an expression. Am not even sure if there's anything missing, the space was overwhelming yet soulful and friendly but too much was shared there. I actually reflected when I started listening and I actually listened and listened again as it took me back to the space.
4. The lyrics are a true reflection now and even then.
5. I would have liked to add previously but I also think I fully participated with just an understanding I had for things then and it has been an eye opening space one has grown or have had a broader perspective afterwards on different things.
(Transgressing) It totally means the same things as an activist that for one in South Africa to be particularly listened, sometimes you must just transgress.

6.2.17 Nozuko Masiba



My name is Nozuko Masiba – I am currently running an organisation called the Volunteer Centre; this space allows individuals like-minded to express their voluntary skills, thoughts and knowledge so that they can be better versions of themselves. This is done through workshops, trainings, consultations and youth exchange and awareness campaigns.

I am passionate about figuring out what could be possible, what we could create or polish, for the next to use. I love reading – any random reading – this could be politics, history or philosophy to cartoons. I enjoy sport particularly cricket to watch. Currently I am making the Volunteer Centre space to create or promote youth mobility – I would like Volunteer Centre to be the vehicle in sending our youth to different partner countries to explore, to develop, with no limits! Especially in Africa.



Move!



You will never know what lies trapped inside,
till the right conditions rise,
far away from home,
far away from home.

Then nature starts to take its course,
and shapes a journey that must unfold,
asking: who are you,
asking: who are you?

And when you move,
you brush against the heart of you in motion.
You catch a glimpse of who your soul has been.
You get to choose your way again,
kuenda ni kuona,¹¹⁸
I'll meet myself there,
naenda!¹¹⁹

There is nothing you can do, be, make or create,
without the aid of another person,
reaching out to you,
reaching out to you.

Every interaction that you go through,
Will bring many questions to pursue,
pointing back at you,
pointing back at you.

And as they do,
you'll brush against the heart of you in
motion,
you'll catch a glimpse of who you've tried
to be,
you'll get to choose your way again,
kufanya niku jua,¹²⁰
I'll face myself there,
naenda!¹²¹

Naenda, enda, enda, enda enda, enda
enda!¹²²
Na nakutana na wengi,
Na nakutana na wengi.¹²³

Will we learn to see ourselves?
Can we walk this distance together?
Brother can you take your place?

Sister will you lead us there?
And what will we foretell?
For those who will need us yet?
Can we build a legacy of our own,
that speaks of this experience?

Can we move?
In ways that we can feel ourselves in
motion?
To really see our visions growing wings?
To bravely name the way again?
Tunaenda!¹²⁴
Toboa!¹²⁵
We are in great company!

Tunaenda, enda, enda, enda enda, enda enda,¹²⁶
Na tuna jenga na wengi,
Na tuna jenga na wengi oh oh!¹²⁷

¹¹⁸ This song contains some lyrics in Kiswahili. This means to go out there, to see new things.

¹¹⁹ I am going!

¹²⁰ To do something is to know something, as in through actively doing something you come to understand it.

¹²¹ I am going!

¹²² I keep going and going and going, I keep moving...

¹²³ And I meet so many people along the way, I meet so many!

¹²⁴ We are moving!

¹²⁵ Push through

¹²⁶ We keep going and going and going we keep moving...

¹²⁷ And we are building something with so many people...Oh oh!



Why this song?

At the heart of the stories that Nozuko effortlessly shared with us is the theme of movement, of experimenting, of trying new things and stepping up to the interesting circumstances that life throws at us in motion. The song “Move” seeks to honour this aspect of the knowledge she shared with us, by zooming into the journeys that young people encounter when they have the opportunity to move, the opportunity to go somewhere else and volunteer. The song sings out this journey by acknowledging the vast potential that young people are invested with that often only gets activated when they are challenged and have the opportunity to move outside their own immediate contexts – when they transgress the limits of the contexts they have been embroiled in. The song begins by affirming this sentiment: “You will never know what lies trapped inside, till the right conditions rise, far away from home”. The need to move from home to see into other aspects of oneself is echoed here. Nozuko states in her offering that we are creatures of nature and to grow we have to let things “take their course”. This becomes part of the process that one must undergo, a process in which one inevitably has to consider and answer for themselves the question “who are you”?

The chorus of the song resounds in the affirmation that it is movement that gives us the opportunity to work through these identity strengthening questions, because “when you move” you are challenged to acknowledge the “heart of you in motion”, those parts of yourself that will travel with you wherever you might go. In this way, you get a sense of what is enduring in you and “who your soul has been”. But there is more to what movement offers than this personal reflection; movement also allows you the opportunity to “choose your way again” to make important moves towards how you desire to be in the world. To recreate yourself based on how you desire to experience yourself in the world and who you want to be. Nozuko’s painting shows the image of one person coughing out the expression that leads to another person and they in turn do the same. She spoke about this being related to finding and giving voice to one’s inner child. An action that requires an ongoing sense of reflection and accounting for who you are in the world.

The second stanza of the song moves from learning individually to the relational learning that one inevitably does with others out there in the world. It draws verbatim from Nozuko’s words that there is nothing you can “be, do, make or create, without the aid of another person,

reaching out to you”. These interactions with other people also give insight as to who we are in relation to them; what is useful in your way of being and what needs to shift. This is also an opportunity to see oneself and who one has “tried to be”. Doing things with other people affords one the possibility to choose again, because it is only through this doing that one begins to know. This is about relationality as an important aspect of what teaching and learning means for emancipatory futures; one can begin to see oneself and learn and transgress the limits of one’s own understanding of oneself as a result of the relationships fostered with others. This is an invitation to listen differently to what it means to collaborate, to see what happens when one is in the space with other people as a vital portal for one’s learning.

The song changes track after the second chorus in that it moves from an individual journey to beginning to think about what these journeys can mean collectively for the continent as a whole. It follows Nozuko’s key questions about recognising each other: “can we learn to see ourselves?” It also asks about what it means to allow each other the space to contribute in our own ways to the vision of the future we are striving for. This ethic of working together transgresses the “selfishness” referenced in her offering; we need ways to undo the individualistic ways of working that are entrenched. This is a challenge to operationalise a way of working that does not rely on one person’s leadership but rather finds strategic ways to pull the power of this together. The question she raises about “what will we foretell, to those who will need us yet?” relies on our ability to see each other and listen to what is emerging right now in our experience as important markers for the journey yet to come. It challenges us to do the kind of work and thinking that can in itself provide a legacy from which those who are coming behind us can draw from. Nozuko challenges us to consider what it means to move together, what it means to be so close to each other that we can see our collective visions “growing wings”. What it means for us to take the space to bravely name the way again as part of our praxis, like our predecessors did. These crucial elements need each person to move in ways that stretch their horizons whilst simultaneously being able to recognise and collaborate openly with the different ways of knowing and being that other Change Drivers possess. One’s ability to reflect deeply on one’s individual journey, the power of being aware of what happens when one is challenged to work relationally and an ethic of collaboration and naming our experience are the vital keys that Nozuko shares with us in her understanding of what it means to transgress towards emancipatory futures.



Nozuko's response

1. I was reminded and awakened again and was trying so hard to go to that place, I had to remove a lot of emotion, a lot of “I think I was” instead of “I was feeling this way”. I have grown and matured but one thing is still the same, questioning “who am I?” – this has been my armour when things get difficult or don’t make any sense. With that being said, the realization of being captured in this video is one of the best ways of reflection – I cannot even believe that it has been two years already.
Is that me? – Well that sunk in that it was me – I was thinking, the calmness, how quickly I processed information to be interpreted and responded to that was and still is my truth.
2. At first it was difficult I had to listen to it more than once – I had to listen very carefully to the voice, to words, to sounds and how that made me feel. At one point I was looking for connection, then I was fighting with myself (resisting) – this I think was born from the fact that I am very much a believer of collaboration that “I am me because of you” and that we have the ability to change peoples’ situation including feelings so that we can move in becoming better versions of ourselves. So, hearing the song – at some point it felt heartwarming that someone took time to learn more about me and my randomness – this sent me straight to my childhood to the child in me to inform her that it’s okay and that it’s limitless!
3. I felt some sort of a shift and this shift again was a positive shift but it was difficult to make sense of it, I think this is due to the fact that so many different learnings and unlearnings have taken place since. I think the missing part was understanding that it’s the past and questioning if whether I am still the same or am I different and that my friend is difficult to answer.
4. Hahaha – No! It is how it should be.
5. Yes, I think it was an honour to be part of your team or the chosen one, I also believe that that when you made that decision to select me there were other 1000 of people you could have chosen – so for me this means all truth and questions lies within us, all answers lie between us – to be contradictory is okay. For me I feel all the people and connections made are somehow coming together, am also still learning to accept what may still be seen “normal” by society even in the space of development (NGO) – The more I am relaxed, the more it’s easier to collaborate and make things happen.

(On Transgression) That time for sure it was right through the sessions and days, my mind was stretched so far that I felt like I had arrived at truly who I am, then I realize there was more! – This time it's like transgressing is a "spirit" like it wants to come out and be as expressive and loud – I think that for me is a struggle I sometimes feel I am literally shutting myself and I think that is ok, like I have said I am still learning, how exciting and scary it is – what it means now to transgress, is to truly allow yourself to be as accepting yet questioning everything – expressing with but being mindful – to continue to listen more and welcome other individuals onto this journey.

6.2.18 Action Setaka



Fondly known in activism spaces as a global citizen, social engineer, planetist, pragmatic luminary, advocate of intellectual discourse and an advanced groundbreaker for developmental agenda. He is always being part of a course to improve his community and describes the A! network as an organization which enables him to make the most effective contribution. In the last National Youth Parliament of South Africa in 2016 he was chosen by his peers as a commissioner of Youth and Access to Education. He singlehandedly led a campaign for the year which seeks to inspire young people to realise and start acknowledging themselves as solution providers. The campaign was themed around his personal slogan “Stop complaining, Start solving”. Action Setaka is also a facilitator of Library and Information Science in Free State for Department of Education. He is a hater of uselessness particularly in leadership. He believes that the time is now that young people move beyond rhetoric, sloganeering and ambiguous statements.



Get the Basics Right!



Bo nkhono ne bare joetsa¹²⁸
Li tsono hore hulisa¹²⁹
Bo nkhono ne bare joetsa¹³⁰
About the heroes that built our world

And their stories filled us
With pride, and awe
A patriotism that's rare
They taught us such love,
And care, and a real understanding
Of what it means to share.

Get the basics right!
This child is gonna need it.
So there's no need to reverse the tides
And this child grows unimpeded.
Get the basics right!
This child is gonna need it!
Prepare the African child to grow,
Beyond the ravages we know
We have so much to outgrow
To keep the future
Safely on board.

Litichere tsa rona¹³¹
Ba thuswe ho esta mosebete ea bo¹³²
Batsoali le bona,¹³³
Ba tsuge ho aha bokamoso¹³⁴

Le nna nste kele teng¹³⁵
To defend
And make sure nothing goes unchallenged
To make sure we create, a space
where we invigorate new mind-sets.

Get the basics right!
This child is gonna to need it.
So, there's no need to reverse the tides
And this child grows unimpeded.
Get the basics right!
This child is gonna to need it!
Prepare the African child to grow,
Beyond the ravages we know
We have so much to outgrow

To keep the future
safely on board.

Instead of the protests and violence,
we build the engagements
to solve the problem
the people know I advocate
for intellectual discourse

Outgrow all the judgements
that keep us here
to the solution we appeal
the material conditions with real
intellectual discourse

Cause we have so much to outgrow?
We must engage to keep the future
Safely on board.

