Chapter 24
South Africa: Desegregated Teaching, Democratic Citizenship Education and Integrating of Ethnic Minority Teachers

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Abstract Much of the debates on South Africa's recently desegregated schools centre on intersectional tensions between access/participation; external inclusion/internal exclusion; and assimilation/integration – as it pertains to minority-group learners. Limited attention has been given to the experiences of minority group teachers, as they struggle to find professional and personal inclusion in historically prohibited schools. Yet, not only do minority group teachers experience untold professional undermining within majoritarian schools, but they are often subjected to prejudicial scrutiny by parents and learners, as will be highlighted in this chapter. Leaning on a narrative inquiry, this chapter centres on the experiences of a first year, 'black' female teacher, Slindile, at a historically advantaged ('white') school in South Africa. The narrative inquiry brings to the fore her dialectical experiences, while simultaneously revealing the normative discourses which have thus far remained intact at the school. Underscored by a discursive synchronicity between presumptions of privilege and prejudice, the findings reveal a powerful, yet painful social reality. Firstly, a construction of 'black incompetence' is necessary for the preservation of 'white competence'. Secondly, perceptions of Sindile's 'black' body lends itself to an intersectional tension, which provides for deep considerations on how whiteness reduces the other to the extent of erasure. Thirdly, assigning blame for racism and discrimination to institutional cultures ensures the avoidance of individual accountability. Lastly, minority group teachers are not the only ones at risk. The less diverse a teacher corps is, the less capacitated schools are in advancing democratic citizenship education.

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Introduction

One of the key expressions of South Africa's remarkable transition from an apartheid to a democratic state, in 1994, is the desegregation of public schools. Prior to 1992, public schools were defined by stark racial and ethnic segregation – entrenching not only differentiated schooling, but normalising unequal opportunities and expectations. The subsequent opening of all schools to all learners suggested a break from a dehumanising past, intent upon integrated teaching and learning, with the objective of cultivating the grounds for a shared and equitable citizenship. Given the enormous disparities in terms of resources and infrastructure between historically ('white') advantaged and historically ('black', 'coloured' and 'Indian') disadvantaged schools, the exodus from the latter to the former was expected. Learner migratory patterns adopted different tropes. A significant number of 'Indian', 'coloured' and 'black' learners flocked to historically 'white' schools; a number of 'white' learners left public for private schools; the country saw a surge in the number of faith-based schools as well as home-schooling options. While some parents equated desegregation with a drop in the quality of education, others simply did not want their children learning and interacting with different racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious groups. Not only has South Africa's desegregated schools given rise to new forms of separation – as is evident in the proliferation of new kinds of educational spaces – but desegregated schools have not been without their own sets of exclusionary tensions and controversies.

The result is a burgeoning body of literature on the experiences of learners, as they struggle to find their sense of belonging amid historically constructed identities and practices, which remain resistant to other forms of being and acting. The heightened attention on learners – albeit with good reason – has, in most cases not taken account of the teachers' experiences at schools, where they constitute the minority. Part of the reason for this neglect is an assumption that teachers might encounter more professional settings and relationships within schooling environments, and therefore be less prone to any forms of discrimination, marginalisation, and racism. Another reason resides in teachers' reluctance to participate in research or conversations, which attempts to look at the specific experiences of minority-group teachers. This reluctance stems from a fear of further victimisation, alienation, or non-promotion, despite assurances of research confidentiality and anonymity. As revealed by one such teacher, who is enrolled in my BEd Hons class, there is no point in raising her experiences as a matter of concern, the situation simply is what it is; it is the way society operates. When probed as to what the situation is, she responded, with a wry smile on her face: the Head of Department (HOD) regularly sitting in her classes for the purposes of lesson observation, without any prior notification or discussion, and never allowing her to set any examination papers. The HOD justified her actions on the fact that the teacher was new and needed guidance. Yet, according to the teacher, she had been in the post for 4 years at the time of the latter explanation, and no guidance has ever been forthcoming. In the interest of

"not rocking the boat", she decided not to raise any further questions or complaints about how she was being treated.

