

Disrupting Higher Education Curriculum

Undoing Cognitive Damage

Michael Anthony Samuel,
Rubby Dhunpath and
Nyna Amin (Eds.)



Disrupting Higher Education Curriculum

CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE: CURRICULUM STUDIES IN ACTION

Volume 13

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Scope

“Curriculum” is an expansive term; it encompasses vast aspects of teaching and learning. Curriculum can be defined as broadly as, “The content of schooling in all its forms” (English, p. 4), and as narrowly as a lesson plan. Complicating matters is the fact that curricula are often organized to fit particular time frames. The incompatible and overlapping notions that curriculum involves everything that is taught and learned in a particular setting *and* that this learning occurs in a limited time frame reveal the nuanced complexities of curriculum studies.

“Constructing Knowledge” provides a forum for systematic reflection on the substance (subject matter, courses, programs of study), purposes, and practices used for bringing about learning in educational settings. Of concern are such fundamental issues as: What should be studied? Why? By whom? In what ways? And in what settings? Reflection upon such issues involves an inter-play among the major components of education: subject matter, learning, teaching, and the larger social, political, and economic contexts, as well as the immediate instructional situation. Historical and autobiographical analyses are central in understanding the contemporary realities of schooling and envisioning how to (re)shape schools to meet the intellectual and social needs of all societal members. Curriculum is a social construction that results from a set of decisions; it is written and enacted and both facets undergo constant change as contexts evolve.

This series aims to extend the professional conversation about curriculum in contemporary educational settings. Curriculum is a designed experience intended to promote learning. Because it is socially constructed, curriculum is subject to all the pressures and complications of the diverse communities that comprise schools and other social contexts in which citizens gain self-understanding.

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Edited by

Michael Anthony Samuel, Rubby Dhunpath and Nyna Amin

University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa



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PREFACE

In a recent book entitled, *I Love Learning; I Hate School: An Anthropology of College* (2016), Susan Blum declares that higher education as we know it, is destined for obsolescence, because the very foundations on which the system is pillared, are fatally flawed. She adds that because higher education is a system, it cannot be fixed piecemeal and only radical transformation will rescue it from extinction. While this somewhat pessimistic pronouncement is not new, there is a growing impatience amongst beneficiaries of this outmoded system we know as higher education, which fails to meet the promise of liberation through education. Although the prospect of radical reform seems laden with misguided optimism, we should remind ourselves that change we thought impossible did occur (but not as we expected). For example, in South Africa there was a time when white men in dark suits met in the Orange Free State (now Free State) to make decisions about the curriculum for whites and non-whites (then referred to pejoratively as coloureds, coolies and natives/bantu). The undesired non-whites were split into two groups: tolerable lighter skinned persons (coloureds and coolies) and intolerable dark skinned persons (natives/bantu). Race-based physical separation was instituted. Phenotype was linked to intelligence, ability, knowledge and beauty and whiteness was set up as the marker of the best of these qualities. Curriculum became the tool to entrench apartheid idealism, conceptions and practices. Superior resources and structures and sophisticated curricula were offered to Whites (with immoral untruths about the darker races based on the dubious ideas of eugenics) while a restricted curriculum and variable basics (more for the tolerables and less to none for natives) were provided for non-whites. Some changes have taken place with the installation of a democracy-for-all government. Much still remains the same. While some discourses have changed, some beliefs have remained stubbornly resilient. For example, race categorisation, gender inequalities, poverty, rising unemployment, cultural hegemony and so on continue to frame identities, cultures and practices. Perhaps there is truth in Fernand Braudel's avowal that "history may be divided into three movements: what moves rapidly, what moves slowly and what appears not to move at all".

We could argue, perhaps, that what appears to move rapidly or slowly has not moved at all. For instance, from 1994 (freedom from apartheid) a number of rapid curriculum reforms were undertaken in South African general education, namely, Outcomes-based education, and the National Curriculum Statement, the Revised National Curriculum Statement and Curriculum and the Assessment Policy Statement aimed at improving educational standards and outcomes. Many argue that none of these reforms has succeeded in extricating education from the shackles of Bantu education because the policy reforms were politically rather than pedagogically driven, while the politics of epistemology were rarely contemplated by the new regime.

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In higher education and training, one of the first of post-apartheid policy moves was the establishment of the national commission into higher education in 1994, which arose out of the noble project to transform the unequal and divided higher education sector. This was followed by the Higher Education Act of 1997; the Further Education and Training Act (1998); Education White Paper 4 on Further Education and Training (1998) and the National Strategy for Further Education and Training (1999-2001). The initial policy impetus for a re-envisioned system that would redress inequities gave way to managerial discourses in the early 2000s and beyond. The furious and sometimes frivolous policy process was accompanied by a range of regulatory institutions, systems and frameworks including the National Qualifications Framework, the South African Qualifications Authority, the three Quality Councils and the National Skills Authority, and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

Despite these grandiose installations, it is becoming abundantly clear that the higher education sector lacks a primary ingredient: systemic coherence. As we slowly confront the damaging effects of racism, we appear to be constructing new forms of apartheid. Similarly, curriculum tinkering has not provided the foundation to escape our past or to refashion a viable future devoid of violence, hatred and intolerance. Perhaps we underestimated the length of time required for a society to be transformed. The recent dominant narrative in higher education transformation, encapsulated in the violent resistance to western and colonial symbols in institutions, appears to detract from the more fundamental crisis of indolence and our failure to confront the real challenge of curriculum transformation. It is this reality that has propelled our work as academics and researchers over the years and, a turn to our own histories of involvement in higher education illuminates the point.

Michael Samuel spent his early years in Stanger (north of Durban). He had aspirations to become an architect, studied it for a while, dropped out and became a schoolteacher instead. He began his employment in a state school, moving thereafter to an élite private school before joining the former University of Durban-Westville (UDW) in 1989.

Rubby Dhunpath entered higher education in the tumultuous year of 1976 and despite participating in the endemic student protests against the discriminatory curriculum, he qualified as a schoolteacher and taught at various schools in Durban, before resigning as a deputy principal to enter higher education. In 1996 he enrolled for the MEd degree, followed by the PhD in education, both studies supervised by Michael Samuel. Rubby moved on to become head of the unit for language and literacies at the Human Sciences Research Council in Pretoria.

By contrast, Nyna Amin grew up in Pretoria and always wanted to be a medical doctor, but teaching was one of the few options available for a black female at the time. She started her professional life as a teacher in Pretoria before moving to her marital home in Durban. In 1999, she enrolled for the MEd degree at UDW, followed by a doctoral qualification which she obtained through a Fulbright Fellowship

which provided exposure to a global curriculum experience at the Michigan State University. Michael Samuel was a co-supervisor of her doctoral thesis.

Ironically, UDW, a *bush college* set-up for those of Indian origin, was the intellectual space of our initial meetings and subsequent friendship and research collaborations. Over the next few years, all our careers converged at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). Michael became Dean of Education, Rubby, returned to UKZN as the Director of Teaching and Learning and Nyna, was promoted to Associate Professor in Education Studies. Each of us was involved in curriculum work (amongst a host of other roles and functions). Michael, after international explorations of alternative post-independence teacher education curriculum policy choices in developing world contexts, was a member of the Ministerial Task Team which provided the foundations for the construction of a post-apartheid national teacher education policy framework. Rubby contributed to activating an environmental ethos for researching the scholarship of teaching and learning, an endeavour embraced by academics across the disciplinary sectors of the university. The Teaching and Learning office and the annual teaching and learning conference evolved to become the catalyst for generative, multi-disciplinary scholarship. Nyna was tasked with setting up the framework for reconceptualising teaching practice for first year undergraduate students and the new BEd curriculum. All three editors' involvement in designing and supporting innovative Masters and Doctoral education programmes is also noted. We participated in various teaching and research activities and associated programmes attached to the annual teaching and learning conference. Curriculum was at the heart of our work and aspects thereof, troubled us sufficiently to publish in journals and write books. But it was the keynote address delivered by Gayatri Spivak at the Eighth Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Conference in 2014 that provided the language and made explicit the reasons for the futility of our attempts to bring about real transformation through curriculum intervention, and served as impetus for this book.

Drawing on her experiences of repaying ancestral debt to the lowest of the low and poorest of the poor in India, Spivak explained the mammoth task of rewiring their damaged cognitive structures which was caused by her ancestors. Spivak's allusion to *cognitive damage* found resonance with the audience. She argued that many are complicit in their capitulation through learned obedience and servitude to not question the organs of power. In exploring the role of the curriculum she challenged the audience to consider the limits of economic and social empowerment. She offered her comments about approaching indigenous knowledge systems and the relationship between quality in education and the democratic imperative. '*Undoing cognitive damage*' became the mantra of the conference and a by-line for this book.

Spivak's address was suitably complemented by William Pinar, another keynote speaker at the conference. Pinar posed the question, "what knowledge is most worthwhile?" with reference to recent attempts to reform the curriculum in South Africa and the implications for substantive change. He argued that cognisance of multivariate contexts is crucial for curriculum reform. Indeed, one element – such

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as *structure* – cannot be cast as the key contributor to educational accomplishment. In the workshop that followed, Pinar turned his attention to repositioning students as central to curriculum reform as they defined the context, conviction and incorporation of diversified worldviews. His comments suggested that higher education curriculum designers need to be attuned to the *pedagogy of listening*: in effect, being sensitive to forces which include recognising state technologies as agents of the marketplace. Simply responding to students' demands is also to be challenged as students too may be similarly seduced by simplistic econometric and individualistic rationalities. A recurrent theme that emerged through the conference debates was the concern that curriculum reform should not be confined to just the formal, taught components of higher education. A key ingredient of curriculum reform was the acceptance of unarticulated theoretical and implicit philosophical orientations of the course designers who infused their brand of intellectual, ideological, political, social and cultural worldviews in the curriculum. Curriculum, we believe, should transcend the narrow prescripts of content and pedagogy, and we should sustain enquiry of the institutional conditions that support intellectual labour. It is our responsibility to ensure that higher education curriculum shapers (academic staff, managers, leaders, co-workers and students) produce curricula that will inspire the next generation of thinkers who will contribute to the quality of the society which we will co-habit in the future.

We must remember that readings of the context are not limited to the textual products engaged during lecture interactions or in the course materials; they are equally accessed through the multiple texts that characterise the higher education environment: its architectural environment; its marketing and imaging material; its artistic and creative works; its utilisation of spaces; and they are limited by the absence and omissions of alternative texts. Textual materials are harbingers of legacies, ideologies and values of preferred authorities and hierarchies. As a complex space, the curriculum of higher education is accessible and speaks directly to those who share its ideologies and values whilst alienating those who contest its worldviews.

These keynote addresses have inspired and complemented the multitude of curriculum questions that punctuated the parallel sessions, the TV interviews and corridor conversations. For example, chapters include debates about whether the new delivery media of information communication technology embraced almost unquestioningly into the university pedagogical terrain are driving distorted conceptions of advancing teaching and learning. Other debates include the acknowledgement of human diversity beyond race, gender and class, to include the absent human rights of queers within formal curriculum spaces. These are just some of the ways of undoing cognitive damage.

Our aim in this book is to offer to readers philosophical, practical and future directions of writings on shifting the curriculum that foster *undoing cognitive damage*. We hope that it will stimulate debates about the importance of curriculum

redesign as we enter a critical, even dangerous, period (in South Africa) of ideological warfare being waged on university campuses. Through our damaged lenses, clouded with the muck of old thinking so out of sync with the aspirations of the contemporary youth, we have not been able to respond appropriately, or to understand (nay, a refusal to understand) the attacks on higher education. The younger generation is suspicious of our motives, our ideals and values. We need to look again at our curricula, to be aware that there is a range of alternative perspectives to be engaged with. We anticipate that this book will inspire critical possibilities for curriculum change in higher education. Change, of course, as Mahatma Gandhi reminds us, begins with us.

This anthology is about disruptive shifts to vitalise the higher education curriculum. It critically questions whether already enacted alternative curriculum interventions have indeed assisted to undo cognitive damage in higher education. Have the curriculum disruptions enabled re-defining who we are and who we want to become as knowledge activators? We leave it to readers to judge our musings, interventions and (mis)directions.

Finally, this anthology represents over two years of reworking and re-designing as the key themes emerged across and between chapters. The book took shape in the first instance by identifying possible authors. Delegates who presented papers at the conference were invited to write chapters. Later, the invitation was expanded to include authors who were making significant strides in adapting their pedagogies to embrace more critical conceptions of curriculum.

A NOTE ON THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS

The book is a product of deliberations at the 2013 Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Conference hosted by UKZN, and chaired by one of the editors. As a post-conference activity, delegates and other curriculum specialists in higher education were requested to critically analyse and reflect on their philosophical and theoretical perspectives and practical experiences of curriculum innovation and change in their diverse disciplinary contexts.

Authors submitted their draft chapters to the editorial committee, which made final selections based on relevance to the theme and potential to advance thinking in the domain of higher education curriculum. Each of the chapters was subject to a double, and in some instances, triple-blind peer review process. An attempt was made to include at least one national and one international reviewer.

As a consequence of the review, four chapters were excluded from the collection. Following consultations between the editors and authors, authors were given an opportunity to revise their chapters. Each author submitted a final draft manuscript incorporating reviewers' comments which was circulated to the editors for further critique. The final manuscript was then sent to the publisher which subjected it to their own publisher peer-review process.

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To all of these shapers of the final product, we are indeed grateful.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	– Architectural Association
AAU	– Association of African Universities
AIDS	– Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
BRICS	– Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CALL	– Computer Assisted Language Learning
CAPS	– Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CBDs	– Central Business Districts
CCE	– Curricular Community Engagement
CE	– Community Engagement
CHE	– Council on Higher Education
CIAM	– Congres Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne
CNN	– Cable News Network
CoS	– Church of Sweden
DHET	– Department of Higher Education and Training
DOI	– Diffusion of Innovations
Ed.D	– Professional Doctorate in Education
EGST	– Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology
FGC	– Female Genital Cutting
FGM	– Female Genital Mutilation
GRH	– Gender, Religion and Health
HEIs	– Higher Education Institutions
HIV	– Human immunodeficiency virus
HLTs	– Human Language Technologies
HSRC	– Human Sciences Research Council
IASTE	– International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments
ICS	– Information & Communications Services
ICT	– Information Communication Technology
INC	– IsiZulu National Corpus
ISIL	– Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	– Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IQ	– Intelligence Quotient
MDGs	– Millennium Development Goals
MIE	– Mauritius Institute of Education
MUCT	– Makumira University College in Tanzania
NCHE	– National Commission into Higher Education
NCS	– National Curriculum Statement
NGOs	– Non-Governmental Organisations
NLG	– Natural Language Generation

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NSA	–	National Skills Authority
NSFAS	–	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OBE	–	Outcomes-Based Education
OGPU	–	Obyedinyonnoye Gosudarstvennoye Politicheskoye Upravleniye (Joint State Political Directorate)
PACSA	–	Pietermaritzburg Agency for Community Social Action
PanSALB	–	Pan South African Language Board
PGCE	–	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PhD	–	Doctor of Philosophy
QEP	–	Quality Enhancement Project
R&D	–	Research and Development
RDA	–	Resources Development Administration
RoLA	–	Relationship of Labouring Affinities
RNCS	–	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SAMR	–	Substitution Augmentation Modification Redefinition
SAQA	–	South African Qualifications Authority
SL	–	Service Learning
SOGI	–	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
SRHR	–	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
STEM	–	Science Technology and Mathematics
SUN	–	Stellenbosch University
TAM	–	Technology Acceptance Model
TEC	–	Tertiary Education Commission
TPACK	–	Technological, Pedagogical And Content Knowledge
UDW	–	University of Durban-Westville
UKZN	–	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UN	–	University of Natal
UNESCO	–	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	–	United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund
UoB	–	University of Brighton
UTAUT	–	Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology model
WBE	–	Whole Brain Emulation

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PART ONE
PHILOSOPHICAL MUSINGS

NYNA AMIN, MICHAEL ANTHONY SAMUEL AND
RUBBY DHUNPATH

1. UNDOING COGNITIVE DAMAGE

INTRODUCTION: THE ENCHANTED LOOM

(Re)presenting the Human Brain

In the book, *Man on his Nature*, Charles Sherrington (1942) compared the complex structures, networks and functions of the human brain to a jacquard loom thus,

The great topmost sheet of the mass, where hardly a light had twinkled or moved, becomes now a sparkling field of rhythmic flashing points with trains of traveling sparks hurrying hither and thither. The brain is waking and with it the mind is returning. It is as if the Milky Way entered upon some cosmic dance. Swiftly the head mass becomes an enchanted loom where millions of flashing shuttles weave a dissolving pattern, always a meaningful pattern though never an abiding one, a shifting harmony of subpatterns.