¹²⁸ This song has lyrics in Sesotho. This means: "Our grandmothers used to tell us"

¹²⁹ Stories or fables so that we can grow

¹³⁰ Our grandmothers used to tell us

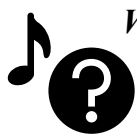
¹³¹ Our teachers

¹³² They need to be helped to do their work

¹³³ And even the parents

¹³⁴ Need to wake up to build the future with us

¹³⁵ And even me I will be there



Why this song?

Of all the offerings, what Action shared on video has to be one of the most concise and to the point sharings about what matters for him in his work. It is not so much the length of time he took to speak that I am referring to here but rather the force of clarity in his articulation that I am interested in. This is a man used to many levels of engagement; he is used to being the person in his community that is bold enough to bring another discourse out, to encourage something different to emerge out of a context that can easily get stuck in one way of doing things. A deep sense of clarity is also evident in the way that he has chosen to strategically place himself in the community. As a person with no doubt many options in terms of the work that he can do in his community, he chooses to be at the interface or at the intersect between all the stakeholders needed to secure a better future for the children in his community.

The song “Get the Basics Right” celebrates his particular focus. It draws back from his memory of how his grandmothers used to tell stories to him about the “giants of history”. It evokes the emotion he expressed as so important to him, what that kind of learning did for him, and the other young people in his community. The “pride” they felt and the “patriotism” that was instilled in him as a result of the stories of his grandmothers. It also uses as its lyrical foundation the way in which being together in that way taught him and his siblings how to care for one another, and how to share with one another, both things that he shares in his offering as being absolutely key in creating a positive future for the continent as a whole.

The first verse of the song celebrates this vision and sings out what he shared with such emotion in his offering. It culminates in the chorus which holds the essence of what Action’s main desire is, to “get the basics right”, to create the kind of early child development spaces where “there is no need to reverse the tides” that is, reverse the damage that can be done to children if they are in schools that do not cultivate a space where they can be “intellectually, emotionally, and psychologically” (as stated in his offering) prepared to be the bright future we need. Because there is so much to “outgrow”, the “ravages” of poverty and violence in his context need to be met with another educational ethic that can inculcate a difference.

The second verse goes more deeply into describing the intersections that Action draws together as the chairperson of the school governing body. Each person is afforded their

responsibility in the task towards securing the future of the African child: the teachers need to be supported, the parents need to wake up and play their part and of course, he too is there, to provide the kind of oversight in collaboration with others that can build a vision for early childhood development in the community as a whole. He inserts himself there at the crossroads of interactions that are needed – to vocalise and advocate for a more intentional focus on the future of the children.

The chorus remains the same but after it, the song affirms what is at the heart of the transgressions that Action chooses to take. The conversation he shares about outgrowing the violence and outgrowing the judgements we hold in society are held in this section. His is an attitude that refuses to leave these forms of engagement as the only way in which society can respond to the issues it faces. Instead he insists on building in whatever platform he is on engagements centered on “intellectual discourse”. This is a determined attempt to be “solution orientated”, to try by all means to solve the problem without resorting to more violence and judgements that harm the heart of the community. He has become someone in his community that is renowned for advocacy. He is a walking transgressor that insists that another way is possible and that the community has what it takes to surmount the issues that they face. He appeals for this and puts his money where his mouth is by being present in platforms such as a school governing bodies to make a tangible difference to the young ones in that school. This insistence on engagement and waking up to the issues that are present in the community is his way of attending to a decolonial future. He is a weaver in his community bringing together the stakeholders that are necessary to attend to the important issues of the time through intellectual discourse. He teaches us what it means to boldly represent and keep introducing a different form of engagement in spaces where the possibilities for change have been exhausted by the grinding “material conditions” that people face every day. Instead of seeing what exists as insurmountable, he pulls together those needed to build new social tissue for the future of the children in that context.



Action's reflections

1. Pleased with my consistency of class struggle, I realise how deeply rooted I am in my people's struggle. I still believe in all the things I believe and I realise how much contribution I have made in almost everything I spoke of.

2. One can only appreciate the spirituality and razor sharp wisdom, which is detected in the ability of the author to accurately captures one's thoughts and being in just a song. I was emotional when reading the lyrics and was impressed with how much time the author invested in each of us, having only known each other a few days. The song perfectly describes me and my experiences

3. I believe Injairu was possessed with the spirits of wisdom. Within the song I recognised many things which included how my environment played a role in shaping my activism identity. I recognised the value of my role in the development of my country and the continent. What is missing is the role my late mother who left the world of the breathing when I was 8; she played a role in the foundation of the person I am to the world. She is the one who continuously played in my imagination when *bonkgono* (grandmothers) were mentioned in my offering. My sister continued to play the Godly character in my life, singlehandedly since the demise of my mother.

4. It is accurately captured

5. Transgressing to me means disrupting the status quo and smashing the norm. A lot has happened but within everything I shared.

6.2.19 *Khululwa Nkatshu*



I consider myself a Teacher. I am an objective thinker, practical, dependable and thorough. I am helpful in providing planning and resources. I use logical thinking to make decisions; I weigh all sides of an issue before making a decision. I am introspective and self analytical. I am good at spotting mistakes and fixing them. I believe myself to be an organiser, visionary and nurturer.



Khululwa!



Nkululeko¹³⁶

Aaah ndiyazoyika endinamandla ako!¹³⁷

Nkululeko

and I can't compromise something my eyes
have never known.

Khululwa¹³⁸!

Can't you see me searching through my name?

I've come to find myself

A spirit that can't be tamed

I'm here to become myself

In a time with little examples,

Of that which I seek...

Show me freedom

then I shall be free.

Nkululeko¹³⁹

Aaah ndiyazoyika endinamandla ako!¹⁴⁰

Nkululeko¹⁴¹

and I can't compromise something my eyes
have never known.

The moving seas, those skies, the earth
keeps turning.

Surely our desires and visions are
evolving?

When there's so much room for
improvement

Can we be satisfied,

With these broken things?

We ask why these illusions,

keep creating,

the same old things?

Nkululeko¹⁴²

Aaah ndiyazoyika endinamandla ako!¹⁴³

Nkululeko¹⁴⁴

and I can't compromise something my eyes
have never known.

Khululwa!

For goodwill of our fullest potential,
acknowledging everyone's survival.

We come bearing seeds,

Only when we become ourselves

and no one else.

The presence we gift each other
only a work of art can see another¹⁴⁵

becoming a vessel

for another way,

to find itself

yes we manifest...

Nkululeko¹⁴⁶

Aaah ndiyazoyika endinamandla ako!¹⁴⁷

Nkululeko¹⁴⁸,

and I can't compromise what's inside us
that needs to be born.

¹³⁶ Freedom!

¹³⁷ This song has some lyrics in isiXhosa . This means "Aaah I am scared of what I am capable of! /I'm scared of what I have the power to do."

¹³⁸ The hard process that makes freedom possible

¹³⁹ Freedom!

¹⁴⁰ Aaah I am scared of what I am capable of! /I'm scared of what I have the power to do

¹⁴¹ Freedom!

¹⁴² Freedom!

¹⁴³ Aaah I am scared of what I am capable of! /I'm scared of what I have the power to do

¹⁴⁴ Freedom!

¹⁴⁵ Okri, 2011, p. 24

¹⁴⁶ Freedom!

¹⁴⁷ Aaah I am scared of what I am capable of! /I'm scared of what I have the power to do.

¹⁴⁸ Freedom!



Why this song?

Khuluwa's offering and her questions during our time together shared a profound longing to know and better live into what freedom could actually mean in our lifetimes. As vibrant as she was in her delivery of her questions, there is a searching for something needed but not yet known that shows itself as the drive behind what she does and how she does it. When researching the difference between the words 'Nkululeko' and her name 'Khululwa', it was as if Nkululeko speaks to a sense of freedom attained, a liberty gained. It is a word that is a proclamation of sorts whereas Khululwa speaks to the hard process that helps one attain the freedom that one seeks. It speaks to the sense of struggle and patience embedded in the working or growing towards freedom. It is a wish held to grow towards freedom. It felt apt to honour the struggle and seeking that is in her name through this song as a way of speaking to that process of freedom she speaks about in her offering.

What is inspiring about the way that Khululwa goes about this is the sense of wonder and curiosity and energetic apprehension that she embodies as she tries to find her way through. The recurring refrain of the song "Nkululeko ... aaah ndiyazoyika endinamandla ako" tries to capture this. These words translate in a spicy way both as an exclamation around the fear that is felt when one knows there is so much to come and a kind of excitement around that what is yet to come or what you can bring forth yourself. It echoes her statement in her offering that it is "scary" to become oneself, that the things that one can conjure up or manifest are vast and scary. This is like the feeling of being on the horizon of something and fearing the possibilities that one can see because they are so vast. This statement speaks to both a kind of daring as in: Wow! It is possible for me to do all of this; as well as the feeling of being overwhelmed that comes with this. The second part of the refrain backs this up by affirming a sense of determination to see what is possible through; even if it is overwhelming and scary, these visions cannot be compromised because she is so aware that she is struggling for something that she has never seen with her "eyes" in her living world.

The first verse acknowledges how she embodies the work embedded in her name and how for her, the constant work towards becoming herself or finding herself and growing herself is how she attends to the feeling of freedom that she seeks to liberate even whilst she wonders about this. The second part of it speaks again to the fact that in her waking world there are so "little examples" of that "which she seeks". This is an important aspect of Khululwa's

offering that resonates strongly. She asks this especially as part of the generation of those defined as “born frees”: that is young people who were born after the fall of Apartheid. Many people speak of “born frees” as people who know what freedom is. Khululwa turns this on its head by asking: what is this freedom that we speak of? I have not seen the semblance of it with my eyes. Let’s stop talking about it as if it exists; “show me freedom, then I shall be free”. This is a challenge for a living practice of freedom that satisfies her search for it. It is the search for this that propels her forward, that she searches for through her name.

In the spirit of movement and evolving the second verse echoes the sentiments that Khululwa shared about all things being in constant motion. She then asks us how it is possible to be confined within a status quo that continues to stay the same or even worse a status quo that demands that we all be the same thing. It is the sense of satisfaction with things that clearly “do not work”, things that have so much “room for improvement that she seeks to challenge”; she asks how can we be “satisfied” with “broken things”. We need to move past this in our way of being, so that we make sure we are not just “creating the same old things”.

The third verse moves more into what she hopes to embody and how she moves in the spaces she is in, and how she transgresses towards her visions for freedom. In it we find echoed her desire to accede to a vision of freedom that can help us fulfil our “fullest potential” whether this is within the work she does with others, or in the work she does with herself. It retells the story that she shared about “bringing seeds” as a deeper more regenerative way of helping others rather than offering little sustenance for the day. The aspect of “bringing seeds” is linked to the act of helping others in a way that is focused, in a way that truly reflects the particular gifts one has. In the verse, the act of bringing seeds is connected to the act of becoming and knowing oneself because only then can one give something that can reseed itself, something that can live on –like she shared that her strength comes from many who invested their energy in her.

The final verse builds from the definitions of ubuntu that she had shared; it is in fact an act that comes alive when we can be present for each other enough to feel the humanity of each other and respond to what is happening from that place. It also mentions that “only a work of art can see another” again echoing Okri’s statement that only when you are in the process of becoming, can you see and acknowledge how another person is also unfolding (Okri, 2011, p. 24). It completes itself by stating how these acts of becoming contribute to growing oneself,

to struggling to become free and in this way, other realities begin to assert themselves. Through this practice, people become “vessels” for freedom. Khululwa’s song highlights for us the struggle to transgress the limited perspectives of freedom that we have inherited by doing the work with ourselves and others that scares us. The work sits on the horizon, work that we might have no real examples of in our waking world but still seeks to “be born” through our efforts. She challenges herself and us all to “show us”, to bring to life and manifest that which can help us colour our visions of what freedom could actually mean.