In the ensuing discussion I will commence by bringing into contestation the idea that all desegregated schools in South Africa are conducive and open to diverse teacher identities, or teaching practices. This discussion will shed some light not only on the internal barriers within schools, but also the role of parents in ensuring that minority-group teachers are kept to the minimal both in terms of representation and participation in schools. I follow this with an in-depth narratival account of the experiences of a first-year 'black' teacher at a historically advantaged ('white') school. Her narrative sheds profound light on the intersectional complexities and discourses, which led to her eventual departure from the school. In concluding, I turn my attention to what the implications are for democratic citizenship, if schools act as barriers to pluralist teacher identities, and persist in a preservational ethos of maintaining schools, which is closed to diversity and difference.

Schools as Closed Off Spaces

Although not as widespread, teacher migratory patterns from historically disadvantaged schools to historically advantaged schools, are driven by the same imperatives as those for learners. These include better resourced schools, smaller classes, more opportunities, safer school environments, more learning support services and, in some instances, a higher salary, augmented through the SGB (Davids & Waghid, 2015). The deep-seated disparities which continue to characterise South African schools, despite substantive educational reform, have put into play not only particular patterns of movement away from historically disadvantaged schools (for those who can afford it), but has entrenched the latter as deficient spaces of teaching and learning. Dyadically, historically advantaged schools, by virtue of their well-resourced spaces and opportunities, benefit from associated perceptions of quality education and academic achievement. That these perceptions might neither be fair nor true, has done little to stem the tide of attraction presented by historically advantaged schools. The debilitating effects of poor socio-economic communities, coupled with high levels of violence, vandalism, substance abuse, poor learner attendance, and restricted or compromised parental support, hold dire emotional, psychological and physical consequences for teachers.

There are two points worth noting. Firstly, the decision by 'black' teachers to leave historically disadvantaged schools, is not solely due to adverse school conditions. This decision is influenced by nodes of socio-economic despair, coupled with disillusionment in what has become political rhetoric about equal, equitable and democratised schools. On the one hand, teachers should not have to work in schools, without electricity, running water, inadequate sanitation facilities, limited or no resources, and unacceptable levels of violence. On the other hand, teachers should have the right to teach in schools, which are representative of their society's diversity and pluralism. Inasmuch as South African schools have desegregated, most

have retained their historically designated teacher and learner demographics. While learner migratory patterns have been more significant than that of teachers, the majority of teachers in South Africa continue to seek employment in schools, which are aligned to their historical racial category. Moreover, even where schools have shifted entirely in its learner demographics, the teacher body does not necessarily reflect this change, with the historical composition often remaining intact. It is therefore not unusual to find diverse school environments in terms of learner demographics taught by a teacher corps, which does not reflect this diversity.

Debates and concerns about the experiences and under-representation of minority-group teachers are certainly not new. In the United States, for example, it has long been an issue of national importance, with numerous scholars and commentators arguing that there is a growing mismatch between the degree of racial/ethnic diversity of the school learner demography and the teaching corps (Ingersoll et al., 2019). What sets the South African context apart, firstly, is its dual erosions of colonialism and apartheid, which have entrenched not only racial hegemonies and segregation, but a kaleidoscopic infiltration into other intersectionalities of ethnicity and culture. The second factor is the society's relative newness to desegregated educational spaces and diverse teaching corps. And third is a misplaced assumption that either teachers are not sharing similar experiences of marginalisation and exclusion as learners, or that they are better equipped to respond to it.

Yet, the reality that learners are likely to encounter only one kind of teacher – as in schools retaining their historically designated racial identities – holds particular implications not only for teaching and learning, but for the democratic responsibility of schools. In examining teachers' responses to integration, Vandeyar (2010) found inherent notions and practices of racial discrimination and cultural bias. Despite having a class of diverse learners, "a white Afrikaans-speaking teacher" taught "as if she was teaching to a class of Afrikaans-speaking students" (Vandeyar, 2010, p. 354). According to Vandeyar (2010, p. 354), teachers' responses to school integration involved a suppression of seeing difference (colour-blindness), and focusing instead on "sameness", thereby dismissing the "power and structural dimensions of racism".