The brain, Sherrington (1942) implied, was more beguiling, more sophisticated and more exquisite than the most complex loom known to humans at that time, and his description conveyed the idea that it was some kind of magical, mystical machine toiling away, powering the mind with its neural electrical impulses. For Sherrington, the quote settled the debate begun by Descartes (1984/1641) of the separation of mind (non-physical/immaterial) and brain (physical/material) by making explicit the connection of the one with the other. Sherrington, it must be noted, was referring to the physiology of the brain, that organ that humans are born with, which he surmised, functioned in the same way in all persons. He assumed that the brains of all individuals are enchanted looms that continuously weave meaningful patterns. We know now that each brain is unique to each individual (Caine & Caine, 1991, p. 95), weaving meanings via neural concatenations and making interpretations in relation to external contexts.

As a response to likening the brain to a loom, the following questions which the various chapters in the book engage with are pertinent: Meaningful to whom? Meaningful in response to what? Does harmony of subpatterns translate into harmonious co-existence? Perhaps, a very brief tour of the brain is necessary at this juncture.

The Brain

The brain, it transpires is twice the size of the heart, weighing approximately 1.3kg and comprises about 100 billion neurons (Ornstein & Thompson, 1984). Tightly coiled to fit into the restricted space of the skull, it is divided into two by a thick band, the corpus callosum, giving rise to the flawed idea of a left and a right brain rather than an interactive one (Gazzaniga, 1985). Damasio's (1994) work also shattered the myth of two functionally differentiated brains, a left (rational/language processor) and a right (emotional/creative) brain, showing instead that it does not work in isolated cortices; interconnections form neural highways that are linked for functional efficiency. What is known, too, is that the *enchanted loom* is fragile and can be physiologically damaged which can result in, for example, paralysis (inability to move), aphasia (word comprehension impairment) and apraxia (speech impairment). Equally true is brain plasticity (see e.g. Diamond, 1988). The brain can recover from trauma, regenerate and compensate for lost neurons. How and why this happens is not always clear. Some aspects of the brain are still mysterious. For example, it is not obvious why some people develop Alzheimer's disease (a total breakdown of the mind, dissociation with reality and fragmentation of memory) or manifest psychological conditions like neurosis (considered a mild psychological disorder like the compulsion to wash hands excessively) or psychosis (a severe psychological disorder like schizophrenia) or why some individuals breakdown emotionally and become depressed while others manifest an optimistic and resilient attitude. What we do know, however, is that the brain can be impaired physiologically, psychologically, emotionally or cognitively through internal malfunctioning, trauma or degeneration, which, we want to emphasise, are not the foci of this book; instead we are concerned about cognitive damage *in the absence* of physiological malfunctioning, trauma or degeneration.

Cognitive Damage in the Absence of Physiological Damage

In this section we explore the ways in which the brain, as an organ of learning, is complicit in acquiring and actioning life to its detriment. For example, recalibration of the brain is possible because teaching is done verbally and, as argued by Korzybski (1948), language is used to create non-existent realities that can lead to confusion, alienation and delusion:

These 'philosophers', etc., seem unaware, to give a single example, that by teaching and preaching 'identity', which is empirically non-existent in this actual world, they are *neurologically* training future generations in the pathological identifications found in the 'mentally' ill or maladjusted. As explained on page 409, and also Chapter XXVI, whatever we may say an object '*is*', *it is not*, because the statement is verbal, and the facts are not. (p. xxix)

It seems then, that 'neurological training' occurs when teaching is inefficient and lacks sophistication such that *what is* cannot be differentiated from *what it is not*. Thus we

are concerned that the function of learning can rewire intraneural connections, revise the *weave patterns* and rescript meaning making in numerous ways that are often not beneficial for all communities. For instance, formal, informal, intrinsic and extrinsic learning and external forces like culture, society, and institutions of education, influence sense of self in ways that are hazardous for some yet advantageous for other individuals. A case in point is the *manifesto for a new world order*, passionately argued by Monbiot (2004) in *The Age of Consent*:

Throughout history, human beings have been the loyalists of an exclusive community. They have always known, as if by instinct, who lies within and who lies without. Those who exist beyond the border are less human than those who exist within. (p. 8)

The art of dismembering and fragmenting communities and to isolate and separate one from another appears to be some kind of intuitive knowing inherent in human beings. But is it? Could it be the result of retroactive memory transmitted through the genes? Or, to appropriate Žižek's (2008) description, could intuition be an 'apparition of the Real' (p. 59), an illusion of capturing verbally that which is elusive?

We are concerned too, that the history of human development is also a history of the failure of the enchanted loom to withstand the debilitating effects of distorted constructions of reality, and of its failure to resist historical repetition and, in so doing, it has mediated the reproduction of damaged rationalities for centuries, reminiscent of Nietzsche's (1974) idea of "eternal recurrence" (section 341). Finally, we are concerned that the *enchanted loom*, which has enthralled and mystified human beings for millennia as the seat of intellect, is so vulnerable to cognitive damage.

COGNITIVE DAMAGE: AN ETERNAL DOOM?

Cognitive Damage Explained

By cognitive damage we mean the following: to accept and inhabit impositions that are antithetical to sense of self; the inability to recognise the ways and means in which the individual/self is marginalised, erased, rendered invisible, treated unjustly, oppressed, silenced, suppressed, censored, disregarded, ignored, mistreated, rendered powerless or enslaved; giving in to practices and structures of hegemony; obedience and acquiescence to imposition of these various forms of subjugation, the inability to overcome/resist these impositions when aware; and, the absence of agency, revolt or retributive action.

Cognitive damage, we argue, is not only a pathology of the downtrodden, the powerless or the subjugated individual, it is also manifested by those who hold and abuse positions of authority; promote hegemonic worldviews; suppress resistance and revolt against tyranny; mask the ways in which systems and structures privilege a few at the expense of the majority; and by those who maintain the *status quo*. Furthermore, between the oppressed and the privileged, lies a third category of

cognitive damaged: the so-called neutrals, that is, those who are not oppressed but are witnesses to oppression, yet indifferent or silent.

In effect, we want to know the reasons for the uninterrupted continuation of cognitive damage and, more importantly, how to undo it. The itemised listing of manifestations of cognitive damage would be regarded by Althusser and Balibar (1997) as *symptomatic readings* thereof. Peering beneath the symptoms, which are superficial in nature, is the first step, perhaps, to undoing cognitive damage. We begin the discussion with ‘discourse’ and ‘representation’ because words and visuals are powerful tools used to construct reality and they are also used in human learning. This will be followed by a discussion of the roles of ideology and hegemony to create and sustain cognitive damage.

Discourse, Representation, Reality and Cognitive Damage

Depending on one’s theory affiliation, discourse could be, for example, narrowed to text and context (Fairclough, 1992) or widened to include the totality of the field of discursivity (Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). There are other articulations of discourse and discourse analysis (see e.g. Foucault, 1986, 1991; Koselleck, 1985, 1989; Luhmann, 1993, 1995) which we will not visit here as the first two mentioned are sufficient for the point we are making. What is common to the approaches is the attention to power relations that underpin the way we talk, describe and make meaning of the world we inhabit. Talking and meaning making are not neutral because they are implicated in the construction, reconstruction, revisioning and rearrangement of the world. Words, uttered by the powerful are potent, whilst the disempowered may be ignored or silenced. Critical analysis of discourses can reveal the ways in which power circulates, coagulates or bleeds out. We are inclined towards the discourse analytics of Laclau and Mouffe (1995).

We begin with an analysis of the 1955 Bandung Conference of Afro-Asian countries to exemplify how discourse constructs the world in unanticipated ways. The conference gave rise to the notion of *Third World* to mean an alliance emancipated from Eastern and Western bloc influences (Spivak, 1994). Brought together to promote political self-determination, cooperation and to resist colonialism, the 29 new decolonised states assumed that the third way would symbolise its power as a unified group (the Non-Aligned Movement). Instead, *Third World* became a one-sided, pathological synonym for countries depicted as poverty- and disease-stricken, economically needy, under-developed and backward. Hierarchically, it was construed as subordinate to the First and Second Worlds. The designation, *Third World*, constructed to represent an agentic, autonomous unity, resistant to the dominance of the First and Second Worlds, delivered instead, a pre-packaged concept to the powerful which was then deployed to subvert one of the intentions of the Bandung Conference. The *Third World* thus became associated with notions of weakness, subservience and pessimism. That all three worlds contained elements of development and under-development was conveniently ignored and the construction

reduced to essentialised pathology. Instead the reality that was being resisted was installed as the only meaning that could be attached thereto. More than sixty years later, the substituted reality persists; it will take many more years before it is revised. The example demonstrates that once labelling or categorisation or classification occurs, new realities which differ from those originally intended can result. The formation of BRICS (the alliance made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) is one such attempt. But here again, one can recognise the desire by BRICS countries to escape the pejorative realities associated with and, simultaneously, to distance themselves from the *Third World*.

We could shift the debate from geopolitical spaces to more familiar, local grounds (institutions of learning) and encounter the same game of domination by some and oppression of others. The production of inequalities within the structures of education is related to social class, economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1973, 1977, 2006), succinctly captured here by Reimer (1973):

The school system has thus amazingly become, in less than a century, the major mechanism for distributing values of all kinds among all the peoples of the world, largely replacing the family, the church, and the institution of private property in this capacity. In capitalist countries it might be more accurate to say that schools confirm rather than replace the value-distribution functions of these older institutions. Family, religion and property have such an important influence on access to and success in school that schooling alters only slowly and marginally the value distributions of an earlier day. Jefferson put it well when he said, in arguing for public schools, that by this means we shall each year rake a score of geniuses from the ashes of the masses. The result of such a process, as the English aristocracy learned long before Jefferson, is to keep the élite alive while depriving the masses of their potential leaders. (pp. 26–27)

Based on the aforementioned, discourse, we can agree, are all types of interactions that are non-innocent, political constructions of understanding the world, emanating from unequal relations of power. It is a constitutive force; representation is a similar force as articulated by Escobar (2012, p. 10):

[R]egimes of discourses and representation ... can be analyzed as places of encounters where identities are constructed where violence is originated, symbolized and managed.

The quotation is a stark revelation of the outcomes of contested spaces marked not only by face-to-face socialisation but by a more insidious figuration, namely, representation. Representation takes many guises (word texts, photographs, paintings, drawings and collages) to describe reality, portray a thing/event/action in a particular way or to act on behalf of others. Acting on behalf of others, we want to make clear, should not be confused with the notion of political representation – speaking for those who cannot be present (Pitkin, 1967). In fact, acting on behalf of others often misrepresents individuals, rendering them invisible or insignificant or

creating vulnerabilities that disadvantage them even more. For example, Monbiot (2004) presented a convincing case to show the ways in which big organisations, created to cushion the financial weakness of poor countries, exacerbated their financial woes:

The two international bodies which are supposed to help struggling economies both to avoid and emerge from debt are the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. That they have failed is not difficult to see; even after receiving debt relief, several poor nations are spending more on interest payments than on primary education. Indeed the majority of their clients have fallen much further into debt than they were before these bodies intervened. ... Indeed, it is demonstrable that the nations which have most obediently followed their prescriptions are among those which have suffered the most violent economic disruptions. (pp. 141–142)

We must remember that the ‘donor’ institutions and the ‘helped’ nations are governed by *people* who exemplify *cognitive damage*. How else can we explain the madness of organised and legitimised compliance on such a large scale? Cognitive damage operates not only at an individual level, it is systemic too, and it is the empty promise conveyed by an empty signifier like ‘debt relief’. In fact ‘debt’ is incurred by poor nations while international bodies get ‘relief’. In this instance, the reality created by words is an illusion because the sutured terms, ‘debt relief’, mask their split affinities in favour of one and detriment to the other, echoing Korzybski’s assertion that,

[t]he present analysis shows that, under the all-pervading aristotelianism in daily life, asymmetrical relations, and thus structure and order, have been impossible, and so we have been *linguistically* prevented from supplying the potentially ‘rational’ being with the means for rationality. This has resulted in a semi-human, so-called ‘civilization’, based on our copying animals in our nervous process, which by necessity, involves us in arrested development or regression, and in general, disturbances of some sort. (p. 62, italics in original)

It seems our capacity to be rational is compromised by power relations and *cognitive damage*. Structures like patriarchy (which authorise male authority over women and children), schools (which privilege some knowledge and not others) and political arrangements (which determine legality/illegality), are implicated in classifying and sorting human from non-human, good from bad, male from female and so on, promoting the notion of a binary world comprising *us* and *them*. Since both sides of the binary are cognitively damaged, it matters not that one could cross over from *them* to *us* or *us* to *them*. The damage remains, but disadvantage is displaced by privilege or vice versa.

The exposure of inequality, disadvantage and impotence described through its various mechanisms will lead invariably to the idea that human life is predicated on the principle of inequality, privileges for a few and disadvantage for the majority. We agree. Despite the installation of democracy in South Africa, discriminations of

various sorts continue to haunt us regarding access to technology, age, ability, career choice, class, culture, economic status, education, ethnicity, family structure, food choices, gender, health, heritage, land ownership, language spoken, marital status, nationality, occupation, political affiliation, race, religious belief, residential area, sex, sexuality, skin colour, shopping habits, social networks, and so on. Multiple categories could either enhance or jeopardise access to privilege. For example, a poor, black female could experience a life of suffering or escape suffering by marrying a rich, educated male or marriage creates the condition for suffering to be displaced by patriarchal dominance and physical violence. Most of those who are dispossessed, disadvantaged and deprived endure discrimination, rejection and marginalisation in many more than three categories. To complicate matters, some individuals may be privileged in some and disadvantaged in other settings. Spivak (2006) warns us too that the marginal (of any category or combination) are not a homogeneous group. So long as we are not disabused of our flawed thinking about what counts as important, that is, that all humans count, there will always be those who suffer and those who prosper. A paradigmatic shift (towards post-humanism) will require a revision of what counts: all living and non-living things count. Based on history, we are rather sceptical, though seriously concerned, about human capacity or desire to embrace more than self-interest. Our education, formal and informal, has failed us thus far. It has failed thus far to undo cognitive damage.

Ideology, Hegemony and Cognitive Damage

Ideology (Marxian notion of a coherent system of political ideas) and hegemony (Gramscian notion of manufacturing consent), we argue, are the principle causes of *cognitive damage* and are the most pervasive invisible forces that structure the possibilities and limitations of being human. Being human should not necessarily be interpreted as positive as the unfolding argument will demonstrate. A 'being' could be constructed as subhuman, inhuman, superior human, inferior human, barely human or half-human depending on *who* is the articulator. Ideology and hegemony are serviced through language. Language not only constructs and structures the world; it is also important for conveying ideological and hegemonic articulations, not by those whose articulations hold sway but through the co-option and complicity of those at the receiving end. Co-option and complicity are possible because of distorted perceptions of our place in the world.

One of the clearest descriptions of ideology (though he did not name it so), *anonymous authority* was offered by Erich Fromm (1941) in *Escape from Freedom*. The excerpt below captures his explanation of how *anonymous authority* differs from external authority:

In external authority it is clear that there is an order and who gives it; one can fight against the authority, and in this fight personal independence and moral courage develop. But ... in anonymous authority both command and

commander have become invisible. It is like being fired at by an invisible enemy. There is nobody and nothing to fight back against. (p. 190)

Anonymous authority, however, is not sufficient in itself to grasp the nature of ideology for there is implied a consciousness of being ‘commanded’. Ideology (and hegemony) operates on a horizon beyond consciousness. For clarity, we turn to Žižek (2008), who, by contrast, makes apparent the insidious nature of ideology by expanding on Marx’s thesis thereof,

‘they do not know it, but they are doing it’. The very concept of ideology implies a kind of basic, constitutive *naiveté*, the misrecognition of its own presuppositions, of its own effective conditions, a distance, a divergence between the so-called social reality, and our distorted representation, our false consciousness of it. (p. 24, italics in original)

Misrecognition of social reality is crucial for domination and exercise of power because it appears that the reality experienced is natural. Since the sources that power ideology and hegemony are invisible, those being manipulated give in to subjectivations that *others* them at worst or disadvantages them at best. Misrecognition is supported by fictions (master narratives) that are received as truths. These fictions are expressed in multiple ways, e.g.: abnormalisation (homosexuality); normalisation (gender roles); standardisation (IQ tests); naturalisation (patriarchy); doxa (religion); marginalisation (the homeless, the poor) subalternisation (the dispossessed and disempowered); surveillance mechanisms (schools and prisons); technologies of the self (self-surveillance); and governmentality (population control). Through these various means it becomes possible to capture the imagination of the masses, to colonise their minds and to hold them hostage to beliefs and practices that undermine and subjugate them in ways that appear to be legitimate. Through these means, decisions are imposed, policies are legitimised, beliefs are inculcated, and practices are established whilst the imbibers of these beliefs and practices, no matter how abhorrent, are blind to their manipulation, co-option and complicity in their own domination and subjugation. Blindness, false consciousness, misrecognitions and compliance are learnt in homes, schools, churches and organisations (amongst many more structures) over time, setting up the conditions for *cognitive damage*.