Khululwa’s response

1. When I watched the video it reminded me of who I truly am and that I am still in the right path and that I should remain grounded and resilient. Even though things take time I will eventually get there and reach my life goal.

2. When I listened to the song I was astonished, hearing me from another person’s mouth, The Real Me. Who I am, who I stand for and what I stand for. I am revitalised by the song to continue being me.

3. I was surprised by how well I was listened to, observed and focus on that it felt like I was there while the song of me was written and made to life. Well spiritually I was there lol :)

- I feel she has expressed me fully, all the notes corresponds even musically. I recognised who I said I was, what and whom I stand for, how I go by with who I am and standing for myself and those around me within my circle and outside. I recognised how much power a collective can have, if one focused, determined individual such as Injairu can represent the real person from just spending few days in getting to know the real you. How much change could there be? How much freedom could there be, freedom to be you, understood and expressed, freely? Nothing was missing, all was said well. I am not alone in my search for real freedom. Real freedom is free.

4. It resonates well with me.

5. To transgress for me means to finally obtain what you are in search for, embrace it, celebrate you for the achievement and then share it; by sharing it will be yours in bundles.

6.2.20 Phindi Duma



I have been involved in many healthy educational sports programmes some of which I personally initiated in partnership with many other relevant stakeholders. It has been a life changing process, one which is humbling, inspirational and fill fulling. I worked with Grassrootsoccer, an HIV/AIDS organisation we worked in the community of Soweto and Cape Town as a lead coach in soccer and HIV/AIDS health talks (mentorship). I'm also honoured to be a Young African Leadership Innitiative Alumni in Public Management and Governance, and was also nominated to be the Chapter Co-ordinator for YALI LRC SA 2018. I'm currently working on a health project in KZN which is a combination of health, education and sports.



Engaging your Arrival!



When salt loses flavour,
life becomes tasteless now.
Without the gifts of the children,
the future gets watered down.
The strong roots that they bring us,
never will touch the ground.
They are journeying far,
journeying far to find
what should be so near...

I can engage you,
clear the way and make the space, for
your arrival to take place.

When so many came together just to make you,
You deserve the chance,
to arrive at what
only you can bring for us.

Iskhathi siya hamba!¹⁴⁹
Izinto ziyo nakala!¹⁵⁰
vusani intsha yethu,¹⁵¹
babe abahlelelwe kona.¹⁵²

Iskhathi siya hamba!¹⁵³
isizwe iyo nakala!¹⁵⁴
Vusani bantwana betu,¹⁵⁵
babe abazalelwe kona.¹⁵⁶

I create value,
where we are accustomed to seeing none.
To grow the appetite for dreams,
we thought were never ours.
The missing link that were facing,
requires that we show up and coach them now,
Cause how will they know,
how will they know,
if we can't show them a way in?

I will engage you,
I'll make the space to play these games
So your arrival can take shape.

When so many came together just to make you,
then you deserve the chance,
to arrive at what only you can bring for us.

Iskhathi siya hamba!
Izinto ziyo nakala!
vusani intsha yethu,
babe abahlelelwe kona.

Iskhathi siya hamba!
isizwe iyo nakala!
Vusani bantwana betu,
babe abazalelwe kona.

We play in a way that brings what's dead
to life,
A spirit alive to what it is,
We play in a way that bears new fruit for
life.
We play in a way that brings what's dead
to life,
A spirit alive to what it truly is,
We play in a way that bears new fruit for life.

¹⁴⁹ This song contains lyrics in isiZulu. This means:
"Time is moving!"

¹⁵⁰ Things are getting messed up!

¹⁵¹ Wake up our youth

¹⁵² So that they can fulfill what has been planned
for them

¹⁵³ Time is moving!

¹⁵⁴ Our nation is getting messed up

¹⁵⁵ Wake up our children

¹⁵⁶ So they can be what they were born to be



Why this song?

Before I delve into the particularities of this song and how it hopes to mirror what Phindi shared in her offering, it is important in this case to reflect a little on the quality of her offering and the interview process that produced it. I must confess that when watching the video clip of our interaction, I was very uncomfortable with some of the underlying tension in our interaction. It felt like I kept asking questions of clarity in abrupt ways and there was a sense of frustration too in the way that Phindi kept expressing what was important to her, as if she kept cutting through the questions to assert herself almost with a sense of annoyance that I was still digging. I have had to reflect on this whilst writing the song, I have had to try and digest what possibly made the offering space filled with the tension of irritation in this case. Furthermore, in writing her song I have intentionally tried to do a better job of listening to what she said and how she said it, which in truth tried to be more patient and caring was evident in the interview. I hoped she could receive this song as a way of acknowledging what was uncomfortable in that place and a way of honouring the incredible work that she does as a coach. I apologise Phindi for what I experience as my abruptness in the offering.

The urgency with which Phindi shared her journey in doing the work that she does, the matter of fact way she cuts through the questions asked of her and the impatience she embodies as a way of being form part of the emotion of the song. The song “Engaging your arrivals” builds itself from the rich metaphors she provided throughout her offering. It starts particularly with her expression that “salt is losing its flavour out there” indicating that young people are walking around without appropriate boundaries or knowledge about how to take care of themselves. The tone of the song builds on the weight with which she shares these stories. It is heavy and provides a kind of caution around the fact that the future is a scary place without the “gifts of the children” or without a nurturing ground in which their “roots” can plant themselves. The first verse also makes mention of the powerful image she shared of a young person trying to cross the highway, or a child on a cramped train trying to get somewhere; they are “journeying far to find what should be so near”. This refers to the kind of education that can activate their gifts and possibilities.

The song then moves to talk in a straightforward manner about Phindi’s work. She volunteers to “engage” people. Her work as a coach “clears the way and makes a space” where the sense

of who they are (“their arrivals”) can take place. This chorus builds in her very spiritual outlook on how each person matters, how each one needs to be valued, especially if each person is the culmination of so many ancestors, spirits and gifts. If “so many came together just to make” one person, it is right that each person is given a chance to share or “arrive” at what only “they can contribute to the world”. This part of the chorus expresses the logic of her contributions, while the second part of the chorus in isiZulu expresses the spirit, determination and agency that she challenges herself and even us with as part of her offering. She challenges us to get real about what we are actually doing that makes a difference to young people out there in the world. It bears witness to her admonition that “things are getting messed up out there”; we have to do what we can to help young people become who they are meant to be “abazelelwe kona”.

The second verse gets to the heart of how Phindi navigates her space and how she positions her offering to the world. This is equally very clear in the way she came to it. “I create value where we are accustomed to seeing none”. This is the critical space she occupies. She willfully enters a space that has no recognition of the value that sport can give children and slowly starts to build a praxis that can demonstrate clearly the power of sport in generating purposeful futures for young people. Her transgression in the space is thus one that willfully, carefully and consistently occupies strategic positions and populates them with an ethic and a practice that begins to bring “new life” to the culture of the school. She enters what is old or basic and reseeds new possibilities in it. She grows the parameters of it. This feels like a decolonial ethic of working from what exists and building on this in ways that can engender and inspire the value for new possibilities. There is considerable strategy in this, and perhaps the central presence of the chess board in her painting expresses the importance of thinking through one’s moves as part of the one’s practice. It is interesting that the value that she creates has the ability to both educate educators about what is possible and the potential in learners, whilst at the same time invigorating young people by teaching them a discipline that is a gateway to so many of the possibilities that lie within them. The spaces she enters in this way start to shift as a whole in terms of an understanding of what other things are possible through learning interactions that go beyond the specific learning students gain from their main classroom-based curriculum.

The song honours the specific role that sport plays: “we play in a way that brings what dead to life”. These are the words Phindi used to describe what happens when young learners get

very involved in sport. Something in them comes to life, one starts to see the changes in each person, and their personalities emerge. The challenge she posed to us all about bearing the fruit of the seeds we plant refers to how the effects of this work start to come back to the schools in ways they can all be proud of, in ways that shift the borders of what is even understood as being possible. Phindi's work helps transform spaces, cultures and individuals by consistently creating practices and the discipline to play the games. Her impact is one that builds the imaginations and extends the possibilities and potentials that one can live into within the space of the schools she is determined to serve.



Phindi's response

(Note: Phindi responded in a letter instead answering all the questions.)

I Phindile L Duma am writing this letter to express my gratitude for been given the chance to be part of the above-mentioned initiative. It is a very important initiative not only because it's a platform for leaders to come together and discuss social ills within the current education system in their communities but it's an opportunity to grow (by learning and unlearning important things in life).

I personally believe that more needs to be done to eradicate the existing socials ills of which some are caused by the poor education system (especially in our public schools) because of the fact that PHYSICAL EDUCATION is either over looked or neglected as well as HEALTH EDUCATION . I have seen that by INTEGRATING THESE three important activities, positive social change can be achieved not only for the benefit of an equal and quality education but for the entire society.

I have listened to the art work (SONG) , I have also studied the POEM and VIDEO and I must say I am very proud of the brains behind these. I'm truly inspired and motivated to continue working towards building a better society for all.

I hope that the NOT YET UHURU initiative can grow because it is very necessary, relevant and through such a magnificent initiative we can create a better community for all.

Yours sincerely

P L Duma

(AN AFRICAN LEADER BY AFRICAN LEADERS

let us continue to make a positive social change)

6.2.21 Peter Gabriel McKinnon Wright



Peter Wright (El Tsiboni), thought leader, light worker, medicine man. Working on healing journey workshop called, To Slay a Dragon, and looking for conspirators who wish to embark on developing The Pedagogy of the Free.



Love can Serve to Bring us Home



Scattered intermissions,
as the unfulfilled promise grows.
Righteous indignations,
justice seeks to be restored.

I arrive at the boundaries,
crossing over each time.
An exile from living in binaries,
Oh, it's just a matter of time,
this conditioning subsides.

How can we forget the key,
that love serve to bring us home?
If it's only love that heals,
then love can serve to bring us home.

Hanging in the balance,
this process takes its toll.
Learning the burden of hate,
and how its fires can corrode,

And all of the work that we're striving for,
digging deep into the mire,
searching for grace in this anguish
oh, it's just a matter of time,
that this paradigm is redefined.

Can we embrace the key,
that love can serve to bring us home?
It's only love that heals,
and love will serve to bring us home.

Oh – and we forsake it,
when we accept these
meagre standards of living.

Oh – and we forsake it,
when we repress
our humanity shining through us.

Oh – and we forsake it,
when we seek redress,
without discerning that
only the sword of love,
can restore what it is that we long for.

I arrive at these boundaries,
and I've been rejected by every kind.
The thing about living in binaries,
is the belief that one should pick a side,
when something greater would suffice.
We could embrace the key,
that love could serve to bring us home.
It's only love that heals
and love can serve to bring us home.

We could embrace the key,
that love could serve to bring us home.
It's only love that heals,
and love can serve to bring us home.



Why this song?

There is a poignant longing that sits at the heart of Peter's offering, and a courage that seeks to face the contradictions of the times charged with an understanding of what love can offer us as we move toward decolonial futures. The song "Love can Serve to Bring us Home" seeks to explore the intensity embedded in this experience. The opening verse seeks to bear witness to the "scatteredness" that Peter referred to as part of his own personal experience whilst also invoking the image of a larger landscape of voices and practices that are struggling to transmit their message and hopes in these times. Peter spoke so clearly about the South Africa's transition at this particular moment and what "hangs in the balance". His articulation of how South Africa is emblematic of an "unfulfilled promise" is a particularly powerful image that the verse builds on. It also goes straight into the exploration of the anger and hate that he feels are part of the frustration people feel as they grapple towards a future that is worthy of their longing. In this place "justice seeks to be restored"; there is a sense of anticipatory resolution that is trying to work itself out through the lives of so many that seek for it. This part of the verse tries to describe the context that his transgressions come from. The next stanza references his place directly within this heaving atmosphere.