There are immense benefits to learners, as well as teachers and parents, if a school's teaching cohort reflects that of a learner body and is representative of society. In this regard, a "demographic parity" (Ingersoll et al., 2019) or a "democratic imperative" (Achinstein et al., 2010, p. 71) to counter the disparity between the racial and cultural backgrounds of learners and teachers, is equally important for minority and majority group learners. In turn, "demographic parity" provides the context for "cultural synchronicity", which allows for minority-group teachers to relate to the life experiences and cultural backgrounds of minority-group learners due to "insider knowledge" (Ingersoll et al., 2019, p. 3), and possibly promote culturally responsive teaching (Achinstein et al., 2010, p. 72). Sleeter (2001), for example, posits that although a large proportion of 'white' pre-service students anticipate working with children of another cultural background, as a whole, however, they bring very little cross-cultural background, knowledge, and experience. Proponents of a "democratic imperative", according to Achinstein et al. (2010,

p. 72), cite an emerging body of research, which suggests that minority-group teachers can produce more favourable academic results on standardised test scores, attendance, retention, advanced-level course enrolment, and college-going rates for minority-group learners than white colleagues.

Often because of personal experiences with a culturally disconnected curriculum, or the under-resourced conditions of their own schooling, assert Kohli and Pizarro (2016), minority-group teachers have a heightened awareness of educational injustice and racism. In comparison with 'white' teachers, minority-group teachers have more positive views of minority-group learners, including more favourable perceptions of their academic potential and higher expectations of their learning potential (Kohli & Pizarro, 2016). This argument does not necessarily infer that 'white' teachers cannot be effective teachers of minority-group learners, or that only minority-group teachers can effectively teach minority-group learners. The contention, however, is that the demographic discrepancy between the racial and cultural backgrounds of teachers and learners may contribute to the democratic failure to provide minority-group learners not only with opportunities to learn (Achinstein et al., 2010), but with experiences of inclusion and belonging.

'Whiteness' as De-democratization

To scholars like hooks (1992), Giroux (1997) and Yancy (2008), race is a social construction, without a referent in the natural world. In an interview with Michael Peters, Yancy states:

> Despite the fact that race is not a natural kind, it has tremendous social ontological power; the concept is a powerful organizing social vector that functions as if it cuts at the very joints of reality. The concept of race constitutes our institutional spaces, our political forms of arrangement, our perceptions, our bodily comportment in space, our organization of lived space and lived experience… While the concept of race is unreal qua natural kind, the concept of race has served to create rigid social binaries and used to oppress, to dehumanize, to murder, to render disposable (Peters, 2019, p. 664).

Although democratic South Africa has seen the replacement of explicit racialised discourses and exclusion with more subtle murmurings of 'competence' – the ensuing tensions, however, remain the same. Minority-group teachers, who pursue employment at historically advantaged schools are subjected to vague descriptors and criteria of 'competence' or 'standards', which could include any feature from qualifications and experience, to religion and accent (Davids & Waghid, 2015). Framing this multi-faceted construction of 'competence' or 'standards', most often, is a 'whiteness', which on the one hand, "benefits all whites regardless of their class or gender status" (Leonardo, 2009, p. 70), and on the other hand, is used for no other reason but oppression.

'Whiteness', by its very nature, explains Yancy, is binary and hierarchical. While 'whiteness' establishes itself as the thesis, racialized groups that are not white are deemed "different, deviant, that is, the antithesis" (Peters, 2019, pp. 663–4). As "a

structural, ideological, embodied, epistemological and phenomenological mode of being", 'whiteness', explains Yancy (Blasdel, 2018) "is predicated upon its distance from and negation of blackness"; neither 'whiteness' nor 'blackness' are based on objective, biological facts, but are "sites of lived meaning" (Yancy & Del Guadalupe Davidson, 2016, p. 8). To Yancy, 'whiteness' "is a master of concealment; it is insidiously embedded within responses, reactions, good, intentions, postural gestures, denials, and structural and material orders…Whiteness as a form of ambushing is not an anomaly. The operations of whiteness are by no means completely transparent" (2008, p. 229). So embedded is the condition of 'whiteness' that it has not been subjected to the same level of scholarly scrutiny and analyses as 'blackness' (Giroux, 1997, p. 379).