The education we offer rarely reveals the hidden forces and mechanisms that construct our world and our place in it. The fields of psychology, anthropology, history, geography, biology and economics often present knowledge not as contested but as true. Where and when contestations are offered, they are often memorised for examination purposes (and forgotten soon thereafter) while thinking tools to reveal practices of hegemony, or to uncover ideological beliefs are largely absent in our curricula. We should not be surprised by the null and hidden curricula in our education systems as curriculum planners are also cognitively damaged. So are we doomed to being cognitively damaged? We think not.

UNDOING COGNITIVE DAMAGE: A CHANCE TO BLOOM?

The most important question we pose in this chapter in particular, and in the book in general, is this: Can *cognitive damage* be undone? Postman (1996) gives us an idea of what it might mean to bring about change:

of course there are many learnings that are little else but a mechanical skill, and in such cases, there may be a best way. But to become a different person because of something you have learned- appropriate an insight, a concept, a vision, so that your world is altered- that is a different matter. (p. 3)

The answer he posits is ‘learning’ acquired through education. Education need not be formal; it can and should occur through multiple fora in multiple spaces. Unfortunately, those most affected by the present world order are those most likely to be deprived of the following: access to radical ideas and education; access to portals of power; access to structures of support; access to health and medical care; access to basic amenities; access to courts of law, and access to psychological well-being (respect and dignity). Re-envisioning education and reconceptualising curriculum may be some alternatives at hand. But could we make a radical shift, a shift that alters our world? We turn again to Postman (1996) for direction. He provides a provocative example of what should be asked “in each subject of the curriculum” (p. 128) to make education relevant and authentic, and more importantly, to rescript the master narratives that construct knowledge as truth:

Describe five of the most significant errors scholars have made in (biology, physics, history, etc.). Indicate why they are errors, who made them, and what persons are mainly responsible for correcting them. You may receive an extra credit if you can describe an error that was made by the error corrector. You will receive extra extra credit if you can suggest a possible error in our current thinking about (biology, physics, history, etc.). And you will receive extra extra extra credit if you can indicate a possible error in some strongly held belief that currently resides in your mind. (Postman, 1996, p. 28)

We know too that the world, as we have argued before, is constituted by language. To radically transform the current order will require the capturing of concepts, to attach new meanings thereto and to refuse that which is given. Negation, however, is easier said than done. To dislodge internalised oppression will require the Freirian notion of enlightened empowerment termed *conscientizado* (Freire, 2000) and interpreted as,

learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the aggressive elements of reality. (p. 35)

It will also require reflexive practice by those who can bring about change. The chapters in this compendium make various arguments and recommendations, and suggest implications for curriculum redesign, revision and reconceptualisation that

can be seen to be in alignment with Freire's conscientisation agenda: to read the *word*, to read the *world*, to *transform the world*. We know that we face enormous challenges on many fronts but we cannot give in to pessimism. It is heartening to note that most of the chapters in this book provide empirical evidence that there are possibilities through curriculum intervention to undo *cognitive damage* and to bloom.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THIS ANTHOLOGY

The chapters of this anthology are organised into three overlapping sections:

Part One (Philosophical musings) draws on a range of and introduces key constructs for the analysis of the higher education curriculum. The debates include an analysis of the ways the present education curricula (its disciplines and bounded categorisations), our social structures and operations, and the distribution of knowledge and power are implicated in producing, entrenching and supporting "cognitive damage". Rather than fatalistically capitulating to these forces of oppression, the option for strengthening our capacity is offered via acknowledging the conscious critical activation needed in curriculum actions (*Nyna Amin, Michael Anthony Samuel and Rubby Dhunpath*). Furthermore, the analysis explores how those on the peripheries may be complicit in their own oppressions (*Gayatri Spivak*). Agency, we know, can be self-realised and expressed in a range of ways, including destructive acts of resistance or, ideally, for productive transformation through curriculum intervention.

This section also probes whether universities can still be regarded as concerned sources of practical, reliable and relevant scholarship. Has the purpose of higher education to generate discerning judgement and innovative epistemologies been relegated to the periphery in the era of global capitalism (*Chatradari Devroop*)? The curriculum of higher education could also be characterised as subtly promoting the delusion that even the aesthetics can be programmed and deployed through technologies (*Dennis Schaffer*). Which codified knowledges are being celebrated and cultivated via higher education curricula? Does the study of disciplines, for example, architecture, subtly promote outdated notions of modernist fetishes (*Franco Frescura*)?

These philosophical musings challenge architects of the higher education sector to generate mature curricula that speak against a world made up of isolated entities. Such discrete boundaries are exploited to service rampant competition between one individual and another and, furthermore, to alienate individuals from their environment. How does the curriculum of higher education shift from protecting securities of bounded selves to one that troubles knowledges, and that is cognisant of interconnected selves and relationships? Troubling knowledge has relevance not just for academic interdisciplinary pursuit, but is also relevant for all domains of life (*Kriben Pillay*). New modes for exploring how we produce relationships within higher education curriculum are explored as a form of "de-pathologising and

decolonising mentalities”, creating a “relationship of labouring of affinities”, and generating “complicated conversations” (*Mershen Pillay*).

Further philosophical insights are offered about the limitations of a humanist anthropocentric way of thinking (*Bert Olivier*). The loss of focus on the “reign of the human” is reinterpreted as a gain, prompting a shift towards a posthumanist, post-anthropocentric approach in a variety of disciplines, not just in the humanities, but across the landscape of higher education curriculum. Using film studies as metaphors for curriculum analysis, and drawing on Deleuze and Gattari’s work, this section evokes an interpretation of “becoming other” and “becoming animal”.

The juxtaposition of these multi-disciplinary inputs provides a rich collage of theoretical insights, establishing lenses through which to critique our research engagement in curriculum development and analysis.

Part Two (Curriculum shifts) explores the enactment into practice of alternative curriculum approaches when designing or analysing the higher education curriculum. What shifts are already under way through the curriculum choices course designers and policy-makers are engaging? What is the influence of curriculum *shifts*? Can the shifts extend beyond the confines of policy implementation studies, or the investigation of the pedagogical readiness of the actors within the higher education system to chart new directions? How can curriculum shifts redefine the expanding field of curriculum studies?

The examples are drawn from troubling the instrumentalistic and managerialistic interpretations of national policy implementation analysis studies (*William Pinar*). It shifts conceptions of community service pedagogies beyond patriarchal, parochial and patronising preoccupations, instead, offering the need for dialogical spaces in pedagogies of dialogue and listening (*Julia Preece*).

This section also expands the notion of the curriculum beyond classroom-based course designs and pedagogies. Instead, it argues that the institution is continually communicating a quiet curriculum via the ways in which it chooses to profess historical interpretations of itself, its shifting identities and its (dis)connectedness to the social, temporal and cultural-political spatiality. Textual representations of historicity and spatiality, by varied individuals of an institution across time, constitute another dimension of the higher education curriculum studies landscape (*Michael Anthony Samuel*). These multiple readings problematise the quality of relationships that the university higher education system sets up within the institution itself, and between the institution and its surrounding communities. It invokes alternative vocabularies to consider higher education pedagogy as recursively dialogical, mediating adaptive leaderships in re-negotiating its power relations across different spaces and social actors: the general public, the targeted working environments of graduates, other higher education institutions, the nation state and international collaboration partners (*Hyleen Mariaye*).

The section also deals with curriculum innovations in interdisciplinary studies such as gender, health sciences and religious studies. Exposure to alternative

multidimensional readings across bounded categorisations influences how students of different religious positionalities and perspectives choose to activate new directions for research (*Sarajini Nadar & Sarasvathie Reddy*). The section addresses marginalised groups such as gays, lesbians, bi-sexual, transgendered and inter-sexed individuals as exemplars of re-defining an extended notion of what constitutes the discipline of curriculum studies. How individuals of different generations interpret these reformulations in a master curriculum studies programme is explored (*Thabo Msibi*). This section also provides an intellectual response to developing marginalised languages as a corpus for university teaching and learning. Developing marginalised languages provides counterpoints to the argument that African languages are not able to sustain higher education curriculum restructuring endeavours. A strengthened, co-ordinated effort at multiple levels of the higher education system is required to activate an alternative that is operationally and philosophically coherent (*Langa Khumalo*). The section concludes with a critical examination of the potentialities and limitations of technological innovation in enhancing the quality of university pedagogies and curriculum design. We can easily become seduced into believing that technology would resolve many of our current challenges in higher education, but caution is advised about how it is appropriated to service particular agendas (*Craig Blewett*).

Part Three (Mis) directions? charts a prospective agenda drawing on explicit strategies at an institutional level to engage with the project of systemic curriculum reform. The strength of advocating a systems-wide institutionally-led curriculum development process is counteracted in the closing chapter which privileges the value of a “curriculum without borders”, and “working with uncertainty” as valued orientations for quality curriculum change. The presentation of a theoretical framework drawn from curriculum explorations in teacher education and medical education for activating a more socially-just, socially-responsive (and seemingly “incoherent knowledge space”) in a/an (de)intellectualised, complexified higher education curriculum, is offered as new directions for curriculum theorising and design (*Nyna Amin*).

Finally, this book makes a case for a new language to engage alternative reconstructions of higher education curriculum. Part One develops the vocabulary for critiquing cognitive damage; Part Two explores how these changes are being enabled and constrained in higher education in curriculum spaces; and Part Three marks the shift to a confidence in a borderless curriculum.

Multiple levels of reformatting and strengthening will be necessary to address the reconstruction of higher education curriculum (See [Figure 1.1.](#) below). The diverse competing forces impacting on the design, delivery and transformation of the higher education curriculum at personal, institutional, programmatic and national/international levels are invoked here illustrating the multiple levels of responsiveness required, and the intersected-ness and blurring of boundaries across these considerations theoretically, politically, epistemologically, contextually and methodologically.

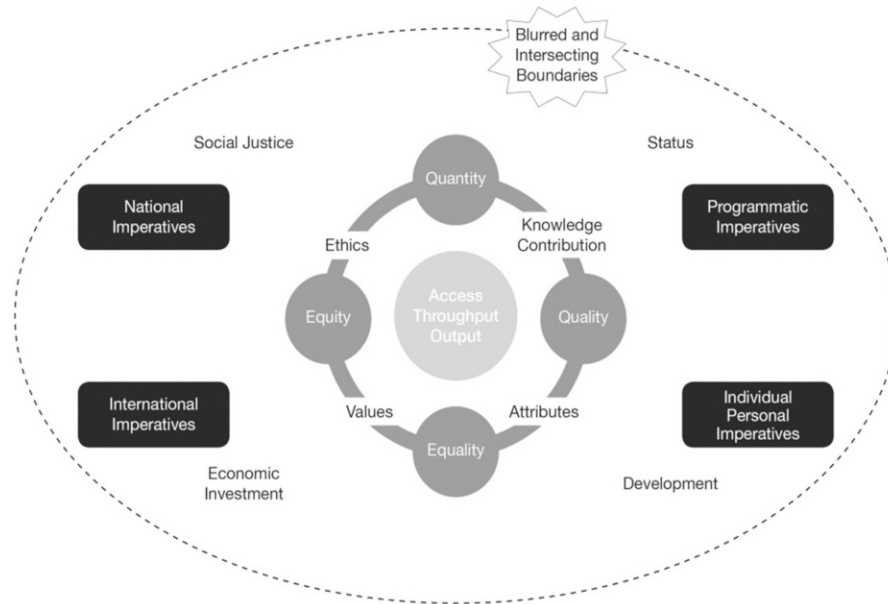


Figure 1.1. Blurred and intersecting boundaries: Competing agendas driving higher education curriculum reform

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Nyna Amin
School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Michael Anthony Samuel
School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Rubby Dhunpath
University Teaching and Learning Office
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK

2. HUMANITIES, DEMOCRACY AND THE POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is divided into three somewhat disjointed parts. I have not tried to create artificial transitions. The first section is an edited transcript of only part of what actually happened at the podium. The second part is something like a prepared paper. The third part is answers to a series of questions generated by the abstract I had sent. I have not deleted all repetitions. I wanted to keep the aura of the classroom.

AT THE PODIUM: SPEAKING THEN AND THERE

Universities are a great weapon for us. The university needs to be used. Yet when a vision is institutionalised, it is the laws of institutionalisation and disciplinarisation that take over rather than the power of the vision itself. The beginning of what seems like success is actually the beginning of problems. That is the theme of this chapter.

Another sub-theme might be the lesson of being folded together with your enemy, being com-plicit, folded together, not complicit in the sense of conspiratorial or involvement in something underhanded. Often we teach in a knowledge-managed way against our best convictions because we want to keep the job; we are folded together with what we want only to oppose. That is the first rule of forging a strong critique, not us and them, but the fact that we are in it together. No excusing but also no accusing the protocols of whatever it is that we are critiquing so that we can locate the point in the system that can turn it around, for use.

Let us go back to the theme: What seems like success is the beginning of problems. ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ an essay that you mentioned when you introduced me, became for me a problem that led to a beginning (Spivak, 1999). To evaluate the place of French theory in my vision of myself at that time of my life, I turned toward my own class, which is the sort of comfortable middle class although the woman that I was dealing with was certainly less comfortable than we were by then. Broadly speaking, then, I turned toward my own class, I turned to my own caste, and I turned to my family. That was where I turned. But the woman who was my example was a special kind of subaltern that Antonio Gramsci, the Italian activist who defined the concept, could only imagine when he was in prison being looked after by a woman whose sister, his wife, was exiled in her own country as a member of the OGPU, the Soviet security and intelligence agency.

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In the classic Gramscian definition, the subaltern is a social group, not single. And secondly, a subaltern is someone who is denied access to the structures of social mobility. In 1986 I began to try Gramsci's idea of the production of the subaltern intellectual without specifically thinking of Gramsci except as internalised through teaching. His idea had been to make the super-educated traditional intellectual, namely myself, instrumental in learning to learn how to teach cognitively damaged minds. So when you say 'teaching and learning', for me, since I am not an institutional philosopher of education, it is the lessons learnt from these fifty years of institutional teaching at Columbia and at reputable universities in the United States but also in the lowest sector of the electorate in India, my country of citizenship, landless illiterates, so-called untouchables, people who do not know the word that is used by the upwardly class mobile movement, a Sanskrit classical language word – *Dalit* – which is used outside to recognise such groups. Judging from these two ends, my lesson is: learn to learn how to teach this specific group. I should like to think that I am what in theoretical language would be called the dangerous supplement, showing that the toolkits and templates produced by knowledge management are incomplete, that they must be exceeded by learning the specific mind-set of a group, opening up homogenising statistics.

I was looking at your Quality Enhancement Project (CHE, 2014) and it is very good material. The framers really want to help the students; they want to bring students success:

The focus is necessitated by the combination of low participation rate, only 17% of 20–24 year-olds in 2011, low throughput rates, and stark racial bias in student success. (Grayson, 2014, p. 2)

No one can fault this. On the other hand, for speed and convenience the framers went to John Kotter's work, which was developed within a business context and then expanded into other contexts with no real care for specificity. Although in the published literature, we read: "much of it can be adapted to a higher education context," I would demur. The way in which one leads and succeeds in business is good with these kinds of knowledge management toolkit-type systems. That sort of success is not the success in preparing the ground with damaged cognitive systems. To insert the disenfranchised into entrepreneurship without subject-formative training is a sure formula for corruption and violence, in spite of the occasional Horatio Alger story aired on television or social media.