Peter speaks about navigating the boundaries inherent in South African society that are based on the lines drawn by Apartheid. He "arrives at these boundaries", racial, class based, gender based and as part of his practice, he challenges himself to "cross over each time"; he tries to challenge a way of thinking that unconsciously always replicates a "binary" based logic i.e. black-white, male-female and so on. He intentionally explores for himself and with others the grey areas within and beyond these in his work. What is more, his praxis is generously rooted in the understanding that the resistance and tension that he experiences is part of a "conditioning" that will surely "subside"; the resistance to change is simply a way of being that people have inherited and become accustomed to, and the work needed to open up new parameters and explore something different must go on regardless. This work is what creates the opportunity for new things to come in.

The chorus gets to the heart of the message of his explorations: the fact that "we have forgotten about love", "we forget that love" can help bring us to the "home" that so many instinctively long for. The understanding about what love can offer is substantiated by his

clear expression that at the end of it all “only love heals”, and so any struggle towards a decolonial future and any work transgressing towards its possibility critically needs to attend to what the practice of revolutionary love can look like.

The second verse steps into the learning that takes place even as things stay increasingly difficult – even as identity-based polarisations run rampant, even as inequality and injustice become so common. Peter speaks carefully about how even the anger and the hate experienced is an important process for each person to go through. “Learning the burden of hate” becomes an important part of stepping into a pedagogy of love. In this he speaks about the value of transmutation, that the “burden of hate” as it is experienced can alchemically shift itself into valuable learning, into ways of being that will ultimately understand the corrosive impact of hate? and how it does not create anything new. This learning has to happen viscerally in one’s body and at best it can result in the choice to unburden oneself of this way of responding, so that “all the work” that Change Drivers are “striving for” can be resourced from a different place, so that it can be done “wonderfully” and not “dreadfully” in his words. That anger and hate and fear, though a valuable part of the process of coming to terms with the extreme contradictions of South African society, cannot truly serve us to create a different future. The “search for grace” within one’s work can relieve the anguish of the struggle. These words are used intentionally to denote what overall is an intensely spiritual perspective on transgression towards decolonial futures. Again, the verse ends by signaling that these transitions are part of a shifting paradigm that will indeed be redefined. There is something akin to assurance that sits within this perspective. One must keep going to serve what is needed for the future and not what keeps regurgitating itself in the present. It also serves as reminder that in this process you might not be acknowledged as useful, legitimate or relevant by the status quo. You will not get positive feedback as you try this, but still you must persist. This is akin to the biblical reference of “being in the world but not of the world”, of mobilising other ways of being within the current culture. This means not being sucked into the pervasive cultures that exist but instead being able to perceive them and choose to act in alternative ways.

The bridge of the song tries to briefly explore this kind of decolonial love. It goes beyond the kind of love that we are socialised to trivialise. It echoed Peter’s sentiments that only a country that has forgotten love could have such a low minimum wage or permit such intergenerational inequality and injustice. In this way we forsake love when we buy into the

‘normality’ of being the most unequal society in the world. This is the socio-material perspective of redress neglected by the rainbow nation. We also forsake love when we act in ways that repress “our humanity shining through us”. Transgressing requires the bringing forth of the spirit of humanity unlike other ways of being that ultimately dehumanise others in the process. Lastly, we forsake love when we fail to “discern” that only the “sword of love” (in Peter’s words) can create what it is that we long for. This is what he at the time was struggling to actualise in his work. This bridge challenges us to think through what the practice of decolonial love entails, something that is justice orientated and fierce in its desire for change, but also fierce in its insistence that we cannot undo the legacy of hate by mobilising in ways that replicate it. That perhaps there are more ways to address the issues that we face and a different vision or understanding of how love can “serve to bring us home”. There is a rigour embedded here that seeks exploration and that seeks other ways of being.

Even though Peter has arrived at many boundaries and holds the experience of being rejected by many “kinds” of people as a part of this, it is essential in this perspective for him to keep his eyes on something bigger than the reproduction of binaries, which fragment people instead of generously struggling to be more inclusive, bold and radical. This kind of work can serve a bigger vision. A pedagogy of fierce decolonial love and the struggle to figure out what this is with others and how to actualise it at each turn is what is held in Peter’s offering. It is a challenge to work in ways that can open up this space as a legitimate, relevant, practical and useful way to respond to the injustices of the times.



Peter’s response

1. It was a weird and wonderful thing to watch myself speaking. I saw that I have suffered a lot, but that it has made me to grow. I would say that the deeper yearning to belong that I often allude to is unnecessary. I would tell myself, you don’t need to belong because you are already home. You are part of a fabric and only need to be yourself. I could see in myself a self-regulating mechanism, an auto correct, an intellectualisation of self that I no longer see as necessary. What I saw in the video was how light-hearted I can be, if I allow it to be.
2. It was great to have my words, my lamentation spelled out for me. I felt I was deeply honoured and that I was seen, as opposed to observed.

3. The song takes a particular melancholy, the blues style, and I think that it is perhaps missing the humour and lightness that I would have woven into it. However, given what I shared with you, it would seem that you have produced it based on what I showed you (duh). What comes up for me is the lamentation and how the time for lamentation is very much coming to a close. It sums up for me a struggle as old as time itself, however if and when addressed will appear to be much smaller than it seems.
4. There are no changes I would like to make. I was in quite a desperate and rather dark place at the time. Love of myself to bring myself home is my take away from your song.
5. Transgressing for me at the time was an act of self-sacrifice imbued with severity, self-castigation and self-denial. I would say that I have grown more resilient now, I have come to understand myself in an entirely new way. Transgressing is my nature, my fool's way, my sacred clowning. I now know that I am the deep void of the still pond in which others are reflected. I can now understand human rejection, social rejection much better. Transgressing for me literally describes my purpose in life, the edge, the duality, the amorality, the need for laughter, reflection and the non-serious.

Chapter 7: For Uhuru: Rising Cultures and Nexus Points Towards a Paradigm of Peace

7.1 Introduction

Bearing in mind the sense of openness and questioning that began this study, this last chapter is the place where I reconcile what has emerged through the readings, reflections, imaginings and praxis generated by the study. It is an opportunity to signal the openings that this work presents, both through the praxis that it generated with others as well as the burgeoning ethics and values in motion that reveal themselves through historical and contemporary reviews of transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis. Having explored the transgressive efforts of many players across time, it is now necessary to weave together the insights gained in a way that synthesises what these collective efforts say about the transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis currently underway.

This study has positioned itself as intermittent waves of praxis between the past, present and future that reach for each other from across time. It conceptualised itself as a call and response between a past historical legacy, the present moment it was reaching for, and the visions of the future beyond. Whilst we have been able to delve into different strains of thought that have coloured our imagination and reinterpretations of the past (that is still present), and the contemporary rising cultures emerging from the transgressive learning of Change Drivers, we have yet to organise the focus of the study in terms of how the future is being conceptualised as part of its meaning-making. The second chapter started with Napiadi's story. There was someone egging her on from the future, someone continued to encourage her arrival even before she emerged from the forest. For the purposes of this final chapter, it is useful to begin by naming what continues to wait for us in the future, by briefly outlining a conceptual understanding of this.

When we look cumulatively at what has been confirmed between these pages, as well as what continues to beguile us with a generative ambiguity, when we appreciate the many contributions that have been shared across times, some patterns are discernible. In many ways the insights gleaned from intertwined past and present contemporary rising cultures are articulations of what still seeks to be brought into being within an emancipatory vision for the continent and the world. They are multifaceted expressions towards a wholeness that evades

us within the over culture. They are an affirmation of what needs to be released, reclaimed and embodied in the service of a future that is worthy of our longing (Rushdie, 1999). Some of these expressions are about foregoing the dualistic culture of separation facilitated by the Cartesian, capitalist, patriarchal, extractivist paradigm we find ourselves in (Moore et al., 2016, p. 88). Other expressions found here are about recuperating, “hospicing”, “composting” and “midwiving” the human subject in contemporary times, so that we can progress in ways that better serve an emancipatory vision for the earth and all sentient beings (decoloniality.net). More is said below on the plethora of verbs that form a part of the many works currently being undertaken in the service of decolonial futures:

Gesturing towards decolonial futures involves learning and unlearning, detoxifying and decluttering, mourning, grieving and healing, composting and metabolizing, in order to build something new, life-sustaining and life-supporting. It also involves loosening our attachments to what we think we want so that we might instead go where we are needed. (decoloniality.net)

Practising these acts in ways that does not merely take us where we want to go, but rather compels us to consider where we might be needed is an interesting part of what these remedies require. This implies that we in some ways discern where it is that we will be most useful, and what our unique contribution in the service of the future we wish to occupy might be. While we have had many discussions that spelled out and orbited the multifaced ways in which “a paradigm of war and alterity” and the colonial matrix of power is at the heart of contemporary precarity, we have not sufficiently explored the fuller possibilities that “a paradigm of peace, new humanism and pluriversality” present to us as a synthesised post-binary response (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p.142). The term ‘humanism’ can additionally be improved to better serve us by making it more faithful to a translation of Ubuntu¹⁵⁷ which rather articulate itself as “humanness” or “being-human” because the “prefix ‘ism’ inevitably fixates and arrests itself” and can “result in the creation of the dogmatic and unchangeable, the foregone and finalised” (Dlala, 2017, p. 52). Another benefit in using the term “humanness” as it stems from an articulation of Ubuntu is that this “humanness” is not strictly anthropocentric in nature, but is instead an ecosophical treatise that acknowledges the

¹⁵⁷ For greater detail on how Dladla conceptualises what Ubuntu as an emancipatory concept includes see this excerpt from his writing: “We understand much of the struggle for liberation in South Africa from its beginnings to have always had its basis in *Ubuntu*, in the understanding that human life is inter-connected, in the understanding that a ruler derives the authority to rule from and through the people. Furthermore, human beings were deemed to be equal in their status as human beings despite differences in the colour of their skins (among others)” (Dladla, 2017, p.56).

interrelated co-existence of humans, the earth and other sentient beings¹⁵⁸ (Le Grange, 2012, p. 334).