Although invisible, the presumptuous presence of 'whiteness' asserts and sustains its dominance through judgements not only on itself, but on others. Whatever is inferred by and associated with 'whiteness' cannot equate to that of 'blackness'. Reflecting from this hegemonic framework, are trivial tributaries – identities and modes of being which are approached as less-than in terms of value, and hence, 'competence'. How these tributaries take effect, varies from context to context, and reveals a spectrum of racialised thinking, which cuts across a 'black'/'white' binary. 'Black' schools appoint 'white' principals, while 'coloured' schools refuse to appoint 'black' principals; 'black' teachers are not only excluded from 'white' schools, they are also excluded from 'coloured' and 'Indian' schools (Makhetha, 2017; Simelane, 2017).

Notably, while all schools ('black', 'Indian', 'coloured' and 'white') are prepared to appoint 'white' teachers or principals, all schools are not prepared to appoint teachers of all other races – suggesting two key considerations. Firstly, that 'whiteness' is as Yancy (Blasdel, 2018) describes, a "transcendental norm", which means that 'whiteness' goes unmarked – "As unmarked, white people are able to live their identities as unraced, as simply human, as persons". Secondly, not only is 'whiteness' is generically allied with a presumptive privilege and competence, but notions of competence should not be misunderstood as a judgement of excellence. Instead, what the use of 'competence' seeks to do is to re-assert a hegemony of 'whiteness', which is diametrically dependent on a perception of 'blackness' as 'incompetent'.

The imposition of a deficit pertains not only to 'incompetence' in terms of teaching, subject content knowledge, or classroom management skills, but to the very identities of teachers. On the one hand, it is commonplace for 'black' teachers to be subjected to 'mentoring processes', which is seemingly not applicable to other staff members. Other times, they are actually not allowed to teach their subject specialisation – as was the case with a 'black' teacher, who had applied for the post of a mathematics teacher but was instead only allowed to teach mathematical literacy (Davids & Waghid, 2015). On the other hand, attempts by teachers to bring their diverse backgrounds and identities into an existing ethos, assert Kohli and Pizzaro (2016), are met with resistance, which makes it difficult for them to engage holistically with their peers and learners. While manifested differently, the same fields of tensions, which are used to keep minority-group learners out of historically

advantaged schools, are used to keep minority-group teachers at bay. Once appointed, and granted external access, minority-group teachers face continuous struggles and barriers to be included and recognised – rendering the challenge of remaining within these schools, greater than trying to get appointed in the first place. In one instance, a teacher faced endless complaints from parents, on behalf of their children, that they could not understand his 'Indian' accent. His eventual decision to leave was precipitated when the principal mistook him for being Muslim, when he was in fact, Hindu (Davids & Waghid, 2015).

As debilitating and dehumanising as the infliction of 'whiteness' can be on the lives and experiences of minority-group teachers, these experiences become even more nuanced and harmful for minority-group teachers, who are not male. Practices and experiences of oppression can seldom be understood or explained in relation to a single categorical axis. To do so, following Crenshaw (1989), would be to erase the particular experiences of minority group women, as it fails to take into account the intersectionality of discrimination and oppression. To Crenshaw (1989, p. 140), the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism:

> Black women sometimes experience discrimination in ways similar to white women's experiences; sometimes they share very similar experiences with Black men. Yet often they experience double-discrimination – the combined effects of practices which discriminate on the basis of race, and on the basis of sex. And sometimes, they experience discrimination as Black women – not the sum of race and sex discrimination, but as Black women.

Following the above, the ensuing case study discussion centres on the experiences of a first year, 'black' female teacher at a historically advantaged ('white') school in South Africa. The case study leans on a narrative inquiry, which allows for the un-fleshing and exploration of her experiences in the context of a particular sociality. Her identity as a 'black' woman lends itself to an intersectional phenomenon and tension, which provides for deep considerations and contemplations on how whiteness reduces the other to the extent of erasure.