When at home, I work with my teachers and supervisors, I tell them,

I have come to repay ancestral debts. I am a good person. My parents were incredibly good people, plain-living, high-thinking, anti-casteists, against religious sectarianism, they were very solid people, but two generations of good people are nothing in the context of thousands of years of cognitive damage. We brought you up by denying you the right to intellectual labour, brought you up for manual labour, punished you for intellectual labour and,

indeed, bred in you obedience. I want you to know that I am your enemy because history is larger than personal goodwill and I want you to be able to work without me.

Now this particular situation, learn to learn how to teach, they know what I am talking about. Everything is shared. My education teacher, the education director, has had seven years of schooling. My ecological agriculture director has had four years of schooling, nothing but elementary schooling and really bad education like everybody else in class apartheid, so that their capacity for unconditional intellectual labour has been destroyed. Some of the illiterate ones are smarter, and they are smart because they have not been ruined by bad education. In such a context, when you take knowledge management, what I am obliged to say is that it actually impoverishes, existential impoverishment for the sake of convenience, it actually destroys the possibility of education in the broader sense. It is a formula for success where the specificity of groups is generalised as in the Kotter expansions and success is measured in soft statistics.

Rubby Dhunpath gave me ‘Democracy and Humanities,’ as the title. And I am indeed talking about the connection between humanities and democracy which is the task that the framers of the Quality Enhancement Project have set out for themselves, not corporate financial success. It is the humanities, with its other-directed methodological focus which can promote in the student the intuition that democracy is not just me, me, me, autonomy and freedom – it is a deep aporia, a deep contradiction – it is also at the same time equality for people who are completely dissimilar to me, rogues and thieves, anybody, they are the same as I am.

Human rights initiatives are concerned with promoting justified self-interest of victims but that does not produce a just society for all. Democracy has at its heart this intolerable contradiction, which is why democracy has to be worked at. I am talking about humanities teaching in that context, I am not talking about how you teach everything. I am just talking about this slow cooking of the soul as it were, without which you cannot use systems. Your students can then use knowledge management systems critically (a hope) because a basis has been built – which can only be slow – upon which the management takes hold within a different epistemological pattern, not on top but on tap (a hope). There is no other way. Speed is essential, yet in order to be able to use speed right rather than just for hacking, or pornography, or all kinds of piracy and theft, or killer drones, or the transformation of space into a business enterprise, you have to prepare the ground first with humanities teaching which does not have to prove itself in a world that can only value digitality. Digitality is like a dangerous horse. You have to know first how to ride.

Quality and development are compromised and existentially impoverished by a complete confidence in so-called toolkits and templates. I was looking at the picture of national and local coordination in the Quality Enhancement Project literature that I was studying and I am certain that it is not going to rearrange desires so that a democratic society is possible. Yet most of the Kotter statements are psychological

and behaviourist in nature. Many would argue that those premises and conclusions resulting from it are based on a rather crude model of the human mind, not including the specificities of the class-racialised other. When the Kotter project says something as broad as ‘incorporating the changes into the culture,’ it should seem like a joke in the South African context. You can only try – repeat, try – to do this if you have earned the right to enter that other space. That is, training in literary reading. Not just reading novels but teaching reading so that you hang out in the space of the other. It is taught negatively today only within groups that practice genocide. And we do not try to create a world that will not want to kill.

THE PREPARED SPEECH: AS THE OCCASION WAS IMAGINED

Terrorism teaches us how political economy, using the ideology of race, caste, or religion, can destroy teaching and learning. And its opposite, the ‘rule of law’ that arises because barriers between national capital and global capital are removed, and the state is run to manage the global economy rather than specifically to look after its citizens, attempts to enhance teaching and learning by producing toolkits that also limit teaching and learning. In the previous section, I discussed the Quality Enhancement Project, because that has come down on your university. In fact, that sort of initiative exists in selected places everywhere, globally, today.

The official descriptions of the project say that there should be a national focus on improving teaching and learning, particularly at the undergraduate level, which accounts for over 80% of student registrations. This focus is necessitated by the combination of low participation rate, only 17% of 20 to 24-year olds in 2011, low throughput rates and stark racial bias in student success “...[T]he next cycle of activities would be formulated as the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP), with a *focus on student success* across the entire higher education sector...” Although John Kotter’s work was developed within a business context, much of it can be adapted to a higher education context. Kotter identifies eight steps for leading change:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency: Help others see the need for change and they will be convinced of the importance of acting immediately.
2. Creating the guiding coalition: Assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort, and encourage the group to work as a team.
3. Developing a change vision: Create a vision to help direct the change effort and develop strategies for achieving that vision.
4. Communicating the vision for buy-in: Make sure as many as possible understand and accept the vision and the strategy.
5. Empowering broad-based action: Remove obstacles to change, change systems or structures that seriously undermine the vision and encourage risk-taking and non-traditional ideas, activities and actions.
6. Generating short-term wins: Plan for achievement that can easily be made visible, follow through with those achievements and recognise and reward those who were involved.

7. Never letting up: Use increased credibility to change systems, structures and policies that don't fit the vision. Hire, promote and develop people who can implement the vision. Reinvigorate the process with new projects, themes and change agents.
8. Incorporating changes into the culture: Articulate the connections between the new behaviours and organisational success, and develop the means to ensure leadership development and succession (Grayson, 2014, p. 3).

After this comes the typical diagram (Grayson, 2014, p. 7):

Process for each phase of the QEP [indicating] institutionally-based...and nationally-coordinated activities.

When I spoke at the education ministry in West Bengal about the problem of teaching English, they were ready to make for me just such a toolkit, explainable by just such diagrams. And our love affair with 'heritage' work – following the orders of the World Monuments Fund – uses just such broad generalisations for absurd systemic change.

As I have already pointed out, quality and development are compromised and existentially impoverished by a complete confidence in so-called toolkits and templates. The desire for such speedy solutions must be rearranged with the training of the imagination to understand that the toolkit closes off the contingent and therefore change. One must teach how to make toolkits as halfway houses to be undone by the contingent rather than offer toolkits for a solution to the problem of action. A 'dangerous supplement' must persistently (important word) be put on these kinds of successful systems – successful because reductive and easy – in order to bring in the incalculable because toolkits stop the contingent. Indeed, there is no computer that can catch the contingent (Rousseau as cited in Derrida, 1967, p. 229). One of the problems with toolkits is that they make teaching 'easier'. Far away from radical solidarity tourism, teachers of language, as well as the teachers of literature from whom they are hierarchically separated, no longer confront the challenge of the unexpected. We might want to remember that the teachability of literature is not only in its categorisability, but in the fact that it can open us to a contingency that escapes all knowledge management. I am not a romantic. I certainly do not suggest that we go back to the primitivism of emoting over global communities that I witness at many international conferences where I am invited because I am seen as a 'postcolonial' person. We want to combat orthodox Linguistics and Anthropology, colonial disciplines, in the same way that I am trying to combat from the inside the discipline of literary reading becoming colonial as it allows itself to be quantified, rather than rise to the insistent defense of the humanities as instrument and weapon (Spivak, *Resisting trivialization*, 2014). The seduction of digital humanities makes us forget that the greatest usefulness of the humanities is to upload the computer in the brain.

In John Kotter's list, as in the Social Covenant approved by the World Economic Forum (their point in common being a corporate interest in social change), there

are two kinds of items: one talking the talk (basic human values), the other walking the walk ('good' jobs for non-graduates; strong technical education opportunities; apprentice schemes, a pro-active tax and incentive system and 21st century industrial strategy). One cannot walk the walk by merely agreeing to do so. It is a collective decision, not merely something enforced from the top. One must learn the habit of thinking about other people as equal though not same, described in the previous section as housing the aporia of democracy. Here I point out that this is also exactly the situation between the reading pupil and the one who produced the literary work. This is the kind of democratic training that the humanities can provide.

In addition to university teaching, largely in the United States, I have also given time and skill (not just money and site-visits) for 30 years, training teachers and children at six small elementary schools established by me among the landless illiterate in western West Bengal. Much of what I say is tested there.

Normally our desire is to do things ourselves or for ourselves. In good literary teaching, the student is taught carefully to hang out in the space of the other – understand what s/he confronts in terms of the unknown person who wrote what s/he confronts. This is the secret of the ethical and the democratic. One has to stay with it, not follow easy steps so that one can say 'I have helped you'. The long-term implementation of any plan for building a just society through education calls for the teaching of the humanities at all levels and in all places so that the desire for social justice can inhabit souls long-term, not always susceptible to evaluation by checking statistically how each item on a list is institutionally fulfilled. Huge and detailed country-by-country statistical tables are no doubt useful, but, in terms of sustaining an improved world, we have to look at the fact that nations are not monolithic abstract averages, and that evaluations are remote fact-gathering which often do not reflect everyday reality.

We teachers of the humanities – literature and philosophy – at our best train the imagination into knowing ourselves differently, and knowing the world differently, so that our students and we ourselves *want* to do the good things contained in the Covenant rather than having to be checked following enforcement.

Today the emphasis in education is acquiring digital speed. In order to be able to use the digital for social justice, the soul has to be trained slowly, and that is where literary training as I have described it comes into play. Recently, at the celebration of the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe's life, the positive effect of his literary writings was repeatedly emphasised. With my experience of work in Africa, I was obliged to say that, below a certain class line, Nigerians had no idea who he was and what he wrote. The task therefore was to expand the circle of Nigerians who could not only read, but also learn from the literary.

I am remembering the tremendously bright student Rahul Lohar in Shahabad whom I kept pushing to make his head work to think of what it was that the measurements in feet, used to calculate its area – what indeed it was that these units measured. To engage one's head for intellectual labour when it has not been millennially allowed to one's social group is indeed comparable to accessing the

text of the other in oneself. It is the ‘literary’ practice for the ethical, quite distinct from the internalised obligation to serve and from conscientised violence. It does not resemble the ‘literature’ that the dominant assigns as a proper name. I would not push the student of middle-class parents in this way. Intellectual labour is historically available there, and can be joyful. But this is a son of landless illiterates and his entire life is lived on other terms. And indeed I believe from his extraordinarily impulsive responses, interrupting other teaching, that he was fully alive to this. This is the ‘literary’ for the child because it gives the same practice as does literature for trained elite readers like ourselves and our elite students.

Only one of my six rural schools was taught by two caste Hindu men. The junior teacher, hardly capable of teaching Classes Infant, One, and Two, bought a B.Ed degree by scraping together 100,000 rupees. He will go on ‘training’ for two months and hopes to slide into a job of high school teaching through this bribe, although that job actually costs between Rs. 1,500,000 and Rs. 1,600,000, as he innocently told me. The very evening that I got this news, I was dining with Santosh Karmakar, a leftist high school teacher who is also part of the rural landed gentry, and his daughter, who is also getting a B.Ed degree, at Viswa Bharati University (established by the national hero Rabindranath Tagore) who told me that her training required 1400 hours of exams during the one year course, two months of practice teaching at a high school, to be observed by a registered examiner, and so on. Much harder than the B.A., she told me. Now you see how the teachers of the children of the gentry are prepared, for quality (although corruption has entered even here); and how the subaltern children’s ‘teachers’ are prepared – these are the years of schooling that are counted on the Human Development Index to assess a country’s ‘development’. The subaltern must be kept in a situation of only manual labour – bribed with sports and the famous hundred days of employment programme – so that we can keep the largest sector of the electorate as victims of epistemic and physical violence, in order to produce votes. Democratic judgment in the marginal or the subaltern is a fearful thing (Panda, n.d.)

‘Why is there such an upsurge of interest in knowledge?’ asks Prusak (1997, p. vii), editor of *Knowledge in Organizations*, citing the Pre-Socratics. Such a question ignores the plain fact that the word ‘knowledge’ has changed since the Pre-Socratic era. (There was, of course, no English at that time. And, if we are thinking the world, we must – absolutely – remember the many languages that make meaning for its peoples. As a doctor working in Kenya who refuses to be a top-down health worker remarked: “The people will understand Swahili, but you can’t speak to their heart unless you speak their language: ‘I’m getting what you’re saying, but I’m not taking it in’”. That *is* a basic human value: talking to the heart. If you think it is inconvenient, as it is, indeed, don’t dream of improving the world.) Real knowledge depends on cooking the soul with slow learning, not the instant soup of a one-size-fits-all toolkit. The world is not populated by humanoid drones. You cannot produce a toolkit for ‘a moral metric,’ or, if you do, you will be disappointed.

In Nigeria and Kenya, some of us facilitate a project for databasing all the unsystematised mother tongues of sub-Saharan Africa. I know the situation in South

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Africa is different. But I would like to share with you some of the things we think together.

Intellectual labour begins with the training of children, slowly. This is what creates the pool of secondary and tertiary students, away, one hopes, from the long-established hierarchies. And it has been abundantly demonstrated that, an at least bilingual primary education lays the foundation not only for learning other languages (including mathematics, digitality, English, of course, and the like); but also connects the world of social justice and general social welfare with the earliest stages of a child's development. The 'global' languages are first language to only a part of the world. They have an intrinsic connection to them. Others, and we are talking race, class and gender here, suffer a loss of connection with their infancy language and this is an ethical loss as significant as climate change for the world's future.

These languages are not dying and in need of preservation. They are flexible – because not separated by 19th and 20th century colonial disciplines of linguistics and anthropology. They are alive and inter-comprehensible, and in use for electoral campaigning, at least in sub-Saharan Africa. We make use of this existing resource, quite distinct from the past-oriented preservation of endangered languages. We give health, education and agricultural workers future-oriented access to these crucial instruments of successful delivery; the living mother tongues of Africa. The goal of our longitudinal research is to create a multi-portal global access platform, which allows researchers to document, explore and provide portals for the community and for the workers in the field. Its broader consequences will embrace innovative legal research in access portals and international research in oral history and language study.

Higher education based on such bilingual primary education is richer and more appropriate to the effort to break the old class solidarities. The impossible goal is not to keep reproducing the old class solidarities through access to higher education but to expand the scope of higher education by integrating it with a holistic and classed vision of the entire education spectrum. When development thinkers such as Mkandawire (2015, p. 19) quite correctly ask for higher education aid, they must take this into account otherwise, the African 'private sector' will be described as essentially 'unlikely to finance more than a quarter of the major investment needs'. We are training an expanding private sector. This is why their desires must be re-arranged and I have tried to outline briefly why emphasis must be put on the study of the humanities.

ANSWERS TO THE PRE-SENT QUESTIONS

How can the humanities produce the intuitions of democracy in the broadest possible race, class- and gender-diversified sector of the population?

No society 'develops' if its inhabitants are not introduced to the practice of freedom, which is rather different from the establishment of rights by intervention on the part of elected representatives, agitation by constitutional activists, or public interest litigation through national or international interest. However poor and oppressed the groups you teach, the contradictory habits of no competition yet class

struggle, absolute equality yet gender preference, no encouragement to leadership yet problem-solving in every detail of classroom practice: all of these must be encouraged. They change as we go up in level, of course. Teaching justified self-interest – as in collective bargaining, human rights interventions or Occupy Wall Street – does not necessarily lead to a just society.

What Is It to Teach the Humanities?

Democracy is now equated with an operating civil structure, the functioning of a hierarchised bureaucracy, and ‘clean’ elections. We have plenty of examples around the world, that unrelenting state violence on the model of revenge and retaliation can co-exist with so-called democracy. Revenge is indeed a kind of wild justice that proves that no retribution is adequate to the outlines of the tribute. It has nothing, however, to do with a vision of social justice, which builds itself on its own indefinite continuation. It nests in all children’s, and therefore everyone’s, capacity to *use* the right to intellectual and imaginative labour, not just in ease and speed of learning. This is why it is not enough to compartmentalise ‘higher education,’ which also preserves class. And, in order to be supple enough to become ‘real’ rather than merely powerful, statistical evaluation by way of toolkits should not be replaced or opposed, but supplemented, by the humanities style reading skills, not confined to a charmed circle, circulating in its own circuit, quite apart from R&D and policy, also circulating in its charmed circuit, apart from the readers. Humanities, in my sense, are a form of imaginative activism that must permeate qualitative and quantitative welfare and economic disciplinary training as well as human rights training. Currently, it is the last group that shares something with the humanities, at least in select elite universities in the United States. In these programmes, human rights legalisms trump the slow reading skills of the humanities.

What Is the In-Built Aporia of Democracy?