This final chapter seeks to synthesise the findings of this study in a way that appreciates what the contributions found here can offer the understanding and experimental praxis of a “paradigm of peace”, “being-human” and “pluriversality” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p.142; Dlala, 2017, p. 52). It does so because it understands that these three elements, and the many dimensions they represent, speak to the flourishing of a decolonial vision for the continent and the world. Chela Sandoval would define such an orientation as a praxis of “decolonial love” (Drexler-Dreis, 2015, pp. 255-256). This is a concept that has historically been articulated in many ways that are useful to recount, mainly because its varying definitions imply different forms of praxis that are relevant to this chapter:

Some decolonial thinkers, such as Frantz Fanon, focus on a praxis of obliteration within an orientation of decolonial love. Decolonial love requires the reconstruction of a world that allows for a new way of being human, eclipsing current hierarchies within a modern/colonial world: it requires “the end of the world of course”. Baldwin’s decolonial love materializes into a praxis of unveiling rather than obliteration...As an act of decolonial love, Baldwin attempts to unveil the creative articulations [...] that modern thought structures have concealed. This process of unveiling catalyses what Baldwin describes as a universal salvation within a modern/colonial nation-state, yet beyond its imaginary. (Drexler-Dreis, 2015, pp. 255-256)

This is an important stance as the organising principle for the pedagogical openings that this chapter seeks to advance and explore, because at the heart of the politics of “unveiling” what is useful and already here (rather than *only* seeking a politics that ‘obliterates’ what does not work) is a concern around building regenerative decolonial cultures. Remembering the ethical through line of this study, a regenerative decolonial ethic requires a departure from *only* mobilising in compulsively critical and deconstructive discourses that can contradict themselves by not departing from the dualistic logics that underpin the constructs embedded in a paradigm of war (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p.142; see also Braidotti, 2011 and De Sousa

¹⁵⁸ The full quote from Le Grange’s text that opens up this dimension of Ubuntu reads as follows: “In other words, ubuntu involves ‘coming into presence’ (Biesta, 2006, p. 9) of self in a changing social and biophysical world. The sense of wholeness and interconnectedness of self with the social and natural by implication means that caring for others also involves a duty to care for nature. Ubuntu, therefore, is not by definition speciesist as Enslin (2004, p. 25) suggests, but is rather an ecosophy that connects Guattari’s (2001) three ecologies; self, social and nature-self, the social and nature are inextricably bound up with one another. Cultivating ubuntu, by definition, therefore involves healing of self, the social and nature.” (Le Grange, 2012, p. 334)

De Sousa Santos, 2014). This can be a form of ontological slippage. What such perspectives risk is the failure to name and live into *alternative possibilities* that are not enmeshed in the “paradigm of war” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p.142). As a way of boosting the power and possibilities of regenerative research, this study hopes to proliferate the study with as many pedagogical openings as possible that can enrich our imaginations around the transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis already underway in these contemporary times. Mastery within this perspective requires that we understand what we must about a “paradigm of war”, whilst creatively mobilising experiments that are clearly about acknowledging, fostering and rehearsing enabling conditions towards a “paradigm of peace”, “humanness” and “pluriversality” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p142; Dlala, 2017, p. 52). Even though this study has been honest about taking Change Drivers and their intergenerational counterparts seriously, the intention here is not to simply “confirm” all that has been offered within these pages with “without necessarily offering a challenge” (Ndebele, 1984, p. 41; Gqola, 2013). Instead it desires to surface the possibilities that serve as useful pointers for pedagogical praxis, whilst also naming important beacons or ‘traffic cones’ to navigate around. The erotic knowledge that has been shared in the study needs to be challenged in its ability to demonstrate a kind of praxiological stretching around the ethics and methodological considerations it seeks to advance. The word ‘stretching’ is used here deliberately to denote aspects of praxis that have an appreciation within every impasse of the contradictions to be straddled and the hope for a greater synthesis.

It is important to emphasise that within the ethic of regenerativity we are not creating something new here, but rather acknowledging the possibilities of what is already underway. More is said on how this relates to the praxis of decolonial love:

When we see decolonial love already actualised in tradition, when we recognise the already existent and long-standing revolution emerging from decolonial love, redemption becomes something that we need to unveil and enter into, not always necessarily something to be created anew. The “creation” for Baldwin involves the act of revelation. (Drexler-Dreis, 2015, pp.260)

There is something reassuring and reconciliatory about such a perspective; it gives us a chance to loosen the grip around our precarity and our uncertainty in order for us to apprehend and build on what has already been initiated. The work thus becomes about faithfully following and supporting the burgeoning possibilities, rather than inadvertently performing the burden of ‘reinventing the wheel’ or posturing in ‘certain’ ways as educators.

In this chapter, we look closely at what has been offered by Change Drivers and those that have gone before them in ways that appreciate what is ‘revelatory’ about their insights and the methodologies and ethics that have produced them. We will trace converging nexus points in these rising cultures and the historical accompaniments that resonate with them. Transgression, as demonstrated both in the choices around what movements are necessary to make, and the methodologies that accompany them, reveals many experimental possibilities that this last chapter seeks to unveil. I mean to do this in an open way that does not pretend to be a normative definitive guide. Anchored by the words of the decolonial futures collective “decolonization is not an event nor is it a formula; it is a complex, multi-faceted, life-long and life-wide practice that offers no assurances” (decoloniality.net.), this chapter is not about framing transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis in closed ways. Nor is it about feigning the guarantee or certainty around the ways of moving chronicled within it. Instead, the work that is emerging is conceptualised in this way:

...they open the possibility of pluralizing not only what we know, but also how we know and who we are, so that we might learn to know and be otherwise. But this is merely a possibility, not a guarantee. (decoloniality.net)

Pedagogical responses that can straddle this kind of learning entail a sense of reflection, agility and expansion whilst moving forward – a stance that may be uncertain but still insists on taking its place. This stance insists on building a language for itself going forward in community with others, because only through this grappling can we find our way forward. This perspective appreciates that struggles find their diction while they are on the move. It is an assembled articulation that includes and acknowledges new and concealed languages and ways of being, *while the old ways are still pervasive*. This is an important point to make, for much of the praxis highlighted within this study requires that we grapple with what it means to invite new paradigms into existing recalcitrant old ones (Kulundu, Vallabh and James, 2017). This is especially important to consider when we acknowledge that (positive and negative) feedback mechanisms that often underpin the ways of being in a paradigm of war are mis-matched with ones that could affirm our ways of being within a paradigm of peace (Kulundu et al., 2017). We are thus often subject to an echo chamber of old muscle memory and aspirations whilst we grapple our way forward with the feeling of little championing us or symbolically expecting our arrivals in the way that Napiadi was so generously received. Building rigour and legitimacy within new experimental practices thus becomes a project that requires that we learn to hear ourselves much much louder as we try and navigate our way forward. We must call out our movements for all to hear. Purposefully and ingeniously

signaling what we are learning and have reason to value thus becomes something that we need to commit to over and over again within a pervasive culture that does not always affirm our efforts as worthy. I will surface what has been revelatory within this study by weaving capsules of rising cultures of Change Drivers together with the accompaniments that resonate with them across times. These capsules signal what is pedagogically, methodologically and ethically revelatory in these works including the experimental encounters that emerged through this study. The pedagogical, methodological and ethical rising cultures are framed through an appreciative and affirmative approach to the initiations in learning that are underway and deemed necessary in traversing the present in the service of a future worthy of our longing (Rushdie, 1999).

In conceptualising how to do the chronicling necessary for this last chapter, the concept of writing a litany of sorts became relevant. The idea of the litany is inspired by Audre Lorde's celebrated poem "a litany for survival" that is added into Appendix 8 on the online platform that accompanies this thesis¹⁵⁹. What is inspiring about this poem is its insistence on "seeking a now that can breed futures" (Lorde, 1997, p. 255). This resonated strongly with the work that this study as a whole and this last chapter in particular seeks to fulfil. The poem traces contradictory impasses experienced by the speaker in search of peace. After chronicling the different movements the speaker has made across generations, and the meeting of fear at each turn, it ends by affirming that "it is better to speak remembering we were never, meant to survive" (Lorde, 1997, p. 255). The galvanising impulse of this last chapter resonates with this sentiment and wonders what is possible if we shift the meaning slightly to affirm the need for *our voices* as well as *our praxis* by insisting that: it is better that we keep *moving* knowing that we were never meant to survive. It is the movements that we have insisted on making "in spite of the times" that this chapter hopes to chronicle (Braidotti, 2011, p. 295).

Litanies have been described as a "poetic device that catalogues a series"¹⁶⁰ (poetry foundation.org). It is not so much the form of poetry I wish to emulate (I know my limitations there), but rather the sense of cataloguing a series of thoughts that "includes repetitious phrases or movements, sometimes mimicking call-and-response" that I find particularly relevant (poetry foundation.org). I thought that this might help me be succinct in

¹⁵⁹ Access to all appendices are available via email: Please email Injairu@sheddingskins.co.za for access.

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms/litany>

the synthesis required in this last chapter, whilst also allowing me the space to work through a great series of gestures that have emerged as important in this work. The aspect of call and response that is alluded to in this quote additionally lends itself well to the intergenerational voices, past, present and those beckoning from the future in conversation with each other. Litanies are also described as prayers or private devotions or petitions that can be said or sung individually or as part of a congregation (catholic prayers.com).¹⁶¹ This gives the added dimension of a litany being a form associated with prayer or remembrance, which can render the thoughts gathered there as a meditation of sorts, rather than a normative manual to be followed. These thoughts are additionally inspired by the preface of De Sousa Santos' book *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide* (which I understand has been inspired by decades of work alongside the World Social Forum and other collaborations) that outlines a very rigorous and robust manifesto of sorts of the practices espoused by those he has collaborated with. In my interaction with the generative resource that is the decolonial futures website I noticed how they also collate the practices that the work they are doing together calls into being. In the same vein, this last chapter seeks to weave together the practices that revealed themselves as necessary within this study in a way that cumulatively surfaces a 'kaleidoscope' of praxis that can inform transgressive decolonial pedagogies. I hope to demonstrate a litany of a different kind, a litany that can creatively share the depth of the work emerging with a reverence and an agility that can cut across and surface the idiosyncratic impasses that diverse humans face when doing this work. This litany additionally seeks to generously surface the contradictions that we are starting to see past, and the different voices across time that continue to challenge us to regenerate our visions by acknowledging the tensions we need to integrate and transcend.

A note for clarity: within this litany I have stretched the contributions of each Change Driver beyond what was surfaced through their offerings and their songs. I have also included some of the details that emerged from the process as a whole including their responses to their own offerings, the songs written for them and their own articulations of how they have kept shifting where relevant. I have done this because in many instances their responses were indicative of how they have continued to move in the present, extending the praxis that was underway for them two years ago. In this way, the litany remains faithful to a praxis that is still underway.

¹⁶¹ (<https://www.ourcatholicprayers.com/litanies.html>).

Lastly, the title of this chapter stresses a focus on “nexus points” towards a paradigm of peace. This language draws on intersectional discourse, broadly defined below in terms of its relevance to the structure of the litany:

An intersectional disposition requires actively orientating ourselves, and expressly developing interpretive inclinations, modes of being, and political commitments in ways that disrupt, trouble, and fundamentally depart from mainstream logics, ontological habits, and perceptual practices. Intersectionality’s both /and orientation encourages developing and honing the capacity to exercise ruptures with hegemony and embark on (coalitional) journeys toward each other’s worlds/selves/histories/meanings and imaginaries. At the same time, we must attend to significant structural disparities within and between groups and consider the impact (and import) of our different positionings in multiple and relational systems of power. (May, 2017, p. 227)

This quote harmonises the varying theoretical strains that have built this study, whilst providing useful parameters for its chosen reconciliation. It holds within it an understanding of the different praxis or rites chosen on the move as part of an emancipatory discourse. The specific attention given to gestures that depart from mainstream logic, as well as the intention to journey towards each other and with each other whilst acknowledging significant structural disparities, is a useful descriptor for the way in which the litany travels. It seeks to collate significant gestures that have converged throughout this study and present them concurrently in conversation with each other, whilst also being grounded enough to sensitise us to the structural disparities that are so prevalent in our society. In addition to this, “productive ambiguities” are also engaged with as a part of this litany, in ways that account for a “cacophony” of voices that “do not necessarily adhere to harmonious or singular narratives” (May, 2015, p. 244). The litany embraces the movements that people are choosing to make and the methodological approaches they use, whilst also commenting on the ethical considerations that accompany this work. It felt too instrumental to try and separate these different elements from each other, because they often demonstrate themselves in enmeshed ways, which I guess is the reason why the word ‘praxis’ exists in the first place – because it signals and demonstrates the assembly of ethically grounded thinking in practice. The result is an undulating chronicle of what transgressive decolonial pedagogical practice in motion has entailed. My litany strategically indents its contents at many points; this is done in order to symbolically surface the range of voices that speak it out and show how they respond to each other and add to the meaning-making in affirmative albeit varying ways. These voices

are helping each other think about what is needed. In this way the litany symbolically accompanies itself through various voices that rise to meet each other.