Methodology: Narrative Inquiry as Disrupting the Centre

To Connelly and Clandinin (1990), knowledge of the self and of the self in relation to others and one's context provide a powerful lens through which to construct educational research. In this regard, a narrative inquiry brings theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived to bear on educational experience as lived. The key difference between more traditional uses of didactic and strategic narrative, and narrative inquiry, elaborates Conle (2000), is the open-endedness and empirical nature of the latter, since the story must be open to being re-told. Narrative, explain Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p. 2), is both phenomenon and method – "Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the pattern of inquiry for its study." Hence, their assertion that "people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives,

collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience". (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). As a methodology, they continue, narrative inquiry allows for a rich description of experiences, as well as an exploration of the meanings that the participants derive from these experiences. It amplifies voices that may have otherwise remained silent. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study. (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

It is essential, state Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p. 4), that the participant gets to tell her story first, so that she, "who has long been silenced in the research relationship is given the time and space to tell his or her story so that it too gains the authority and validity that the research story has long held". They maintain that by galvanising the voice of the participant, the two narratives of the researcher and the participant evolve into a shared narrative construction and reconstruction through inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Any particular narrative inquiry, state Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p. 54), is defined by a three-dimensional space: "studies have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters: they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry: and they occur in specific places or sequences of places." By working within this three-dimensional inquiry space, narrative inquirers or researchers can begin their inquiries either with engaging with participants through telling stories or through coming alongside participants in the living out of stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Narrative inquirers cannot bracket themselves out of the inquiry but rather need to find ways to inquire into participants' experiences, their own experiences as well as the co-constructed experiences developed through the relational inquiry process. As such, narrative inquirers are part of the metaphoric parade and are complicit in the world they study (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998).

Central to narrative inquiry is the space and potential for the debunking of perceptions, myths, stereotypes, and normative discourses while simultaneously bringing to the centre voices and stories, which ordinarily might have been marginalised and lost. In this regard, narrative inquiry allows for the construction of new stories and new social realities.

Findings

While born into the promise of democracy, Slindile's story is atypical to most young 'black' people in South Africa. After completing her primary education, she attended one of the most prestigious schools in South Africa and attained her undergraduate degree and postgraduate teaching diploma at the University of Cape Town. Her entire education had been attained via historically 'white' and advantaged institutions. While completing her teaching diploma, she completed a learnership at the same historically advantaged primary school she had attended as a young girl. Upon graduating, she was offered a teaching post at this same school. Other than one other 'black' teacher, who was responsible for teaching isiXhosa, Slindile was the first 'black' class teacher in the history of school's 125-year existence. What started as

"a dream come true to teach at a school that has played a vital role in shaping" her, soon became short-lived, described by her as "a painful period during my tenure at the school. Being told to resign or face disciplinary action shook me to my core."

During her first meeting with the parents of her grade 5 class Slindile was questioned about where she had qualified and whether she could show proof of her qualifications. It became apparent that a number of parents were unhappy about having their children taught by her. Soon thereafter she became aware of online chat groups among parents, who discussed her suitability to the ethos of the school. After just a few weeks into the new academic year, she was called to a meeting with the principal, deputy principal, HOD, as well as a parent representative from the School Governing Body (SGB). Slindile was informed that her performance was "not up to scratch", and that she would be subjected to a "quality assurance plan", which involved an "eight-point plan". This plan, which was never discussed with her, consisted of a list of instructions and requirements. She was required to submit detailed weekly and daily lesson plans, including assessment practices; she would receive daily classroom visits at any given time by various members of the School Management Team (SMT); her marking and use of teaching resources would be monitored; and she should ensure "an energised and enthusiastic attitude when presenting lessons". When she queried why she was the only newly appointed teacher being subjected to an "eight-point plan", she was merely told that she required "mentoring". She was never made aware of the specific issues being raised about her, or what had led to concerns about "poor performance". Slindile described her "mentorship programme" as leaving her "more traumatised that supported". She described her "discrimination as subtle, yet so painful" – "I was the only the teacher who had to make additional lesson plans for everything that I taught. I was the only teacher to whom a mentor could come any time of the day and teach my class on my behalf".