An aporia is a situation where two right solutions cancel each other out. Yet one solution must always be(come) chosen in every contingency. This is the in-built and definitive aporia within democracy: it is autonomy (freedom from), liberty; and others (freedom to), equality: us and them. Irreducibly, democracy is the aporetic site of liberty and equality and the children in democracies must be trained into it. There is nothing but obstacles in its way. I speak of class apartheid; of which I have given a concrete example above. Look now at an example from the top: when I explained to a graduate student from a Latin American country that the so-called ‘terminal M.A.’ (no financial aid, no access to the PhD stream) at U.S. Research 1 universities was a fundraising mechanism, he told me “with globalisation everything has changed, we don’t mind buying the brand name for future advancement”. This is why I chose as title for my Netaji oration in Calcutta, my hometown: ‘Freedom *After* Independence?’ Freedom to, after Freedom from.

Otherwise, a regenerated Khilafat movement (1919–1924) – ISIS founding a new Caliphate (Khilafat) – legitimises the politics of the Sykes-Picot conversation which wrote the map of the ‘Middle East’ by reversal and the complex history of metropolitan minority identitarianism and heritagism draws thousands of ‘democratic’ Arab Spring Tunisians and Muslim Europeans/Americans, and women into it. (‘Heritagism’ in West Bengal and continental Africa seems so far to be ignorant of its global politics.) No awareness of aporia here. Only liberty as identity. *Our* task is rather to rearrange the desire for the transcendental, *persistently* (important word), from belief to imagination, from rational choice to the class-specific diversified literary rather than offer ‘clash of civilisations’ style comments such as ‘they do not share our values’ (Canadian Foreign Minister on CNN) or ‘they have no human values’ as offered by a Silicon Valley executive and a politically correct female staff member at a Council on Values meeting (James, 2008). The New Social Covenant of the World Economic Forum wants to perform some movement of change in an altogether confused way (giving them the benefit of the doubt). It therefore requires the literary – as training for the ethical – as a method. In a world of the denial of intellectual labour – in a recent Education Supplement of *The New York Times*, a piece advising recent graduates on entering the professional schools begins with the words: ‘We are not talking humanities’ – its fashioners will not accept this (‘Going professional: The ins and outs,’ 2014). Development can be in any direction, it does not bring with it a value system – it is an unconditional thing, but is always constrained by conditions, and in our world by economic considerations. It is what I call ‘sustainable underdevelopment,’ because it is often the level of development that is kept at a minimum so that profit maximisation can be sustained. The word ‘sustainable’ is also open-ended and does not carry any conditions within it. As for democracy, it is the only system of government that is hospitable to all ways of thinking and therefore cannot be driven if the electorate is not educated in a judgment that can be directed toward others. This, again, is the aporia or double bind between liberty, which is supposedly unconditional, and equality, which imposes a condition to be aware that others, even completely unlike you, are supposedly imaginable by you as equal. When I work this through the formula ‘other people’s children’, I am told that that is a liberal bio-political notion. But we should be able to think the child as absolute event without compromising reproductive rights or human beings’ right to choose. The first is unconditional, like justice; the second, an important condition, like Law.

How Do We Confront the Inevitable Corporatisation of the Entire Education System?

By the persistent construction of a critical mass. Antonio Gramsci’s ‘New Intellectual’ is a permanent persuader. We must continue to speak out; that humanities training will never generate income for the university directly. It is rather an epistemological and ethical health care for the society at large. These are the fully prepared global citizens

and leaders that one imagines as all philosophers assume a rational being. Material conditioning of the intending subject cannot otherwise be grasped. The relationship between the imagination and intention hosts the right to abstraction, so long denied to the subaltern and so fast disappearing under rational choice, behaviourist economics and knowledge management among the elite. Resources should be spent to make the humanities a more attractive choice for interested students so that the number of such persons in society increases significantly. If international socialism *died* of an ethics-shaped hole – in other words, no development of a new approach to the ethical – global capitalism, although it is not as embarrassed to talk the ethical talk, will continue to *live* with the same terminal disease – an ethics-shaped hole, while millennial history is legitimised by reversal.

Let us get back for a moment to the World Economic Forum, wanting to turn capitalism toward social justice. I have pointed out already that their good goal, in itself revealing more and more ideological roadblocks, has inadequate imaginative resources. But they do acknowledge complicity – we alone have done this. Unfortunately, the strongest tradition of amelioration for them is what any serious examination must call sustainable underdevelopment, which is what quality promotion by knowledge management helps sustain further. Sustainable underdevelopment. Education by statistic and risible do-good projects by the digitised under-thirties.

What Is the Role of the Curriculum?

Not much. Because of the stratification of society, a regularised curriculum is only good for mainstreaming. But a customised curriculum is also a waste of time. It is the *method* of teaching/reaching that is important – an uncoercive re-arrangement of desires – reaching the cognitively damaged epistemic instrument.

Of new textbooks?

How not to use the computer. The West Bengal State Education Commission has produced an excellent set of primary school textbooks. Subaltern teachers find them very hard to teach because they do not resemble the old awful ones. I went to the director of the textbook programme to help him with news from below. He said we are trying to win back the English-medium school children, the children, in other words, of the rich and of the upper middle class. No time for the subaltern.

What are the limits of economic empowerment? The inability to think of income as instrument, and not only for self-enhancement. ‘Development’ is the economic transition into the circuit of capital with insufficient attention to subject-formation. Ethics as such cannot be practiced *after* business, or the business of medicine-as-triage, has been sustained. Ethics are unconditional.

How are we to approach indigenous knowledge systems? By entering their protocol and earning the right to rearrange from within, learning from mistakes.

How do we gauge ‘authenticity’ in knowledge? By noticing the manner of the production of detail.

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What is the relationship between quality in education and the democratic imperative? Content and form.

What Is the Relationship between Class, Race, and Liberal Education in Our Countries?

Liberal education is a place of struggle. Within the colonial system liberal education was imitative, class-divisive. With no unmediated control over the national system it produced a useless class. We undo poison with poison here. Poison can become medicine. This is not a 'critique of Eurocentrism'. In the rural schools I try to make the groups friendly with the wretched map of the world on the back cover of the geography book. I point at the north western corner of the huge Eurasian continent on the terrible map and tell them that that is Europe and that though so small, they won. I discuss with them how they won (since capital-production is not a crime) and even use such mid-Victorian examples as James Watt watching the lid dance on the pot of boiling water. I remind myself not to be an 'improver' like the colonialists and discuss with the co-workers (male and female teachers and supervisors) from the community the fact that I am not drawing profits from the work for and with them. Although they are not well acquainted with the world map and know nothing about colonialism, and have not seen any factories of any significant size, they do understand what profit or *munafa* is. I try to give them the sense of the cultural capital I acquired because I teach them and try moralistically to avoid its extreme results by not having a webpage.

What Is the Relationship between a Will to Social Justice and Enforcement?

The first has to be produced long-term, customised, and full of uncertainty. The second is a short-term necessity ultimately productive of a culture of fear and fully compromised when the enforcers on the ground are victims of class apartheid.

What Is It to Interpret a History of Violence and Use It without Accusation or Excuse within the Broadest Interpretation of the Academy?

The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, himself a strong anti-colonialist among the colonisers, read the book Fanon wrote in the last 10 weeks of his life, knowing that he was marked for death by acute leukaemia, even as he was being hounded by the colonising government of France, as an endorsement of violence itself – not reading between the lines, where Fanon insists that the tragedy is that the very poor are reduced to violence, because there is no other response possible to an absolute absence of response and an absolute exercise of legitimised violence from the colonisers. Their lives count as nothing against the death of the colonisers: unacknowledged Hiroshimas over against sentimentalised 9/11s. Here the lesson of Gandhi regarding the power of passive resistance and the contrastive lesson of Israel in the exercise of state legitimised violence drawing forth violence in extremism is

useful today. Fanon's own warning is contained in *A Dying Colonialism*. Against the grain of his optimism of the will, he writes: "it is no longer the age of little vanguards" (Fanon, 1965, p. 1).

Why Is National Liberation Not a Revolution?

Working within the problems created by a postcolonial nation which brings back the pre-colonial problems that the great historian Fernand Braudel called *longue durée* or long term: "structures which lie invisible below the surface of social activities," many of us think that the real disaster in colonialism lies in destroying the minds of the colonised and forcing them to accept mere violence – allowing no practice of freedom, so that these minds cannot build when apparent decolonisation has been achieved. From the example of mature leaders such as Du Bois and Mandela, we know or can at least have the feeling that Fanon would have gone in that direction.

In the postcolonial world, hero worship and ancestor worship stand in the way of the production of the will to social justice. Those of us interested in building postcolonial democracies think that these heroes should be slowly and carefully transformed into teaching texts. In the case of Nelson Mandela, for example, the strongest teaching element is the unconditional ethical – the risky imaginative activism that dares to say yes to the enemy. If one enters the protocol of the heroic life with critical intimacy, reading its text as the symbolic – telling us about the subject's relationship to the imaginary – the greatest collective imaginary of colonial oppression being precisely the dream of liberation – it is possible, again with the greatest care, not to exclude the transformation of the *longue durée* into historical symptomaticity of even the most extraordinarily heroic among us, to make the hero a human warning for those of us who are merely human without the heroism. This is a transformation of the *imitatio Christi* idea of role-model, today emphasised in faith-based leadership initiatives. We cannot forget that this is the substance of the greatest genre the world has, not confined to Hellenic culture alone: tragedy, the tragic hero of history. The leaders of liberation are obliged to produce an 'orientalist' version of the new nation, today spawning an unscrupulous use of the idea of homeland, heritage and history to justify and legitimise xenophobia, tyranny and the doctrine of ethnic purity for which women are often asked to bear the responsibility.

What I am insisting on, then, is that consciousness is material. Epistemology – the way we know – is historically affected. The vanguard cannot instil class consciousness among the masses as if the masses are a monolithic blob. Quality promotion knowledge management style legitimises this by reversal. To pay attention to this is not an academic luxury. On the contrary, to think of the education of the largest sector of the electorate as if their millennially ravaged epistemologies resembled that of the middle class activist or the elite philanthropist is mistaken and/or a sure road to celebrity. This is a material lesson – routinely dismissed by mechanical leftists as too 'nuanced' or 'individualistic', and by the knowledge managers as impractical, inefficient.

G. C. SPIVAK

What is the role of Epistemological Change Clustered Within Education in Notions of Identity and the Broader Public?

I don't know.

How Do We Combat the Anthropocene?

By assuming that the literary-ethical suspension in the space of the other is to *de*-humanise, because the 'natural' tendency of human activities is to accelerate the rate of species extinction, unless we want to mooch over being-human in the face of the Anthropocene. We can no longer work with the race-class-determined binary opposition of free will and fatalism that runs our world today, with the so-called abstract workings of capital running a deconstruction, which is called 'development' by way of alibi.

Over against this, I focused on 'planetary' because it reduced the importance of the human (Apter, Lezra, & Wood, 2014). Now even planetary has been compromised as space becomes a business enterprise.

I say then to students and teachers of the humanities present in this room: understand that your professional teaching and learning skills offer a supplement – an incalculability that may seem dangerous to those who want to disavow the unexpected that is the harbinger of change. Efficient tests to measure success are useful but they can only reproduce the status quo, dazzlingly dressed as 'imagination'.

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Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
Columbia University, USA

CHATRADARI DEVROOP

3. 'SENSING' THE CURRICULUM

The Role of Aesthetics in Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 20th century the critical capacity of the university migrates into three surrounding institutions – technocracies, commercial sites of innovation and civil society. Technocracies,¹ which apply expertise to the management of society, replace the university's knowledge-management function. They establish and test norms while building critical consensus through their jurisdictions and hence become the sources of today's reliable knowledge. Since the Cold War, this process includes the requirement that public administrations also manage risk. This demands that technocracies apply their fund of knowledge strategically, and carefully analyse and critically assess the results. Compared with the reach and significance of such knowledge-management, universities cannot compete as the primary source of reliable knowledge today, nor of its upkeep and revision.

Research, innovation and ideas resulting from relentless questioning, have migrated from the graduate school to the research and development resources of Global Capitalism. To ensure against stagnation and to smooth the business cycle, self-questioning has assumed incalculable importance to successful investment. In business practice every aspect, whether on a particular, or a global scale, is subject to an on-going drive for improvement, to provide innovations to manage and pre-empt crises. Without this effort, the reinvestment of profit becomes impossible. Hence, the new centre of gravity of research, and its derivations, falls within the private sector; where it is owned and transacted as intellectual property. Compared to this, university research and preparations in the best graduate schools are generic portals.²

Where once faculties of Law, History, Humanities and the Arts were the hosts of scholarship on their society's behalf, and derived from this a number of perspectives able to inform public opinion, now this is the task of the social and specialist media. Not only do they extract the information, or profile events on which public opinion is based, but they assess and incorporate this rapidly informed public opinion into their focus and into the platform of their varied constituencies. The encyclopaedic and systematising functions of university disciplines can no longer steer public debate, but only participate in it as one of many fluid constituents. Academics scan the dynamic media-based debates for clues to inform their own future research, and

hence contribute to public opinion as members of that public. Their attempt to add a space for critical reflection and the gravitas of scholarship, is threatened with rapid obsolescence and may suffer from an inability to canvass and represent their student audience in matters of concern as they are raised.³

Given this scenario, in which the university has lost authority and ability to lead in the normative rationality of expertise and standards, in innovation and application, and in the foundations of public debate, the question is, what can it still assert in the realm of its societies' rational practices, quests for knowledge and key critical debates? If it cannot match the scope and momentum of the agencies that manage society, in both discovery and discussion, what can it contribute besides teaching the beginnings of these tasks, to young people who will eventually be recruited into them, at more specialised and realistic levels? Faced by a marginal role, some universities have offered their knowledge content free online⁴ on the assumption that it is not teaching or learning that gives them unique value, but rather the opportunity to network with prestigious future employers: running technocracy, private research and development, or the media. Will the university live on purely as a talent scout, a brokerage or one way of predicting future performance in the concrete areas where social action is restructured, knowledge reformulated or critical opinion developed?

The question arising in this chapter, is what form a curriculum can take if a university is relegated to a recruitment and recommendation role? Is its function to identify, groom and showcase talent, or does it still have a place that technocracy, capitalist intellectual property and mediatised public opinion do not occupy yet? If the university is no longer the most concentrated source of practical competence, epistemological ability and the exercise of discerning judgments, can its former prestige be recovered by rethinking its task from the perspective of experience? This perspective can no longer, without qualification, lead directly to rational action, reliable knowledge and reflective insight: it may however, be able to ground itself in the aesthetic profile of experience and restate from there, the competences desired for its graduates, that is, develop its curriculum.

WHAT CAN A CURRICULUM DO?

It is important to try isolating the nature and function of a curriculum beyond the management imagery in which it is often shrouded today. There it becomes one factor among many, ensuring the optimal throughput of students from registration to graduation, measuring the relevance of learning to performance in labour markets, or to meeting sector needs. Internally, the curriculum is the field of adaptation, where students are put through equestrian-like hurdles made up of norms isolated from the subjects where they arose. The curriculum increasingly functions as the pretext for testing and assessing, for placing students within an ability range, then projecting their capacity to negotiate the next 'equestrian courses' all the way to doctoral level, where the requirement of originality, mysteriously becomes the norm.

Any shrewd student of curricula may detect in this management and performance vocabulary, the attempt to draw closer to the perceived workings of technocracy, research-hubs and the media. Such entities are all monetised and carefully managed. However, they merely use their reproducible aspects, their structure and sustainability, as a basis for reformulating and revising their tasks in the world.

Universities cannot act as flexibly, and despite no longer being our primary managements of practice, innovation or critical opinion, they assume a responsibility for managing students. From a content perspective, they try to instil sound habits of judgment and learning; from a form perspective they are a professor's way of producing more professors.

The relations between the curriculum and learning have become opaque. Content has become the pretext for setting a number of performance challenges to students, who are assessed according to an ability to negotiate difficult tasks and no longer by what they know. The university of hard-knocks has become considerably softer and often stands better equipped than nine-tenths of today's campuses. Perhaps never before in history, have knowledge, technique, criticism and judgment been more widely dispersed, more difficult to encapsulate and evaluate, especially according to the kinds of yardstick encountered in university examinations or doctoral theses.

Is the curriculum therefore, the one asset the university possesses, controls and carries into the future, or is the university's single greatest limitation, the maintenance of the illusion that it can appropriately compress and express the sum of the world's reliable decision-making, critical self-evaluation and high-level judgments? Would the university not function better without its distinctive and possibly redundant curricular component; should it rather pursue the option of outsourcing these functions to other agencies⁵ in society, which have proved to be their more effective custodian?