7.2 A Litany for Transgressive Decolonial Pedagogical Praxis: Rising Cultures in Motion

1...Africa has to mean a present and future home,
for those who strive for a freedom
linked to the freedom of those like – and unlike – us.¹⁶²

Its rich diversity blesses us with vital threads,
That expand our visions for interconnectedness,
solidarity, survival and thriving.

We know that “where there is no vision the people perish”.¹⁶³
The potential of our unity never evades us,
for we know too well the vulnerability and precarity
that our fragmentation has and continues to create.

We remember those who sought to create a different destiny for African futures.
We appreciate the bridges that were built so we could walk over them.

We are beginning to see the work it took
To try seed a new paradigm into a recalcitrant old one

We acknowledge tensions, impasses, and compromises they faced.
We bear witness to the brave beginnings that were carved out by them.
We bear witness to the scars accumulated over time.

We know that something is being asked of us now as it was for them.
We feel the ancient urgency of this journey.

We appreciate the life worlds of our communities and ancestry.
And we go into forays of deep excavation
To understand where and what we have come from.

Our reflections are weighted collectively.

¹⁶² Gqola, 2017, pp. 197, 199, paraphrasing Robert Sobukwe.

¹⁶³ Proverbs 29: 18 King James Bible

We accompany each other on our journeys,
And are constantly curious about
and present to what lies around the corner of our explorations.

We acknowledge the interlinked cycles
of regenerative indigenous strategies, survival,
intergenerational traction, denial, assimilation,
stasis, processing and resurgence
that we have faced over time.

And so we psychically metabolise
what is unprocessed in between generations
using our emotional landscapes and imaginations as a guide.

We face the unanswered questions forged through
patient intergenerational struggles.

In this way we remain faithful

To those who have come before.

Ours is a way of being committed to
The long game of decolonial struggle.

We transcend the work that the lineages
That have come before us have built

In order to arrive more fully in the present.

2...We are not too late

Nor are we not yet ready

We are here

And what we are creating

Is already underway

Nkululeko!

Aaah ndiyazoyika endina mandla ako!¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ isiXhosa for “Freedom Aaah I am scared of what I am capable of! /I’m scared of what I have the power to do.”

3...Our theories around who we are

And our recreation of ourselves is strengthened

By acknowledging the generational strengths

That have produced and resourced us.

We affirm the spiritual and moral outlooks

That have and continue to resource our movements

Especially when it has seemed against all odds.

We let the 'rational' and 'non-rational'

elements of our experience

make an impact on us.¹⁶⁵

Spirituality in this sense does not allow us to bypass

or diminish our sense of responsibility.

But rather affirms a commitment to playing a critical part in our own freedom.

This is the work of faith.

We are weary of the gaze of theory

That makes us subjects of analysis.

And we are learning

that many epistemological frames (ways of knowing)

Do not adequately capture the sufferings of black people.

We redefine African ontologies (ways of being)

In accessible languages of our own making.

We do not theorise ourselves away

From who we have always been.

Neither do we imitate the struggles

of those that have gone before us.

We reveal the embodied theories

That affirm our movements

And name them in ways

That aid us to become more like ourselves.

¹⁶⁵ Biko, 2009, p. 48

We unravel the substrate,
The ethical and moral foundations
of any ontology (way of being) presented to us.

We review the logics
that sit behind our choices.

In order to imaginatively perceive the possible futures
That sit behind our choices

We wilfully turn our backs
On old formulas and their roots.

We challenge any bigotry and exclusion
That are not an expression of love.

We disinvest from visions of emancipation
that make no room for the joy and freedom
of some members of society.

We wilfully veer off the track
Of our learnt privileged prerogatives,
Challenging aspirations of upward mobility
that rely on the operationalisation
Of an oppressive system
That frustrate the possibilities of many others.

4... We never stop asking questions
about who we think we need to be
in order to foster emancipatory futures.
Especially in the light of world imperialism
And mutating neo-liberal aspirations
That co-opt our history and struggles
And inculcate us as consumers
Devoid of an emancipatory outlook.

We hold these aspirations to the light
asking them what they serve,
and if they will help us move

towards a future worthy of our longing.

5... We take seriously the role of the rural
in the vision of social emancipation that we advance

For our ethics of regeneration
are inspired by a reverence

For our grandmother's relationship with the land.

We understand that this relationship
produces praxis-based ethical leanings
and rich metaphors for what it means
to grow, sustain and regenerate life
in collaboration with the earth.

We are vigilant when our praxis
willfully departs from these logics.

6... We present ourselves in ways that we choose.

We do not need to contest or debate our worthiness
And divest from giving away energy
by consistently having to explain ourselves,
or performing our frustrations and pain.

We do not let the labels defined by others
Reflect how we see ourselves.

We are simply interested
In who we are becoming.

We are not 'rebels'.

We move beyond performances
that only stress what it is that we are resisting

In order to generate more creative spaces
In which the possibilities of who we are can thrive.

We are accepting yet questioning
We are expressive and yet mindful
Beyond an ethic of overt sensitivity around

What is allowed and not allowed.

We know that we are home
We move towards learning and actualising
what we have reason to value
Whilst never losing sight of
Where we learnt these values from
And what they actually serve.

We redefine ourselves according to
What is missing and what is still needed.

We become the bridges
Towards a future that is “not yet”.¹⁶⁶
We call in grace to assist us with this.

We curate our cultural evolution
By facing the parts of our history
That are valuable,
That are missing,
That we do not understand,
That are problematic and trouble us.

7...Our place is one that knows
What it means navigate
Both inside and outside of the law
And the way that the law never forgets
And is unforgiving
of the trap of poverty and survival
that many are embroiled in
We are that walking medicine forged in the fire
That know how to touch and see all worlds
We know how to see both sides of things
Even if they do not see us.

¹⁶⁶ De Sousa Santos, 2014

8... We challenge ourselves to recognise the patterns
that have established themselves over time,

And how they persist in the present.

Hierarchical and oppressive

Ways of being

Echo throughout history,

Including the precolonial, colonial

And neo-liberal iterations.

Our work dares to undo all exploitations.

We understand how complicit we are

In the recurring aspects

Of coloniality and neo-liberal trappings.

Acknowledging how we often inherit

a vision of the world that is given to us by others.¹⁶⁷

We are attentive to the auto-pilot

In our muscle memory

That continues to imprint

colonial ways of being into our actions.

We know that the myth

that any of us is separate from the whole

is a carefully administered illusion.

Some truths and questions may lie within us

But all answers lie between us.

Relationality is the greatest strength

Of every counter hegemonic response.

9... We arrive wide awake

into the conversations of our times

Bearing witness even when apathy has settled in

Or the soporific effects of isolationism and indifference.

¹⁶⁷ Kaplan and Davidhoff, 2014, p. 10

We do this whilst simultaneously loosening our grip
Of the need to be steadfastly certain
And instead understand that grappling
with our uncertainty is honest and useful.
We are learning to speak more clearly
Even about what is ambiguous to us
Knowing that this facilitates
An intuitive figuring out with others.
We seek to advance the potential
Of productive ambiguities together.

We challenge ourselves to stretch beyond
the logics held contemporarily
And ask ourselves what other ways of being
We can invite into the present.

10... We honour the measured intelligence
and historical memory that comes with our anger.
We are beginning to understand that
Learning the burden of hate
is an important step
In understanding what the our imagination
of a decolonial love can offer us.
We ask ourselves critical questions
about what it means to fight with the sword of love.
And what rigour we can produce through such a praxis.
We ask ourselves what it means in praxis
To appreciate that only love heals
And question the inherited imaginations
That refute that it can serve to bring us home.

Our frustrations and anger grow us
in ways that can give way
to warm expressions of hope,

Knowing that even though there are many
Intimate and collective moments
Of pain that we experience
 Somehow in another time
 And in another place
 We also grow to feel less despondent
Because things do change
 And because things do take time
For everything around us is evolving
 Even if sometimes it looks
 Like they stay the same.

We let nature and time take its course.
 We train our eyes and hearts
 to perceive what is moving
And forgo what has calcified.
 We appreciate our vulnerability and our power
Our grieving and our indistinguishable need for joy
 Our exhaustion teaches us
 how to better move with ourselves
We run with patience
 And appreciate how we are moving
 Even when we still feel stuck.

We feel that we can afford to be less aggressive
about what we believe and what we know
 Because people grow
 In different and concurrent spurts
 And all must be attended to.
We do not desire to be loud and aggressive
 And choose instead to be unflinching and persistent
 In our assertions for a different future.
Because there are more and more of us
showing up everyday

We are learning to present together
Where it matters
And we are learning to recognise each other
And celebrate what our co-conspiration and co-inspiration brings.

11... We transgress the senseless self-sacrifice or martyrdom
That some social justice struggles impose on us.
We transgress the sacrificing of one's own safety
In order to bolster a larger vision of freedom with others.
We are not disposable bodies to be maligned.
We do not allow the trivialisation of our potential death
And instead turn towards championing
and regenerating life as our core strategy,

We exercise caution
and a self-care that does not bypass
our concrete realities
We do not haphazardly step into situations
That we cannot come back from.
We are not in a hurry
We need to determine our own pace
And reclaim the clocks to our own times.¹⁶⁸
We create the boundaries we need to do the work,
Even as we purposely push the boundaries.
We do not give ourselves away,
And move steadily beyond aspirations that ask us
To compromise our souls.

12... Again we choose to accept the concrete reality
of the contexts that we are in
And do not dissolve into the neo-liberal promises
that have failed to manifest the world over

¹⁶⁸ Akomolafe, 2017, p. 183

We are aware of the great intensities
Experienced at the fringes amongst those
Left outside “the house that modernity built”.¹⁶⁹

We guard against the abstractions of black pain
and are protective of those who bear the brunt
of the historical legacies of racism and colonialism.

Understanding that if our work
does not make sense to the poor
Then we are not driving change.

For re-imagining socio-economic reform
has to be a part of the conversation.

Our praxis is conscious that it does not reproduce
the bifurcated world coloniality prescribes.

We seek to mobilise around struggles
that go beyond and are related to
the ones we are embroiled in.

14...We lead ourselves out and through
the symptoms of our times.

Because history is created from
the circumstances that one is in.

We emerge to create more examples of that which we seek
In the service of those that will come after us.

We galvanise momentum over time to do
that which we have been taught is impossible.

We articulate what continues to call us
into a viable praxis in small,
consistent and connected ways.

15...We know that no perfect example exists.
Flash points in history show us the results of
Emancipatory efforts that were built on colonial logics

¹⁶⁹ Decoloniality.net “The house that modernity built”

Whilst also acknowledging the fervour
of life-long struggles dedicated to redefine
the colonial matrix of power.

We recognise these struggles
as both heroic and incomplete.

We continue to rewire life-giving possibilities
For man's relationship with society
Knowing that this conundrum has been at the heart of
Generations of emancipatory movements across time.

We do not shy away from embracing
the individual choices and surrender
needed to create a more just society for all.

We do this even whilst we question whether justice can ever be realised.

We dare not make any excuses for any violence
caused as a part of this process,

Recognising harm to an individual,
or harm to a community
as interrelated dynamics that compromise
the social fabric as a whole.

None can override the other

And our attentions need to recognise the intricacies of both.

We acknowledge who is present right now
Despite historical attempts
To invisibilise and violently oppress
Fellow community members.

We accede to the challenge of what it means
to embrace the individual sacrifice entailed
in creating a more just society for all,
Without the shadow of coercive measures.