The daily classroom visits created great anxiety for Slindile. From her perspective, she was neither experiencing any difficulties with her teaching, nor with managing her class. She did not know when the visits would occur, who would be coming, what was being observed, or what was being discussed about her teaching. The daily visits did not only involve observations of her teaching and interaction with learners, it also involved the 'mentor' simply interrupting her teaching and taking over her role as a teacher. As the days passed, Slindile became aware that the undermining of her pedagogical authority in the classroom had begun to lead to a loss of credibility with her learners. One morning, while taking register, she was informed by one of her learners that an absent learner had in fact left the school. She found this surprising as she had not been notified by the learner, her parents, or the school administrator. When Slindile followed up on the matter with the principal, she was told that the parent "was so unhappy that she decided to take her daughter out of my [her] class to be home-schooled and only to return to the school next year". When she sought clarity on what the parent was unhappy about, she was told that "it wouldn't be appropriate" for her to know.

By the time the first school term concluded, Slindile had begun to experience deep alienation from her colleagues and members of the SMT. She remain

uninformed about the complaints being levelled against, and there was no engage-
ment with her as to how she could improve her '"poor performance". Matters came
to a head, when a 'white' parent wrote to the principal, complaining about the par-
ents' remarks about Slindile; the hostility and prejudice being presented by the
school; as well as a widely shared question, posed by a grade 5 learner: "Are black
teachers real teachers?" At a subsequent meeting, again with the principal, deputy
principal, as well as two parent representatives from the SGB, Slindile reported, "I
was told that I needed to resign or face disciplinary action. If I did face disciplinary
actions, it was going to ruin my reputation, so I opted to resign. I was scared, I felt
that I was put under pressure to make a decision. The school made my job intoler-
able and treated me in a discriminatory manner".

Nine months after being appointed, Slindile resigned. In a newsletter to parents,
the principal indicated that she had resigned due to "personal reasons". Given the
historical 'white' status of the school, and the fact that she had been the school's
first appointed 'black' class teacher, a number of parents expressed their dismay at
Slindile's sudden departure and demanded to know what had led to this decision.
Amid a significant outcry from the parent body (across racial lines), one parent
encouraged Slindile to seek legal assistance. The matter attracted widespread media
attention, with renewed questions being asked about the pace of transformation in
South African schools – not only in terms of learner demographics and inclusion,
but teachers as well.

Slindile's lodged a grievance with the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation
and Arbitration (CCMA). The school defended its decision to ask for her resigna-
tion by citing that parents had threatened to remove their children from the school.
The school denied Slindile's version that she was unaware of the details of the com-
plaints made against her, and instead maintained that they had had regular meetings
and interventions with her, as well as provided support. They could not, however,
provide any written proof of providing her details of the complaints, of issuing her
warnings, or of the content and purpose of the "mentorship programme". After the
initial CCMA hearing the school made her an offer that she could return as a learn-
ership teacher. She refused and demanded compensation for the way she had been
treated. The CCMA found that the school had indeed acted in a discriminatory
fashion, that she had, in fact, been constructively terminated, and should receive an
apology and compensation. In adhering to this instruction, the school's SGB stated:
"As an SGB we have recognised that the school's institutional culture does not fully
reflect the diversity of South Africa and we have publicly committed to changing
this. It is a priority".

While this particular case had an eventual just outcome, the harm experienced by
Slindile is experienced by many minority-group teachers. As noted by her, "the
apology from the school does not acknowledge the truth of what actually hap-
pened". These experiences are often endured in silence for fear of reprisal – whether
in the form of further discrimination and marginalisation, non-promotion, or as has
been seen in Slindile's case, termination. Moreover, Slindile received significant
support from a group of parents, who mobilised around her case and ensured that
she could act against the school. It is doubtful that she would have gone to the

CCMA without this support. It is exceptionally difficult for teachers, who experience discrimination or racism to act against these entrenched practices – not only because of their fear of reprisals, but because these practices are often deceptively disguised in a discourse of 'competence', which is used to systematically break down the self-esteem of teachers.

Analysis and Discussion

The narrative inquiry assisted Slindile in reflecting upon a deeply troubling experience. What became especially evident through the study is her subjection to certain practices and requirements, because of the way she had been objectified as a 'black' woman. As she moved between her past and her present, she began to become aware of the disjuncture between her perception of herself as a 'black' woman, and how she was perceived as a 'black' woman. Slindile had assumed that her attendance at a historically advantaged high school and university, as well as her attendance at the very primary school, where she would later be appointed, would secure her an unhindered pathway into her career. She had mistakenly thought that her economic privilege and social capital would allow her inclusion across racial lines. What she experienced and learnt, however, is that her racially construed identity presents an impenetrable barrier not only to being seen as qualified and competent, but to being seen as equally human.