One may predict academic indignation at this suggestion. It would be claimed that the university exercises a unique additional capacity, which technocracy, capitalism and the public realm do not. This capacity is *critique*, and it is never made clear whether universities exercise this because they access perspectives other institutions do not, or because the nature of the university ensures that everything taught, discussed, or used as reference within it, is done so critically.

DEVELOPING CRITICAL CAPACITY

The university's claim to assume a *critical* role on behalf of others and of society, highlights the complexity, easily obscured, behind its habitual claim to represent *critique*. Its critical stance came into existence under exact and unlikely conditions, mainly through the prestige of Immanuel Kant.⁶ His three *Critiques* (2002a, 2002b and 2002c) are programmes for objective knowledge (2002a), rational action (2002b) and the productive application of judgment (2002c). They are not methods, like those found amongst his 18th century philosophical precursors, but enquiries into the conditions under which any method is fruitful or futile. Mostly this involves mapping

limits, not seen as restrictions upon knowing, acting morally or judging fruitfully, but as the basis for valid thought. Hence Kant's work is sometimes accurately referred to as the *critique of finitude*, as the reconsideration of limits as productive. As the most comprehensive philosopher of his day, Kant's procedures reverberated powerfully in the debates and resolutions serving to found the 19th century German university. Unlike post-revolutionary American and French universities, Germany still anticipated its revolution when it designed its higher education reforms. Unable to draw upon a society modernised by change, it relied on the projection of cultural and civic motifs, and in particular drew upon the critical programmes of Philosophy as the blueprint for its university. A century later Marx (1998) and Nietzsche (1980),⁷ came to see German Culture, and the institutions derived from it, as a liability; an ambiguous utopia inhibiting future progress on account of its perfection.

The Kantian *Critiques* (2002a, 2002b and 2002c) provided powerful accounts of the institution's purpose: to maintain the ideals and procedures of a critical rationality within their appropriate productive limits. As long as a university maintains such distinctions and limits, it should be able to host powerful, promising and universal processes of *critique*. These provide the permissible themes of enquiry, and the forms and content of research; *critique* itself becoming in this way the path of learning, the curriculum. This investment of the German university in an ideal system of knowledge, made institutionalisation and critique synonymous⁸ – so much so, that when Michel Foucault studied normative rationality in Western society in *Madness and Civilisation* (1988), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1994) and *The Order of Things* (1994), he could do so almost entirely, by mapping its institutions: The Mental Asylum, the Medical Clinic and the Museum.

Universities suspect that the technocracies, and the capitalist and civil societies surrounding them, carry out and extend the tasks and potentials contained within Kant's *Critiques* rather more efficiently. But they also feel that the dynamism and flexibility of these '*para-academic*' agencies, causes them to lose contact with their own form, and hence with their basis for demarcating knowledge in keeping with the requirements of critique; falling short of its requirements of purity and universality. In short, universities contrast themselves, and their rigorous control over their departments and divisions, to the pragmatic justifications exhibited all around them. This gives them the impression that they may engage in the critique or clarification of all processes involving knowledge, belief and judgment, without possessing the content that informs these powers, but by interrogating them critically, purely as to their form and hence their justification.

Those who are familiar with Kant's work realise that it still acts as a yardstick for the understanding of knowledge and learning. Kant divides our aspirations, to know and to act autonomously, into three categories. He shows that the kind of competence, concepts and skilled judgment necessary to derive reliable knowledge from nature, differs from the capacities needed for rational and just action. Hence, the distinction in focus and approach between his *Critique of Pure Reason* (2002a), setting out conditions for objective knowledge or science, and the *Critique of*

Practical Reason (2002b), that identifies the conditions under which actions are brought into consideration, and justified. In the differences between these treatises on how reason is assessed and applied, are the differences between the Faculties of Science and Engineering, and those of Law and the Humanities. For Kant, blurring the distinctions between the two *Critiques* (2002a and 2002b), in search of a common foundation or method, would only result in fruitless debate, and this would also include utopian universities pursuing *inter-disciplinary* objectives, thereby creating irresolvable rivalry between the Sciences and the Humanities.

There is however, a third *Critique* (2002c) that deals with the conditions under which the power of human judgment, which is inextricable from our freedom and autonomy, could be fruitfully exercised. This question goes beyond the role of judgment in Science, as exemplified by experiment and consensus-seeking argument, or in politics, morality and social justice, where the very identity of an action depends on the way we judge it. The *Critique of Judgment* (2002c) seeks, from the outset, those strange and difficult examples that we cannot avoid encountering but where we are obliged to take some position, and hence may or may not anticipate fruitful results. Revealingly, Kant chooses to discuss aesthetics (a judgment derived through the use of the senses) along with organic form (with its explanation by aims rather than causes, involving us simply because we are alive) and history (considered as a cultural creation). It ought to be clear that neither the sensory, nor the living or the historical, may be usefully observed by the Natural Sciences, or become the theme of political or civic deliberation. Many may ask which university faculty derives its rationale from Kant's *Critique of Judgment*? In other words, what activities in the university are apprehended through the capacity, accuracy and sophistication of judgment alone? Where are such pivotal judgments cultivated or taught?

Again, the answer can be approached along divided lines. Institutionally, universities have offered courses in Aesthetics, have hosted Medical Schools and Departments of Biology, and have also housed historians. Doctrinally, Kant has provided the mapping for these terrains, and a means of navigating them in accordance with self-critical aims. In other words, he seeks to provide us with the only thing that critical thought does provide, that is, a way of avoiding the errors and illusions arising from the misuse or misapplication of our own faculties. A critique of any kind cannot give us the subject matter of aesthetics, of an enquiry into the living or into history, for this is left to scholars and their subjects, but it can inform us as to how to conduct ourselves on these terrains, in a way that will keep us free from avoidable mistakes and illusions that result from misusing our own conceptual resources.

From this heady combination of the brave new 19th century university faculties and Kant's three critical appraisals of the scope and limits of reason, all universities in the German mode have the impression of dealing with two distinct resources: the empirical and documentary contents of knowledge, which are subject to the usual criteria of authenticity, validity, reliability and sample representativeness, but also to

the transcendental architecture of judgments, categories and concepts, which only critique, the self-reflection of these capacities on their own workings and limits, can refine. The university is, therefore, uniquely placed in knowledge, between a voracious expansion of its content and on-going critical refinement of its form.

Having shown the only three ways in which it is worthwhile having an exercise of reason, Kant also laid out the three possible areas of fruitful activity for a university, in so far as it aims to distinguish itself from a dogmatic or doctrinal approach, or a process fuelled entirely on the basis of common sense and widespread public belief. And so, in this context, we ask ourselves whether the *Aesthetic*, which the university can only host and comprehend as an exercise of the power of judgment, but not as an objective subject matter or rationally resolvable dispute, might be the right therapy for that ageing relative: the curriculum?

MAKING A WORLD SAFE FOR THE CURRICULUM

The marriage between a powerful conception of experience with the kinds of judgment it supports, and an ideal institution designed to house it, could easily have become a failed experiment if it were not built on already receptive foundations. Compared with the project of Philosophy, the university is an invention of recent times. The oldest university in Europe is barely a millennium old. It was not of course devised according to the principles of Kantian *Critique*, or even by reviving the model of the Ancient Academy.⁹ It resulted from a religious rivalry between the Papacy and Bologna Cathedral, the latter being well funded and hence threatening to develop into the more influential religious centre. The Papacy barred Bologna from doctrinal teaching and as a result, its vast collection of manuscripts, assembled for this purpose was monetised. Scripts could be rented to copy from the library. This took the form of a *lecture*; in which a reader sounded the text, providing commentary where necessary to an audience of writers: copyists conscientiously duplicating the content in the core and the reflections in the margins. This reservoir for duplication, no longer part of religious media, had to be located and approved by the city and, in this way became the university, liable to local taxation and rules, from which foreign students, who made up the main body of the student constituency, were exempt. Thus the notion of ‘academic freedom’ was established, as the right to travel and copy under the protection of, but without obligation to, Europe’s major cities (Norman, 2016). In the 18th century, preceding the era of Kant and the modern university, this original written stockpile had mostly reappeared in print, and the need for copyists of manuscripts vanished. Hence the student was no longer a ‘writer who listens’ but a ‘reader who discusses’. The library came to be a royal and later national stockpile with its value determined by its comprehensiveness. The role of scholarship, which now unites teaching and learning, is to discover *order* in collections of books, which represent knowledge, but also in collections of *things*, which may be drawn together from any quarter of the globe. Objects are not independent but demand to be arranged

intelligibly in collections under royal custody, which not only contained the codes and transcripts of the laws, but also aimed to gather samples, examples and tokens of every kind together to further the aim of understanding them through their potential organisation. All intellectual debate concerned the results and methods of such organisation, and gave rise to an ambition to classify texts and paintings according to their order of prominence, into a canon, but similarly to organise all representations of fact and experience into their logical and inherent structure, such that any one part of the tabulation could serve as the key. This is the era of comprehensiveness, of the encyclopaedia, of distinctions that could be gradually but infinitely perfected: the scholar became a curator.

Communicating between these qualitative and quantitative logics required a universal language able to express both, such as Gottfried Leibniz (1976) sought. In its unambiguous ciphers, all images, relations, sounds, words and concepts would become related. It is not difficult to see in this system and ideal of learning, the persistence of the library, of a certain kind of collection, of an underlying media system and model, idealised and captured in the different fields and quests for order and inter-communication. The scientific or learned correspondence aimed to capture this ‘order’ within as few steps as possible, to demonstrate the extent to which orders could be enlarged by scholarly correspondence and hence consensus or by compilation of types and tokens.^{10 11}

This early phase of The Enlightenment would be turned inside out, like a glove, by Kant, who introduced the theme of productive limits into the unlimited task of ordering and redesigning the infinite range of learning, around the finitude of the experiencing subject. It was no longer possible to believe that knowing could be exhaustive, but only to make the most of finite access to reality and to extend this platform by the art of skilful and principled judgment. It is this limiting perspective that Kant identified, around which he proposes the three domains of reasoning from which fruitful outcomes could be expected. For the *Critique of Pure Reason* (2002a), Nature is the finite constraint, since our contact with it is never exhaustive, even under the most ingenious of laboratory conditions. Freedom is the constraint on Practical Reason, on all matters of action, since there is no consensus that can hope to encompass all future discontents or desires of autonomous people, who are prepared to remodel the framework which publically identifies their actions. In the exercise of judgment, from which aesthetics and the non-scientific, non-political curriculum must derive, the limiting circumstance is that any judge may not disentangle themselves from the thing to be judged: if it is history, then we are aware of ourselves as part of that history, beings carried along by that which we are attempting to act in with understanding. If it is our living totality, then we must be aware that life gains access to itself as a phenomenon through our lives. In aesthetics, and all experience falling within its scope, we cannot find a subject matter beyond the range of our senses, and our discriminations within them, provide aesthetics with an object.¹²

CONSTRAINED CHANGE WITHIN THE FINITE

From within the productiveness of finitude, the 18th century aim to survey all thought and knowledge from a universal vantage point, has to be abandoned. Instead the processes and conditions under which something can be introduced into experience and become realised there, as objective, moral, or reflexive, is the focus. The German university tries to become these processes and conditions, or at least to emulate them in institutions in a way that is aligned to Kant's specifications. Thus, the Natural Sciences proceed within the narrow and conservative margin of the laboratory and the scientific communiqué, through which theory establishes comprehensive contact with Nature, and all evidence becomes reliable through a broadening consensus. These delicately balanced processes proliferated into Inorganic and Organic Chemistry, Experimental Physiology, and Neuro-Anatomy, as well as a Physics of Energy and fields far beyond Newton or Lavoisier's¹³ horizons: not on the basis of extended subject matter but purely by maintaining the fruitful processes and conditions of discovery. This was Kant's first *Critique* in action expressed through the university's willingness to host its principles in institutions such as experimental laboratories and university presses. In the Humanities, manuscripts and books of previous eras became subject to philological scrutiny, once they were standardised by *critical editions* in print. A perspective was established in which thought and sensibility came to be seen as evolving within words and grammars in their time-bound particularity: this particularity and flux was only visible against the fixed standardised background of print. In this way Culture acquires both its interpretability and its norms. In the fields of Law and Civics, the State begins to appear as an entity brought about by contingent and local forces, idiosyncratic pacts and customs all struggling to attain a universal recognition. States acquire a style and even a body, Politics becomes an art or at very least a craft: eventually the question would be posed whether one State could ever understand another or whether their mutual conditions of survival and reproduction could coexist. In this reflexive mode history and life become the basic instruments for understanding the political, and the civic and the laws are overshadowed by norms. In this way the first two *Critiques* clearly establish a point of view as well as a manner of proceeding whose fruitfulness is judged by the new objects of enquiry that it seems to bring into view throughout the 19th century. The university becomes more the place where themes are conjured and allowed to evolve or be sustained in accordance with their fruitfulness. Only the finitude of this perspective separates it from suspicions of speculation and instead provides it with the honorific mission called *research*. This was the yield of the first Western experiment in radical self-reliance, in which our conduct in research and our discipline in judgment, is as important as the result: as the subject under study. The university is an institutional setting in which judgment must be exercised in order to bring about a subject matter but such judgment is rational, objective, just, defensible or astutely interpretative only in so far as it remains as close as possible to constitutive constraints and is prepared at any time to invoke them. Critique is

traditionally the art of being able to identify and express these productive limits and bring them to bear creatively in areas to which they have not yet been applied.

Does the Aesthetic thrive in this exacting climate? As the most intuitively accessible of Kant's three examples of reflexive judgment, how does the Aesthetic satisfy the criterion of being a productive judgment? To an earlier era, the unavoidable entanglement of judged and judge, would have appeared as a 'vicious circle', a sealed zone, with no evident entry, resulting only in scepticism towards engaging life, history and the senses with the prospect of a definite outcome. Kant's insight, which today still dominates our historical, vital and aesthetic imagination surpasses speculation by making mutual entanglement productive, by treating it as a finite limit rather than a paradox. Operating in such domains gives rise to a process of judgment that yields, if not the fields called history, life, or sensation, or forms of action orientated by these, then at least, the possibility of productively rearranging their problems and hence arriving at an objective interpretation.

THE MEDIUM OF THE UNIVERSITY

While reliable interpretability of this kind was established by Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, and snatched from the limbo of speculation, the German university provided every inducement and resource for applying such principles through its eagerness to *curriculate* the study of Art, Music, Architecture and Archaeology alongside the histories of such endeavours and complementary to this, to establish the Human Sciences at the peculiar convergence of the remaining Kantian motifs of historical understanding and the logic of life. While, Kant's solution alone provided the possibility of such interpretative pursuits their real impetus and proof of concept came from a civil servant, a serial seducer, a poet and playwright, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.¹⁴ Kittler (1992), shows that within Goethe's significance several movements in German culture are bundled: learning to read through interior *sonification* or vocalisation, instead of phrase memorisation or rote learning, construing the other of speech and thought as the mother tongue and embodying it in the figure of women teaching speech within the maternal bond. Like Kant's *Critiques*, *Faust* (2001) takes its departure in the encyclopaedism of 18th century learning, which it turns into an epic journey collected in experience, a passage through styles, times and worlds in which the personae, the characters behind writing, are evoked and brought into fleshy and often disastrous encounters. Thus eclecticism becomes the source of coherence in *Faust* (2001). All that is required, is that this romantic conquest of the book as the territory for inner experience, for fictional speech, becomes adapted to the sober purposes of the university in pursuit of the Kantian promise that reflexive judgment becomes living interpretation.

Kittler, like other astute readers of Foucault, will find in Kant and Goethe disruptive and divided figures straddling what *The Order of Things* (1994) shows as the gap between *Age Classique*, and the Modern. Such figures seem either

overwhelmed and bizarre or simultaneously prophetic and archaic, like Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (2005), or Hofrat Schreber (2002). They exhibit unique powers of synthesis as in Velázquez (Brown, 1986) or Giorgio Vasari (2008): the source of all subsequent fusion of individuals and historical narratives. In this perspective it matters little whether Kant first saw the possibilities of interpretation as a reflexive synthetic judgment, or Goethe provided the necessary genres in which interpretative experience could unfold and became commonplace.