We do all of this whilst never losing sight of
how liberal notions of individualism

Confuse us by inculcating
A culture driven by
Individual gain and consumerism.

 This helps us discern
 Who is left out of these promises
 And who benefits from their demarcations.

16...We endeavour to make privilege strange
And also make strange forms of oppression
that are taken for granted

 By asking what the boundaries
 that have been created ultimately serve.

We do not confuse exploitation or exploiters
with the colour of men's skins

 We do not want any exploitation,
 Not even by black people.¹⁷⁰

We outrun and problematise miseducation and poverty
as the inevitable legacy that many inherit.

 Turning these conceptions into other formulations
 For what it means to live a life of dignity.

17...Our imaginations are not reduced
to the possibilities that only the state can engender.

 For we know it can only truly perform
 The functions ascribed to its historical inception
 And it was never meant to really care and deliver services for us all.

It instead was a channel for many enterprises
Far removed from the majority of society.

 Even in knowing this, we still support
 Whatever brings positive contributions to our communities
 with agility and speed.

¹⁷⁰ Cabral in Rabaka, 2010, p. 236

We occupy many key sites of power simultaneously,
That positively subvert and leverage our response – ability in our spaces
And prioritise sharing useful information
To those intentionally left out of the know.

Our allegiance is not to government mandates or people.
We know the power of occupying spaces
In neutral ways beyond clear factional interests.
We challenge ourselves beyond the tribal fragments
of party positional politics
To have a larger conversation
That includes welfare of the earth and all sentient beings.

We acknowledge leaders that are trying to deal with corruption,
And those that believe in people and service delivery.
We recognise the parts that are trying to get there slowly,
The parts that are convoluted with self-interest
And the parts that embrace us enough
To help us try and influence policy in meaningful ways.

Our allegiance is to dignified positive change in society.
We strategically manoeuvre toxic local level politics.
We perceive what hangs in the balance.
We are responsive and flexible enough
To work with what is working,
And make use of any opportunities available, however small
At the same time creating alternative responses
that problematise and surpass
What does not work within these systems.

18... We know that there is no one to wait for
That can do this work for us.
So we step in and put our hands up.
Beyond a context that emphasises a constant deficit of resources.

We exercise a pedagogy of resourcefulness,
Self-reliance and self-help
That eludes co-option.

We move past dependency, endorsement,
bureaucratic measures and institutional validation
From civil society, government and academic institutions
As the only measure of our worthiness.

We redefine who is an 'expert' in ways that acknowledge
The experience and urgency
Of those invested in their own communities.

We do this even whilst we are cognisant
of those isolated enclaves of indifference
Constructed outside of the value of community.

We encourage each other to engage at many levels
Seeing the intersections and crossroads between
Different poles in polarised societies as pivotal.

19...We braid and weave networks,
collaborations and resources as we move

Asserting that what we have
and share collectively
Can also create viable futures.

Our ethics require us to meet and strategise in ways that
Help us nourish ourselves and our families
As much as those that we are meant to serve.

The health of the community
And the sustenance of our families are related.
And we manoeuvre in ways that honour
A healthy movement of resources
That foster alternative social and economic resources
Beyond the mainstream modes.

We create viable counter hegemonic cultures
And espouse experimental pedagogies
Of sustenance and solidarity amongst each other

By actively investing in
And circulating what we all bring.

20... Ours are movements forged out of necessity
We create rudimentary pathways that bring life to
What might yet be unnamed but burgeoning.
Sometimes we move very quickly
so we cannot be found and co-opted.
We commit to finding new coordinates
as part of our growing learning.

21... We know it has become too easy
To misunderstand each other.
We know that we often pull each other down.
Siyacinezelana,¹⁷¹ siyajikelana.¹⁷²

So we develop methodologies
That help us better listen
to ourselves and each other.

We are dedicated to not only what we put into the world
We also desire to be a part of platforms that reflect back to us
How our work is received in the eyes of other co-conspirators.
This helps us learn to see more of ourselves in motion
It also helps us to craft our offerings
With greater dexterity.

We acknowledge that we can easily get stuck in our thinking
So we encourage each other to keep witnessing
And be curious about our stagnation,
And the hand brakes we pull up
In conversation with each other.

¹⁷¹ isiXhosa for “We pull each other down”

¹⁷² isi Xhosa for “We betray each other”

We are aware we often keep recreating
The same responses through our actions.

We have so much to outgrow
Including outgrowing violence as a response,
And outgrowing our judgements about each other.
That have become commonplace.

We remain convinced that our consistent work
Will ensure that this conditioning subsides.
This is only a matter of time.

22... We are weary of competing in our oppressions
Even within decolonial movements

We do not define this in narrow closed ways
That perform a nationalism of sorts
We are starting to understand the broader picture
beyond our own versions of hell
We lift our gaze
and endeavour to transcend ourselves
In order to perceive
How we are mutually albeit differently constructed
By the colonial matrix of power.

We are patient enough to name the many layers
that underpin the experience of oppression.

We endeavour to transcend ourselves
Beyond our particular and relevant individual concerns.
We welcome a greater chorus of voices
Amongst the living
and the living dead.

23... We reach for synthesis
As we learn to cross over boundaries
Our perceptions are learning
to go beyond binaries and duality.

This is hard and worthy work
That requires patience and care
And the courage to stay within one's unsettlement.
We question our comfortableness
as an important part of the journey.
We commit to keeping ourselves moving outwards
Even whilst we work in deep introspective ways.
Broken people cannot heal broken communities,
So we keep a regenerative balance
Between our own learnings
And the offerings that we can make.

We reinvest our learnings into the world through praxis.
We are learning to teach what is longed for.
We create homes for that which wants to arrive.

24... We leave a space of wonder open
To perceive those that are different to us
We celebrate the need for much greater diversity
Even within that which we already call diverse
And create radically open spaces
That help us learn and practise
How to be together but not the same.

25... We reclaim alternative and creative resources of knowledge
That are a present and yet unacknowledged part of history
We not only endeavour to use these resources
We also espouse a generative ethic
That seeks to create more of what they offer
As part of our praxis.
We seek to repopulate cultural resources
With artefacts that speak clearly about who and where we are
In this moment.

26... We celebrate cosmological life worlds and emancipatory visions
That languages alternative to English can produce.

We know that our inculcation
Often makes what we can perceive there
Subject to an analysis that is logged through
An English based rational life world.

We are learning that this is only a fraction

Of the knowledge that exists out there

And dutifully provincialise our learnt responses
To create space for other modes of meaning-making
To assert their ways of seeing
And challenge what we have come to know as real.

We build and restore the potency of many languages as we move

Including languages that build emotional landscapes

And those that are incisive in other ways.

We challenge rote anaemic terminology
And shake free
Assumptions that could hold us ransom.

Our articulations in praxis

are not formulated to diminish

The truths of others.

We are learning that we can and should
Acknowledge the struggles that our counterparts face

Whilst also holding them accountable

For how they choose to language

Struggles that affect us all.

We cannot centre ourselves

By using inaccessible languages

We seek to generate discourses

That are relevant to us all.

We speak in ways that appreciate

that we all want to hear what is happening.
We endeavour to free language in our praxis
We espouse a politics that tries to speak clearly.
We desire to communicate in ways
that can appeal to our souls,
Our minds and hearts – all at once.

27... Our movements inspire us to experiment and try new things.
We step up to what life throws at us in motion.
We cherish the opportunity to move
To go elsewhere
Other than our immediate contexts
So we can see what else is possible
What we did not even know we could invite.
Movement allows us to perceive
What is enduring and burgeoning in us

28...We have the grace to endure
Even that which mocks us
Towards a future worthy of our longing.
We are used to being
on the edge of public discourse
Where we are silenced or berated
Or treated like traitors
Of a fully-fledged nationalistic discourse
That threatens to destabilise us.
We acknowledge the pitfalls of nationalism
As the foundations from which colonialism was conceived.
We recognise that in the perceived absence
Of viable alternative choices
Even that which potentially threatens the future
Can look appealing
Because the urgency of burdens
Sustained over generations

Is not something we should
Simply accommodate in our lives.
Despite this, we disentangle what we are learning
From the cacophony of voices
That often disrupt our meaning-making.
By telling us that nothing but violence is viable.
We understand that a praxis of decolonial love
May not be acknowledged as useful in the over culture
It can even be derided as a weakness
Even though we are starting to perceive
The strength of what we can achieve.

29... We transgress overt exercises in “group think”
That simply ask us to toe-the-line or hold the mandate.
We have a healthy scepticism
That moves beyond logical malaise
We constantly remind each other
To keep the whole in focus.
And can agree to pause and revisit our conversations
In order to better perceive the impasses we face

We endeavour to meet each other at the edge of
Our disparate and common struggles.
By guarding ourselves from receding into
Conversations centred around a perceived ‘other’.
We do this whilst still having the sensibilities
to retrieve from the margins
Exiled possibilities of joy for all.
We nourish and give life to affirmations of joy
Remembering that in actuality
The human spirit is limitless
And therefore a powerful project
Of becoming in motion.

30... We bring up all the sensibilities that are proscribed.

We welcome all unheard and heard assertions

That we possess in exile

Looking to notice those often omitted

In our everyday understandings

Of who counts in the struggle.

We embrace the movements towards pluriversal futures

By taking on the responsibility to put ourselves

In spaces where we have to learn

To meaningfully co-exist with others.

We acknowledge how fragile we have become

And how fragility based on our privileges

Cannot protect us from the great work that is underway.

Baptising ourselves in a bigger world

By seeking out what we were taught never to see

Is an inevitable part of what is to come

And so we might as well get started with this unfurling

Never losing sight of the irony

That some of us can begin to do so by choice.

31... Our pedagogies embrace that knowing and learning

Will happen at different times for different people

We know that this journey cannot be automated.

We pay attention to what is happening concurrently

Albeit at different speeds

For a great diversity of experiences are all intuitively en route.

We are learning to perceive the different rites of passage for each person

And the connections between us facilitate

A greater understanding of who we are as a whole.

Again, our knowledge of ourselves evolves over time.

And so we can be forgiving of ourselves

As we witness our own personal evolutions

We are also generous enough to

Give the same space to others
Even as we hold the tensions around
What we perceive as urgent.

We dare not judge the learning
That is in process right now,
For this will only be revealed in retrospect.

Our collective gatherings give us the opportunity
To re-encounter ourselves.

We cannot do this alone,
For we would only confirm our own biases.

32... We invest in being present for each other
And celebrate everyone's bold moves
Because only a work of art can see another work of art.¹⁷³
We realise that only by sharing our gifts
Can we create more of this collectively
As viable trajectories for the world.

We know that the capitalist system
Teaches us the opposite:
That we should compete.
We know that this limits our collective potential.

We see the interface between our responsibility
and our fragility as essential parts of this work.
We uphold methodologies
That challenge us to be vulnerable
Enough to co-create with others in meaningful ways.

33... Our gestures are generous
Even though they are often provocative.
They primarily seek to serve as invitations
That can draw in those who are curious and want to try.

¹⁷³ Okri, 2011, p. 24

We seek to disseminate interest
And create friendships.

34...One of the strongest incentives for what we do
Is to do what we can to support
And encourage coming generations
To be who they are supposed to be in the world.

We understand that in order to do this
We need to start
becoming worthy ancestors
ourselves.

We take seriously what is to become of the millions of young minds
that are still inculcated by the colonial matrix..

We seek to breathe new life
Into their ways of seeing and being.

We want to clear the space for their arrivals
Because the future is a scary place
Without the gifts of the young.

We teach them that they can reach for
What they have been taught is not for them.

We build and stretch what currently exists.
To grow the parameters from which
New possibilities can grow.