Despite reporting on her deep sense of humiliation, marginalisation and alienation at the school, neither the principal, nor the SGB accepted responsibility for the harm they had inflicted on her. Seemingly, the barrier which renders Slindile's 'blackness' to less-than is the same one which retains the preservation of 'whiteness'. The refusal by the principal and the SGB to accept responsibility for what Slindile had experienced, meant not only a refusal to acknowledge that she had indeed been subjected to racism and discrimination, but that they had been the perpetrators of that racism and discrimination. The decision therefore to issue a statement which assigns blame to an institutional culture is misleading. On the one hand, it suggests an abdication of any accountability, as if institutional culture exists in isolation from those, who instil and cultivate it. On the other hand, it is a manifestation of the capacity of 'whiteness' to conceal itself – "insidiously embedded within responses, reactions, good, intentions, postural gestures, denials, and structural and material orders…" (Yancy, 2008, p. 229). In this regard, the narrative inquiry brings to the fore the dialectical experience of Slindile, while simultaneously giving voice to the normative discourses which have thus far remained intact at the school. While identified as an institutional culture that "does not fully reflect the diversity of South Africa", this culture is retained through a presumptive privilege, which, in turn, is mutually contingent on constructing Slindile as incompetent. She cannot be allowed to succeed at being competent. If she does, she not only debunks the myth of 'black' incompetence, she also disrupts the hegemony of 'whiteness'.

Emanating from this discussion is the synchronous relationship between a presumptive privilege and a presumptive prejudice. 'Whiteness' presumes a privilege, which is sustained through prejudice. The prejudice is evident in Slindile's first encounter with the parents of her learners, who question her about her qualifications. But the question has little to do with her acquired qualifications. Her 'black' skin has already disqualified her, if not as a 'competent' teacher, then as a teacher 'competent' enough to teach 'white' children. What the question confirms, is that judgment on Slindile has already been passed. Next, follows a series of prejudices – from the presumptive occupation and teaching of her class, without prior or post deliberation; the removal of a learner and the "inappropriateness" for Slindile to know the reason why; to the question by a grade 5 learner as to whether 'black' teachers are "real teachers", and of course, the threat by the principal "to resign or face disciplinary action".

Underscoring all of these encounters is a presumptive prejudice, which takes for granted the right to treat Slindile as if she has no voice, no equality, and no right to a dignified treatment. When she dared to question any of it – as she did when trying to understand why a learner had been removed from her class – the response she received had nothing to do with her right to access to certain knowledge; it had to do with her "inappropriate" conduct in having the impudence to ask the question in the first place.

Conclusions and Implications

As I conclude this chapter, it is worth considering why teachers from diverse identities and backgrounds are so critical to teaching and learning, schools and the cultivation of a democratic society. Firstly, teacher diversity allows for the inclusion and articulation of different life-worlds and perspectives, which stands to benefit all learners, teachers, as well as the parents, and hence, society. Secondly, teachers from different backgrounds provide points of resonance and aspiration for minority-group learners. Thirdly, the more learners are able to engage and learn from those, who are different to themselves, the greater and deeper their preparation for engaging with difference, not only at school, but later, as citizens in a pluralist society. Concomitantly, the less diverse a teacher corps is, the greater the risk of a perpetuation of existing hegemonies, stereotypes and prejudices.

The entire point of schooling and education is to prepare young people for their roles as citizens. Schools cannot shy away from the knowledge and obligation that while schooling is temporary, education is not. Schools ought to provide the space and ethos where democratic practices are not only made visible in the inclusion of diverse learners and teachers, but where the very ideals of democratic citizenship – that is, equal recognition, inclusion, respect – are preserved. It matters therefore what learners are taught, and it matters who teachers are. Stated differently, young people learn not only by *what* and *how* they are taught, they also learn from *whom* they are taught. It is often not enough for learners to learn about different ways of

being and acting; they have to be able to participate in those differences. It is only when learners witness and participate in diverse and dissenting contexts that they learn about themselves and others; they learn that they do not have to be and act like others in order to find a sense of belonging.

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