Literature only emerges with all its modern characteristics after Goethe and Kant: earlier writing and publishing of the 18th century, irrespective of genre, was not interpretable as either fiction or non-fiction in the contemporary sense of the terms but only as a contribution to the refinement of order and exploration of places, pre-established in the library, in the museum, in nature, in discourse and in all the other expressions of this ordering. In this context, reflexive judgment is conceivable only as a freakish or curious loop and complication on the surface of representations and words, which are the representations of representations. Nor is it possible to imagine language, whether written or spoken as latently about inner experience, since such a distinction between inner and outer, cannot be posed in the 18th century.

When considered in contemporary terms, the imaginative skills required of all reading, the reconstruction through inner *sonification*, sustained coherence, anticipatory projection of form, all seem to point towards and fortify the realm of the aesthetic. Therefore, the curriculum, which is nothing more than the form of the 19th century university, encompasses every implication of Kant's three broad programmes. Where it is not explicitly the pursuit of experimental enquiry into Nature or juridical enquiry into the institutional forms of action, it is by default reflexive and unfolding under the protective logic of interpretable senses, life and histories.

A better model of reflexive mode of scholarship might be the 19th century orchestral score, which is of course a product of the same media regime as the one subtending the university yet only belatedly becoming part of the academic programme. Here alphabetisation and *sonification* are elaborated in separate steps if music notation along with mathematical notation is seen as flanking and supplementing the phonetic alphabet. In the case of the composer the *sonification* is silent and internal, whereas the performer, the primary reader is literally called upon to reproduce the aural profile through a specialised instrument that serves for its decoding. To the interpreter of 19th century music it appears as two interlocked circles, the one apparently sustained by the composer's experience and imagination, the other laboriously brought into being by skilled instrumentalists complying with a book full of specific instructions. Each circle serves as a norm to the other: performers use the composer's experience as that which is to be aimed at while the composer uses the intricacies and techniques of performers as principles through which to select communicable elements in their own experience. This ensures that music in the Western era of symbolic notation remains an object of interpretation at all times and that this interpretation always departs from alternate yet complementary bases. Orchestral music thus provides a model of the 19th century media network,

dramatising its contrast and splitting its various sutures wide apart. Towards the end of the 19th century, Mallarmé would see in Richard Wagner the principle and destiny of 19th century poetry (Lees, 2007), but by then Wagner had already crossed the divide from score to multimedia and Mallarmé would be confronting the enigma of the typewriter.

Within the hybridisations and enlargements of reflexive judgment and along the paths of every kind of symbolic notation, musical, phonetic or mathematical, it would seem that fresh objects of realisation and interpretation could be discovered *ad infinitum*. 19th century scholarship, which is so close to the domains of cultural invention in the 19th century, can rightly be called ‘Romantic’, or ‘Historicist’ or even ‘organic,’ as never before or since has the passage through the media system of making and of understanding been so intertwined. The aesthetic curriculum or ‘curricular-aesthetics’ might have expanded in all possible ways, up to the present, and formed the habitual basis of our self-conceptions or self-image, had it not been for a further and unexpected media change.

AESTHETIC RELOCATION

The German university implements the prospects, domains and ambitions of critical philosophy in its faculties, departments, programmes and outlook. This has the ironic consequence of displacing philosophy from the university curriculum, since it has become so thoroughly implemented as its form. It is within this instability that one of the key themes of Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, the sensory order, becomes a topic for scientific investigation and hence brutally migrates across faculties and also *Critiques*. The Psychophysics laboratory establishes itself in the experimental order of investigating Nature as fact. The objectivity it pursues, derives from the relationship between stimuli (which can be exhaustively defined by Physics and produced on demand by physical apparatus) with the subject of such stimuli (the volunteer, producing reports on what is experienced, while engaging strictly at the level of their sensory physiology). The early investigations of Wilhelm Wundt, Gustav Fechner and their cohorts (Wozniak, 1995), indicate most strongly the ways in which the senses and their owners deceive one another. Optical colour mixing through spinning discs, illusions of movement through lines of flashing light, inability to estimate relative size, disorientation with respect to the vertical, these were the early themes of the Psychophysics curriculum. What had begun as a rather routine investigation into the correlation between stimulus and sensation, a metric or scaling of such things as reaction time, produced what was surprisingly an ever-growing catalogue of illusions, of systematically faulty perceptions, that could be produced on demand under laboratory conditions. Barely a century after Kant had criticised 18th century metaphysics as being the illusion of objectivity, researchers like Helmholtz conversely established the objectivity of illusion.

The immediate products of Psychophysical Science, were prostheses for the sensory-impaired: the typewriter, enabling the blind to write by touch, or innovations

in hearing aids. These worthy technologies, with their theory, quickly extended to include media systems, extending the principles and mechanisms of the prosthetic into the first technological media. The film fully exploited the illusion of motion created by successive 'still' images, the gramophone took the techniques of writing sound directly into mechanical oscillograms, based on bristles inscribing moving cylinders of soot into the realm of a storage media, and acoustic playback. These illusions of movement or of speech completely altered the relationship between the symbolic aspects, and their possible content, for now a content of film or of a gramophone recording could be completely explained by the causal relation of apparatus to object – a galloping horse, an oncoming locomotive, or even Edison, shouting: 'Mary had a little lamb'. Sensation could be stored across time, and produced later, on demand, without the requisite of coding or decoding in a symbolic medium. This apparently commercial and technical event liquidated the aesthetic academy.

The aesthetic now establishes itself in a non-interpretable format, entirely of its own, which addresses the senses and the physical world directly in the same dimension, as revealed by Psychophysics, but is free to produce phenomena, rather than merely provide their investigation. With interpretation and judgment displaced, along with the symbolic media, discussion of the technological media unfolds within their technical specifications. A demand to master this vocabulary, which is not interpretative but wholly descriptive and procedural, is placed on the critic and on the creator alike. Now they speak in identical terms; the one is no longer able to explicate the other. Hence, the earliest discussion of film did not take on an aesthetic connotation, but rather specified effects and outcomes in terms of making and process. What seems like a '*poetics of film*' in Vertov and Eisenstein (2008) is a formulation of recipes for achieving and later naming and describing, certain technical effects. By the time the earliest audio recording session took place around the acoustic horn (and string instruments themselves sprouted horns in order to find their place within it), the interpreter had already given way to the producer. It would require the flamboyance of Glenn Gould¹⁵ to inculcate this change in over-subtle consumers of music, eager to extend their 19th century 'sleepwalk' through to the realm of the un-interpretable technological media in which Edison, and not Kant or Goethe, provided the relevant vocabulary and experiential access.

All of the singular or defining events of Modernism, would have this character of extracting vocabulary from objective characteristics of the technological medium. Even abstraction in painting, which had detoured through the mystical vocabularies of theosophy, and other promising realms of an order beyond experience, would find Klee and Kandinsky providing it with its definitive vocabulary, in the form of techniques, which assembled together formed part of the Bauhaus Curriculum. *The Thinking Eye* (2013) and *Point and Line to Plane* (2013), are also the manifestos of a curriculum freed from aesthetics, interpretation and judgment, and indeed from reliance upon experience in its 19th century sense, in favour of an absolute concentration of the specifics of the medium and an attempt to redefine Art, in its technical sphere.

CONCLUSION

The question raised by the 21st century university, is how to differentiate itself from its powerful surrounding institutions, which are normative, explicative, relentlessly questioning, knowledge-managing and that actively shape and reshape judgment. The title and theme of this collection imagines the aesthetic as a resource, which the university might use, once more, to distinguish itself from technocracies, capitalist innovation and mediatised civil society. Underlying this hope, is the belief that aesthetic and critical deliberations are somehow synonymous. They are, but not in the ways their contemporary champions imagine, for critique introduces the aesthetic and both play a foundational role in the establishment of the 19th century academy, and in the interpretative and humanistic legacy that it continues to promote today.

From the perspective of the present, however, the conditions under which the critical academy and the realm of interpretable experience, assigned to the aesthetic, coalesce, are well explained as effects of a prevailing media network. They represent a response to its changes, and possess no longevity *per se*. Critique and the aesthetic in which it finds its purest exercise as reflexive judgment, may not be coherently reformulated, let alone called upon as benchmarks or resources, beyond the advent of the technological media. Whether this is to be regretted, tolerated or embraced is a matter for further discussion, but clearly echoes throughout the work of Foucault and of Kittler, who are today's access to Kant's project. Critique and aesthetic can only be revived in closest proximity to their indispensable media regime of symbolic notation: they are indigenous to the era of the book and vanish with the dawn of post-symbolic media whose first task was to disaggregate the book and its modes of understanding. By turning inner experience inside out and making it available within the machine, they also displaced access through interpretation and put in its place a new figure for a new kind of interpretation: the unconscious. Like 'old software' now archived along with its hardware, critical reflection within the university and its basis, the interpretative stance cultivated through reading and writing, can only be accessed as a whole, meaning that a critical academy only exists for us in the past, purely in the perspective of a media archaeology.

NOTES

- ¹ On contemporary technocracies and the scope of their knowledge see Roberto Esposito *Bios* (2008) (especially Chapter 3).
- ² On the centrality of question driven innovation to Capitalisms viability see Jon Elster *Explaining Technical Change: A Case study in the Philosophy of Science* (1983).
- ³ On the notion of 'matters of concern' see Graham Harman *Bruno Latour: Reassembling the Political* (2014).
- ⁴ See Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS) by Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the like.
- ⁵ The other agencies in society would be those such as knowledge-management systems and the generation of expertise in technocracy, the analytic and reverse engineering capacities of private

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sector Research and Development and its ability to select research avenues which efficiently prime innovation, and the mediatised foundations of civil society able to interrogate public opinion thoroughly through their resources of rapid feedback and massive data mining.

- ⁶ Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was a modern German philosopher.
- ⁷ Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900).
- ⁸ See Mary Douglas *How Institutions Think* (1986) on the impossibility of separating form from content in cognitive performance and cognitive performances from institutional relations.
- ⁹ Founded by Plato (428/427 BC–348/347) ca. 387 BC in Athens, sustained by Aristotle (384–322 BC) and upon the former’s death by Speusippus (347–339 BC).
- ¹⁰ Both Sir Isaac Newton (1643–1727) and Carl Linnaeus (Carl von Linné) (1707–1778) are two such early examples.
- ¹¹ A pioneering study of this epoch from a non-philosophical and non-scientific history point of view is Svetlana Alpers’ *The Art of Describing. Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (1984); on the relations between knowledge and print see Elizabeth Eisenstein’s *Printing Press as an agent of Change* (1979) and Bruno Latour’s *Drawing Things Together* (1986).
- ¹² Kant refers to this process as “*reflective judgment*.” Judgment based on an anterior judgment over which the exerciser of the judgment has no control but simply inherits as a result of existing in history, being alive or having senses.
- ¹³ Sir Isaac Newton (1643–1727) and Antoine Lavoisier (1743–1794).
- ¹⁴ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832).
- ¹⁵ Pianist Glenn Gould (1932–1982) was one of the most celebrated artists of the 20th century.

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Chatradari Devroop
School of Arts
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

DENNIS SCHAUFFER

4. RE-HUMANISING THE CURRICULUM IN A NON-AESTHETIC EMBODIED SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores what defines the distinguishing characteristic of human beings which marks us as distinct from other entities. Some argue that our capacity to engage in non-dual thought marks ourselves as definitive. This non-dualistic capacity is however, often not foregrounded within the dichotomous decisions we make within our current education system which seems to be overly-concerned with facilitating the integration into a dominantly normative, econometric, individualistic, linear rationalist and non-aesthetic embodied society. Advances in curriculum design and delivery are frequently imitative of a capitulation to the exponential rise of de-humanised technologies as unquestioned hallmarks of an evolving educational quality. But our educational curriculum could produce an alternative, could build capacity to regain our humanity aesthetic. This chapter will argue that our curriculum is capable of its reassertion of our non-dualistic meaning-making capacities, activated through a reassertion in our complex integrated and non-binary selves. This is what Schiller (1902) about a century ago, referred to as an ethical turn towards an aesthetic state of mind, of being and becoming.

DEFINING CURRICULUM POWERS

It is already well-established that any curriculum entails a selection of courses thought to be desirable to induct new cohorts of learners into the valuing systems of those who govern the management of the knowledge. The conception of what knowledge is most valued shifts in accordance with the specific socio-cultural and historical context and the stages of perceived development of the targeted learners. Its content, form and media are never neutral. These stimulate the recurring classical curriculum questions which are foci of educational studies. These include: who determines the suitability of those who serve on such decision-making bodies, and what guides the choice of such bodies in selecting what is included and/or excluded in the syllabi that underpin the courses that constitute the curriculum? Who establishes the benchmarks of quality? The power to define the curriculum entails the power to define the nature of the society in which one resides, its present and its future, and therefore it is not surprising that different organs of power are specifically interested in defining and redefining the nature of the educational curriculum through the formal and informal

structures of society. In medieval times this role was constituted by the Church who had jurisdiction of accepted knowledges. Today, the powerful barons of industry and economics, abetted by the efficiency rationalities of superfast advanced technologies, perhaps have more authoritative say over curriculum decision-making, even though they may/may not overtly appear as instrumentally connected into the formal education system. What reach do politicians assert in this curriculum contestation of powers? Whose capacity to define is most powerful? From where, or from what does this authority derive to redefine the nature of the curriculum selections? What unexpressed tacit philosophical and theoretical worldviews underpin the decision-making? Do academics, teachers and education managers, as valued knowledge custodians and producers, have much sway to re-direct, or challenge normative tendencies? What consequences does the assertion of a more technologically-driven activity networked society have on the quality of the human aesthetic enterprise? Are we as humans indeed advancing (as some would lead us to believe), or perhaps are we becoming less humane? And why does it matter anyway?

A purely quantitative analysis of the funding income generated into the higher education system to activate the science, technology and mathematics (STEM) education disciplines suggests that these disciplines are the valued ones to be elevated. They notably assert more powerful space within higher education planning, administration, research and management discourses. Often this preference is argued to be commensurate with the contribution that STEM disciplines make to drive manufacturing, industrial and business enterprises, and that they are the activators of economic development. Much foregrounding of issues surrounding the quality of the STEM curriculum emerges, where conscious effort is directed towards finding better strategies of improving access, processing and throughput of its students. This is sadly to the neglect of the arts and humanities which have become blurred and smudged as higher education curricula foci. Concerns are offered about redirecting over-enrolled arts and humanities into instrumentalist STEM-valued, 'productive' career-directed opportunities. This we believe, is having an effect of prioritising the rationalistic discourses usually characteristic of the STEM disciplines as a preferred language of future growth and prosperity. Consequently, the aesthetic, intuitive and instinctive capacities promoted by the arts and humanities, are becoming eclipsed. One of my favourite quotes of uncertain authorship but sometime attributed to Albert Einstein celebrating this latter human aesthetic capacity suggests:

The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant.

We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift.

THE INTELLECTUAL SERVANTS

Setting aside the metaphysical allusion it would appear that our society and the educational institutions that supposedly cater for its intellectual and skills needs have indeed honoured the servant and have been assisted in this through the exponentially expansive use of technology-assisted learning devices such as smart boards, language

laboratories, virtual classrooms and other online learning resources, including the World Wide Web and smartphones. This technological trajectory is about to incorporate a new generation of neuroprosthetics that will change our concepts of knowledge and skills acquisition and might irrevocably change the nature of learner and learning (Harch & Dhillon, 2004). It would certainly have a lasting revolutionary effects on the concept of learning and the nature of pedagogy. But we are not there yet. Despite the development of the *Braingate* technology¹ and the current work on a brain implant to translate languages,² we are still some way off being able to send students through the doors of a university lecture room that has been converted into a medical implant laboratory, to have an information chip inserted into the brain that will instantly convert a student into a mathematics genius, a physics luminary or a fluent speaker, reader and writer simultaneously of Russian, Chinese Mandarin, Hebrew, Classical Greek, Sanskrit, Urdu, isiZulu and Norwegian. The creation of the necessary information chips is relatively easy but where and how to insert these into the appropriate centres of the brain is a problem, as not enough is known about the functioning of the brain.