We do not believe
In the kind of education
That alienates people
From an emancipatory vision for society.

We are reclaiming and releasing
What education means,
We are making education fashionable
We are trying to get the basics right in our contexts
So we can better envisage and inspire the futures we desire.
We stress the importance of the process

As well as the content in the teaching
That we expose ourselves and others to
In informal, ingenious,
Embodied and imaginative ways.

We reseed knowledge in the young
As our primary regenerative strategy.
For they are the future bridges
For regenerative renewal.

We elevate the power and possibility of teaching
As an important core in an emancipatory outlook,
Even whilst questioning
And living into
What this practice means,
If it is to create a future
That is distinct from our past.

35...Leadership is a great exercise in integrity.

We understand that we need to be internally coherent
And inculcate the values
A decolonial vision seeks.

We have to live up to these in action
And be vulnerable to what this asks of us
Or its promises have no way of being real.

We can only move as far as
Our maturity in this regard can take us
No matter how well defined the goal may be,

Collectively building the ethical,
Ontological (way of being)
And vocational muscle
To do the work together
Is a great matter of concern

Ours is a call for integrity that asks
That the ends that we seek

Truly echo the spirit
And means through which we get there.
We are challenged to consistently think about
The best way to respond to the myriad challenges
That occur everyday
Knowing that leadership means
Communicating and actualising
What is of the highest good.

Our leadership requires that we
Unlearn entrenched individualism
And ask important questions
About what it means to move together.
We hold ourselves to this mark
And do not take lightly
what we need to unlearn and forego
Even as we release our sacred clowns
To help us laugh heartily along the way.
For this too is important medicine.

We realise that giving and sharing of power
Is an essential part of how we work.
And each person is challenged to lead in this way
Whilst they also take their rightful place
In contributing that which
Might not be what they specifically want to contribute
But rather is what is needed in that time¹⁷⁴
We challenge ourselves to better see ourselves
Knowing that there is nothing
That we can do, be, make or create
Without each other.
We insist that wonderful things can happen

¹⁷⁴ decoloniality.net

When we collaborate.

36... We do not expect harmonised perfection
of our transgressive efforts.

We know that being uncertain

Is often reviled as not being practical enough

We invite a messy process

That dares to try something

However inadequate

Only to sharpen its potential

In growing experiments.

We know that there are always

Many places to start

Towards the continual

Becoming of ourselves.

We offer imperfect methodologies

That (re)claim and (re)lease our creativity

Through our own rites.

We work through methodologies

And have conversations

About what they enable

And what they leave in exile

Or what is lost in translation.

We forego the performative requirements

Of methodologies

And use whatever is offered

To try and get closer

To what our erotic sensibilities intuit as important.

Our methodologies help us reach into affective sensibilities
that we have not lived into as yet.¹⁷⁵

We allow ourselves to be open to these experiences

And are curious about what we may find.

¹⁷⁵ Braidotti, 2012

This litany of 36 refrains of praxis shows us the inroads that have been made that live into the possibilities for transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis in contemporary South Africa and the world. They trace a persistent journey that has been waged continentally over time as well as growing shoots of praxis that are finding their way in conversation with each other. I have always been frustrated with the way in which we often seem to be forced to start from the beginning when we gather. Often within our circles we spend so much time finding our bearings again and marking the terrain that we are currently on that we seldom go further than an initial mapping of our praxis. The refrains of this litany serve as potent reminders of praxis already underway that can help us zoom into the particularities and challenges that ought to be explored further. The litany does not gain its power from trying to be definitive. It rather serves as a tool for mapping the particular experiences that are surfacing as symptomatic. It hopes to apprehend both the thematic concerns that it magnifies, as well as the parameters in tension that need to be straddled in praxis. In appreciating what it offers, we can design experimental spaces with others that can help us delve deeper into particular symptomatic issues. This way of working gains its strength from understanding that what we are trying to create together is a *habit* that can only gain traction and muscle over time through patient and steadfast learning environments that can be both sporadic and consistent. Each refrain seeks to stretch the praxis embedded in it towards a gesture of synthesis that appreciates the different elements of the phenomena that need to be integrated. They represent loosely demarcated spaces from which a conversation about praxis that is already underway can be further interrogated and explored. They serve as places where we can continue to grapple with what is showing up contemporarily, whilst still apprehending the historical lessons that still accompany us in the present.

An ethic of regeneration is central to the way that the praxis in this litany seeks to mobilise itself, giving us the opportunity to further stretch and refine what it is that we have collectively articulated here, whilst also looking out to name the parameters for what might not be named in it as it stands. I see this litany as a way in which we can check in on ourselves in motion, in order to discern aspects of praxis that are showing up through the waves of encounters that intersect with our daily lives. We all know too well what it feels like to be swept up by incidences, occurrences and events that are emblematic of the intersecting concerns of our times, and the feeling that we have to decide what our praxis needs to be in response to this. The litany is comprised of countless experiences that have been metabolised

over time amongst those who it journeyed with. Within each offering, there are choices that are being made. Within each refrain we see these choices reflected in conversation with each other. The hope is that in recognising what is showing up in our understanding we can better align our responses with transgressive decolonial pedagogical praxis. We can integrate a way of asking questions of ourselves in ways that enable us to appreciate the ethical and methodological choices that we choose to mobilise. These conversations can be seen as a self-reflexive tool that challenges us to appreciate ourselves in community with others. The litany marks named and unnamed parts of our praxis emerging, and the tensions and intentions that we seek to honour as we move.

They are masterclasses of sorts that wait undefined as yet within the defined borders of each refrain. These no doubt need to continue to be championed by those who are at the forefront of their discernment. In writing this litany I found myself excited about engaging further with the co-conspirators that had contributed so steadfastly to its beginnings. What would it be like to further craft experimental gatherings framed around the potent thematic strains that are named here? What would it mean for those who have intuitively listened to the questions at the edge of their praxis to further be accompanied in leading us deeper into some of the insightful premises they have marked out? And how could this work develop in wider conversation with many others that are gathering in their own ways?

Working what is revelatory within this study into a litany of praxis also releases me as an educator into a different role. The work decidedly has been one of listening and attuning to the impulses that are being moved with, whilst also asking and tracing how these relate to what it means to work ourselves into transgressive decolonial praxis. It is important to say that it is not the times that the praxis hit the mark in terms of transgressive decolonial praxis that made the chronicling present in the litany feel legitimate. There is something about acknowledging the praxis that is underway, or in the terms outlined in the introduction to this study *who we are* that feels like an honest place from which grappling towards decolonial futures can continue. This has additionally influenced my role to unconditionally embrace what is already underway and reflect it back to those I am conspiring with in ways that promote an ethic of care. I guess this adheres to the principles of not theorising ourselves too far away from where we actually are, an ethic that chooses to stay close to the phenomena that is present and build our capacity to better respond and move with it. There is a vulnerability in this that does not assume certainty. I am not a custodian of what needs to be

learnt in this perspective. I am simply learning to be present enough to understand what is being surfaced and I am learning to be creative enough with others to find ways to reflect this back in care-ful ways. What has been reassuring and necessary is that whatever learning that is happening finds a way of recognising itself and recalibrating itself in context over time. The study has asked us all to really look and think about how we have been moving. It has given us a chance to think again, sometimes affirming what we already knew but did not appreciate the extent of, sometimes welcoming new proclamations that have been nurtured through time. Ultimately this praxis allows us to be more trusting of ourselves, more affirming of each other, more human, gentler and more discerning around what is underway because we feel supported and affirmed in the steps we dare to take. Change Drivers on this continent deserve to be cared for and trusted in this way as they find their way with others. Ultimately, it is their capacity to apprehend what hangs in the balance and the choices they feel comfortable to take that define the trajectories that are before us.

It is important to celebrate the creation and appreciation of cultural artefacts as a part of this process. Artifacts that have been created historically, including the fictional texts and poetry created with care, are still working on us and helping us make sense of where we are. In the same way, the songs that reflect the praxis of Change Drivers serve as important records and archives for the experiences that are underway in these times. These songs have taught me to hear more of what is being experienced when they have been resonant, and even when they have surfaced an alternative conversation to what they were centred around. They have helped regenerate distinct laminations of discourse currently underway in society. Their representations help clarify what is happening and who we choose to be in the face of this. The music of it all then becomes much more discernable to us. And our recognition of each other as well as our recognition of what is recurring, missing or needed, starts to amplify our capacity to respond. We suddenly have more context and clearer examples of dedicated praxis underway that we can draw from. This ultimately helps us see ourselves and each other with greater depth. The hope is that the litany as an artifact continues to do this work keeping in mind the collective praxis that is being negotiated amongst many of those who seek a future distinct from the past.

The artifacts generated as part of this study can help us hear ourselves and embolden us to make even bolder moves in precarious times, not because we feel we are invincible, but hopefully because we trust that what we know instinctively matters. By moving with a

“dignity worthy of [our] ambitions” we regenerate our capabilities in responding “otherwise” in contexts that often do not recognise the possibilities of doing things in different ways (Erasmus, 2017; Biney, 2018, p. 89). Through this way of working, we arrive more fully in the present, and can continue to create a living praxis with others that first and foremost challenges us to open up to the “affective sensibilities” we need to regenerate life in times of precarity (Braidotti, 2012).

To all educators, parents and learning communities out there that are important part of this ongoing conversation, tune into what young people across the continent and the world have reason to value. Let us find ways to activate and affirm their visions of themselves by simultaneously trusting and challenging them to critically accede to what they instinctively know can be possible. It is time to wake up the vital intergenerational links that can anchor the knowledge emerging, giving it the balance and depth of perspective that can regenerate what insists on affirming life and a paradigm of peace. Wake up tired “vestigial eyes” with a razor sharp focus that centres our meaningful co-conspiracy as the production of knowledge (Akomolafe, 2017, pp. 141-143). Let us challenge ourselves to evolve as part of this journey, by shedding and “composting” our well-worn muscle memory whilst being creative, agile and generous in the ways that we accompany each other. Let us do this in critically affirmative ways that integrally shares the message that who we are and what we know matters greatly as we step forward.

Instead of inculcating change through the dictates of civil society that believes that an emancipatory vision of the future is possible through the “risk management” of youth in this current paradigm, see the glimpses of a paradigm shift emerging from the furtive questions and actions of Change Drivers across the continent and in the world and celebrate this fiercely (Chimurenga Chronic, 2013, p. 48). Celebrate what insists on being alive and let us collectively strategise around what it means to build traction around this together. For this is the legacy that we are responsible for in a world that promotes increasingly limited narratives of who we can be together and what we can achieve. The thinking and praxis of those well positioned to apprehend the inherent contradictions and precarity of the times has the power to actively regenerate our relationships with each other, the earth and all sentient beings towards paradigm shifts in praxis that can continue to honour and trace the possibilities of a decolonial future. We need to find each other and grapple collectively and creatively around what it means to show up in ways that can build a heritage that cares deeply about who we

choose to be together, so that we in turn may leave deep transgressive footprints that may serve to bring hope and inspiration when and where it is needed most (Pinkola Estés, 1992, pp. 459, 460).

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Appendices

Access to all appendices are available via email: Please email Injairu@sheddingskins.co.za for access.

Appendix 1: Written Invitation to participate in the *Not Yet Uhuru* Project

Appendix 2: *Not Yet Uhuru* Orientating Brochure for Change Drivers

Appendix 3: *Not Yet Uhuru* Information Sheet

Appendix 4: *Not Yet Uhuru* Critical Questions emerging

Appendix 5: Think piece: Intersectional Resonance and the Multiplicity of Being in a Polarised World

Appendices 6 and 7: Each Change Driver's offering and accompanying song

Appendix 8: Audre Lorde's *A Litany For Survival*