The deficit in our knowledge of the brain was addressed directly by President Obama in April 2013 in a press conference where he announced the commencement of the *White House Brain Initiative*,³ anticipated to be the next significant step in the understanding of human biology after the successful sequencing of the human genome and stem cell cloning. When it comes to application all the most sanguine aspirations relate to biomedical and neuro-motor advances and to computational, language and factual learning skills (all commercially exploitable, useful acquisitions). One might question, whether any government or organisation would be prepared to invest billions in discovering which part of the brain is responsible for creating aesthetic sensibility. Whilst the technological advances seem to know no boundaries, one wonders whether a chip could ever be devised that would enable someone to play classical music superbly and not just with technical brilliance. Could there ever be a chip for acting Hamlet, delivering a poem by Dylan Thomas, singing like Caruso, painting like Picasso or dancing like a Dervish? Despite the talk of educating the whole person and of striving towards holistic education, the sun seems to be setting on that grand endeavour and seems to be about to rise on a world populated by posthuman cyborgs. The new dawn has already been presaged by many including Katherine Hyles (1999) in her book, *How we became posthuman: Virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature and informatics*. Hyles articulates her understanding of the term posthuman as follows:

I understand human and posthuman to be historically specific constructions that emerge from different configurations of embodiment, technology, and culture. My reference point for human is the tradition of liberal humanism; the posthuman appears when computation rather than possessive individualism is taken as the ground of being, a move that allows the posthuman to be seamlessly articulated with intelligent machines. (Hayles, 1999, pp. 33–34)

SUPERHUMANS AND POSTHUMANS

In answer to the moral and ethical concerns that are being anticipated by the possible fundamental shift in mankind's ontology, an academic, Verner Vinge, pointed out that this would be no more than the natural and historical human tendency to entropy; the propensity to push the boundaries of human possibilities for complexity of order and enhancement of intellectual capacity. In 1993 Vinge wrote in a web article "Within thirty years, we will have the technological means to create superhuman intelligence. Shortly after, the human era will be ended". That leaves us only seven years to get adjusted to the new era. If this prognosis is accurate then we can already answer the opening question: it won't matter at all, because the entire concept of a curriculum based upon human needs would have changed fundamentally.

What then, one might ask, supersedes humans? Dualists of course will regard this entire discussion as absurd because human consciousness, is socially constructed and the *spirit, soul, or life force* are of supernatural origin and not 'embodied' in the human brain. It would, in consequence be impossible for man to transplant or replicate human consciousness. Vitalists would say that uploading was *a priori* impossible. The original cyborg (cybernetic organism) anticipated by Heidegger involved a human being with bodily functions enhanced and controlled by technological devices. Already we are familiar with pacemakers (artificial heart valve pumps) and at many centres experiments with and research into the use of nanotechnology has commenced. The race is on to produce a nanobot (a microscopic robot built by means of nanotechnology)⁴ to undertake simple internal operations within animal and then human bodies. Of course, the scale of the prototypes at the moment is far from being 'nano' (one billionth of a metre in size) and it will require the achievement of practically applied nanotechnology for molecule-by-molecule manufacture of nanobots small enough to be injected into the human body, and once inserted to replicate themselves in sufficient numbers to maintain, repair, diagnose, cure and even enhance bodily features and functions. Some commentators have begun to ring alarm bells by asking what would happen if the process of self-replication went out of control? If this led to the destruction of the human host this would be referred to as the 'grey goo' scenario. If the process led to the take-over of the natural ecology, then reference would be made to the 'black goo' scenario. Alan Goldstein in a very readable posting in a blog on the I, Nanobot – New Scientist – tribe.net refutes the idea of tiny robots being used for the above mentioned purposes:

(T)hey will not be tiny robots. That mechanical fantasy, promulgated by proponents of 'Drexlerian' nanotechnology who appear devoid of even the most rudimentary knowledge of chemistry, has been decisively refuted by people who actually build the components for nanobiotechnology systems. People like the late Nobel Prize-winning chemist Richard E. Smalley and the great Harvard bioorganic chemist George Whitesides. What will really go into our bodies, or out into the environment, will be hybrid molecular devices composed of both synthetic and biological components. These 'devices' will

have been fabricated to specifically exchange chemical information with biological or ecological systems, they will not be nanobots, they will be nanobiobots – and those three letters make all the difference. (Goldstein, 2006, online)

Does this mean though that the human race is prepared to be snuffed out with no more than a whimper? Does it even appreciate the potential danger it is in? It is easy to simply dismiss all the talk of cyborgs, posthumanism, the singularity, and so forth, as fanciful themes for science fiction novels, comic books and the film industry but there are some sobering thoughts to consider:

- Sceptics maintained that manned flight was impossible, but in 1903 the Wright Brothers recorded the first powered flight in an ‘aeroplane’ that cost less than \$1000 to manufacture. In just 66 years, technology had advanced to such a degree that it was possible to launch a rocket to the moon, carrying three people, at a cost of over \$7 billion. In 2015, just two weeks after announcing the intention to send a manned mission to establish a human colony on Mars in 2022, over 78 000 people volunteered for the one-way trip to the Red Planet;
- The first hand-held cell phone call was made by Martin Cooper in the USA in 1983. The phone could make and receive calls – and that was it. Now, just over 30 years later, teachers face classrooms full of students with affordable smart phones in their pockets, that have more power and connectivity and functions than the most sophisticated valve computers of the past that weighed tons, filled a room, required air conditioning to operate, and cost millions. Within twenty years scientists working at MIT predict that cell phones will be obsolete and messages and images will be communicated using encephalographic brain waves instead;
- In the last twelve years we have seen the development of the camera phone, the introduction of the social media site Facebook, UTube and Google Maps. We are now fast approaching what is being called the “Internet of Things” which will link smart sensors, cameras, software, and massive data bases via wearable, embedded and implantable computing devices that can tap into artificial intelligence enhanced, cloud-based information storage sharing holdings with augmented reality;
- On the medical front, the first pancreas was transplanted in 1966, the first heart transplant took place in 1967, liver transplant in 1967, monkey head transplant in 1970, lung transplant in 1981, hand transplant in 1998, partial face transplant in 2005, penis transplant in 2015, and the first human head is about to be transplanted by Dr Sergio Canavera. If that sounds fanciful, a minor prelude to this event occurred on 22 May 2015 at the Houston Methodist Hospital when James Boysen received a “craniofacial tissue transplant at the same time as a kidney and pancreas transplant” (*The Guardian*, Friday 5 June 2015, online). This was the world’s first skull and scalp transplant;
- Human cloning remains a hotly debated issue since the first cloned creature, the sheep known world-wide as Dolly made headlines in 1996. The ethical issues raised by embryonic stem cell research will keep us occupied for a while yet;

- Something that many seem to regard as being on the lunatic fringe (like human flight in the past) is Whole Brain Emulation (WBE) or mind uploading which could herald the dawn of sentient machines. Apart from the dualist objections previously mentioned there are other sceptics who feel that the task of uploading a human brain is of such a complex order as to place this forever beyond human technology. Whilst no one can be certain that this task will ever be achieved the possibility does seem to gain credibility from steps in this direction either already taken, or envisaged. In 1954, Vladimir Demikhov grafted the head and upper body of a puppy onto the neck of a fully grown dog. The world was shocked and morally outraged but the USA government was also concerned that America should stay ahead of the game in all scientific endeavours. It was not surprising then that after Dr R. White completed studies to be a brain surgeon at Harvard Medical School in 1960, he obtained government funding to establish a brain research centre at County Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio. On 4th March 1970, White successfully transplanted the head of a decapitated rhesus monkey onto the body of another decapitated monkey. The head soon regained consciousness and attempted to bite the finger of the experimenter (an action that most people I think would applaud as being both understandable and justifiable). The spinal cord could not be attached and so the animal was in effect a paraplegic. Ray Kurzweil in *Live forever – Uploading the human brain...Closer than you think*, makes reference to a condemned killer who in 1993 gave permission for his brain to be invasively scanned and now all ten billion bytes of his scanned brain are accessible on the internet. Whilst you can see every neuron and every neurotransmitter in each synapse-thin layer, the scan is not yet at a high enough resolution for a re-creation to take place. Further experiments in 1997 enabled White to achieve respiration in the receptor monkey, but the problem of attaching nerve tissue to the spinal cord successfully remained elusive. Presumably this problem has now been resolved. We live in interesting times indeed!

Given the exponential rate of technological advancement, with the above mentioned being just a smattering of examples, there is not a single field of human endeavour that will not be touched by scientific and technical effort. The field of education will not be exempt from this melee. Since Noam Chomsky's critique of language learning via audio-lingual methodology (including language laboratory use), a number of alternative approaches have been proposed. In broad terms the latest theories incline towards 'inculcation' and sub-conscious acquisition as distinct from conscious learning. The problem with CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), which has grown in popularity since the 1990s, is that it is, despite its inter-active elements, a conscious approach and the inter-active element is at best at one removed in its two-dimensional transmission of language information from the natural three dimensional social learning context for language acquisition. The popularity of CALL rests on its ability to handle a large number of learners at any one time and it can also be employed in distance learning; two undeniable and

highly persuasive advantages when one considers the massification of education. One could add to this the advantage of easy self-assessment. This makes it easier to handle more learners as the tutor is only capable of monitoring a limited number of learners at any one time. Ultimately, from an institutional point of view it is the most cost-effective method of language teaching. It is NOT necessarily, however, the most pedagogically sound or advisable method and one could possibly raise an ethical issue here regarding the expediency of cost-effectiveness as opposed to pedagogical integrity. What applies to language learning can be generalised to all aspects of the curriculum that make significant and increasing use of technological approaches for teaching and learning.

It seems inevitable that artificial intelligence will soon outstrip human intelligence (if intelligence is the capacity to assimilate, order, react to, compute, and forecast data) and it is certainly possible to conceive of machines capable of reading and understanding printed materials. Personally I could, grudgingly, entertain the possibility of a machine with uploaded human intelligence displaying, in its way, human-like feelings. Machines that play music are hardly a new phenomenon and with a set of musical parameters and definitions, why should future machines not be capable of producing original works? The same goes for drama, fine art, and even (when robotics reach that stage) a dancing robot. This raises the question: Is there anything that a machine could not ultimately take over from human consciousness? Some have argued that artificial intelligence cannot produce anything new in the sense that it must proceed from information already programmed into the system. But a similar argument can be used to claim that human imagination, which is the source of novelty, cannot create anything completely new because it only recycles bits and pieces from experience and reassembles these in ways that are innovative. How this, in turn, relates to that which is instinctive and intuitive is taken up in the reference to *rasa* in the next paragraph.

I imagine a robot playing the Shakespearian character, Hamlet. I have no doubt that the robot 'performer' would be word perfect. The emotional expression revealed through tone of voice, focus, gestural and postural semiotic signs could conceivably be programmed randomly to select subtle differences of interpretation ensuring that no two performances of the same role would ever be the same. Audience reception, both audible and visible, could be factored in to provide a causal link to variations of mood, pitch, pace, projection, emphasis, and so on. Performing and visual artists, however, know instinctively that there is another level of involvement not covered by the aforementioned. I say instinctively because we are speaking in a western language that has no adequate equivalent to the eastern concept of *rasa*, which makes talking about the issue very problematic. The nearest I can get to interpreting this concept is to say that *rasa* is the inspired feeling that an artist imbeds in an artefact in such a way that it is communicated intuitively to the informed, sensitive individual who experiences the particular artefact through the emotions. From a different mindset one could pose a question such as: How could a robot access the *swadharma* of Hamlet? (i.e., what he is compelled to do by virtue of his fate). Access

could only be via the *gunas* which Bharucha defines as “the innate psychobiological traits which are the heritage of an individual’s previous lives” (1993, p. 71).

Of course in a humanist debate (as I understand humanism) such esoteric considerations are out of order, unless the concept of humanism is revisited to incorporate the metaphysical. At the end of this chapter I suggest an alternative way to address the problem that might be more acceptable. *Rasa* theory aside then, it would appear that there is an inexorable march towards the partial fusion of humans with machines or being totally subsumed by them. Hayles (1999, p. 291), however, reminded us that

Although some current versions of the posthuman point towards the anti-human and the apocalyptic, we can craft others that will be conducive to the long-range survival of humans and of the other life-forms, biological and artificial, with whom we share the planet and ourselves.

Whilst this may be a comforting rejoinder, there remains a sense of unease reflected in films such as *The Fly*, *Robocop*, *Star Wars*, and so on. It is no longer a case of boy meets girl and after some suitable dramatic complications, boy gets girl. Now it is a case of man makes machine and after suitable dramatic battles, man conquers machine, or vice versa, or even having fallen in love, the machine seeks human status through the acquisition of human emotion.

Not that the concept of human bodies fusing with non-human forms is new. The concept is as ancient as the myths and legends of our earliest civilisations. Ganesha has the head of an elephant, Pan was half man and half goat, centaurs are fusions of man with horse, and a mermaid is the fusion of woman with fish, and so on. Transmogrification in literature is reasonably common with Dracula’s ability to become a bat, and Renfield’s ability to become a werewolf. The Dracula tale is interesting from another point of view in that, as a vampire, he is described as being un-dead. Would un-dead be a suitable term to apply to those machines with uploaded human consciousness, and would they only be regarded as ‘dead’ when the system crashes without a backup?

It is significant to note that in myth, legend, and in literary works that precede the concept of the cyborg, humans fuse with other living entities in the main (some with trees, the sea or mountains), but not with machines created by human technology. It is not in my view the prospect of men fusing with machines *per se* that is the cause for the current unease, it is instead the threat of alienation and displacement of the human being from a position of control and violation of human dignity. When Galileo in the 17th century proposed that the earth moved around the sun and was therefore not at the centre of the universe, religious authorities were immediately outraged. Copernicus, some ninety years earlier, had proposed that the world was round, not flat, and that it revolved around the sun. His writings were, predictably, banned by the all-powerful Catholic Church and were only unbanned in 1835. Others who agreed with Copernicus were either silenced (Tycho Brahe) or arrested and burned at the stake for heresy (Giordano Bruno). The prospect of God’s finest

RE-HUMANISING THE CURRICULUM IN A NON-AESTHETIC EMBODIED SOCIETY

creation, man, not being at the centre was as much a challenge to orthodox belief of its time as Darwin's *Origin of the Species* proved to be later. With modernism and humanism man was firmly in charge and responsible for a godless world. Even the transhuman retains control, but in posthumanism, at least in one interpretation of the term, humans seemingly capitulate and vest effective control to machines. Consequently, an over-arching question arises: What qualities are unique to human beings (if any)? In other words: What distinguishes human beings from all other entities?⁵

NON-DUALISM, UBUNTU AND EASTERN PHILOSOPHIES

Without going through all the discounted definitions involving 'tool using animals', 'opposable thumbs and non-opposable big toes', 'language users', and 'creatures of compassion' and without a redefinition of humanism in general or a reversion to something like Kierkegaardian Christian humanism, one cannot seek a metaphysical answer to the question in terms of 'soul' or 'spirit'. These scientifically unproven concepts aside, I do believe that a possible alternative answer could be found in the non-western mindset. To have to fuse with a machine in order to achieve immortality or heightened intelligence would make no sense to a person with the kind of traditional African mindset which has already collapsed the duality of individual and society. This is captured in the isiZulu expression 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' with the denotation 'a person is a person because of people' and the connotation 'an individual is an individual in relation to their contribution to the social good'. Compare this to the individualist ideology embedded in Descartes' '*Cogito ergo sum*' (I think therefore I am). The duality of life and death has also been collapsed in the notion of the *amadlozi* (ancestors). The so-called death of a person in such belief is simply a point of transition between being a person and being an ancestor. In an animist way, the ancestors inhabit trees, rivers or rocks. As far as heightened intelligence is concerned, it can be acquired by direct reference to the ancestors via prayer, sacrifice, trance, or through dreams, or drugs. The idea would be equally illogical to anyone who believes in reincarnation as distinct from resurrection in a Christian sense. The western mindset is characterised by linear logic grounded in dualism and western religion is equally linear in the sense that it proceeds from a notion of creation to apocalyptic eschatology.⁶ The eastern mindset by contrast is cyclical and non-dualistic in nature. In his criticism of Peter Brook's nine-hour film of the great Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*, Bharucha comments:

If Brook had given some importance to the cyclical nature of time that pervades the *Mahabharata*, he would have rejected the validity of dramatizing the epic in a predominantly linear narrative. Nothing could be more foreign to the *Mahabharata* than linearity...⁷ What one misses ... is the sense of time that transcends chronology, time that stretches to infinity...[In Brook's film] time is truncated into blocks of action, acts and scenes that have definite beginnings and ends. (1993, p. 75)⁸

Bharucha illustrates the difference between linear and cyclical mindsets because for the linear mind the whole is the sum of its parts, but for the cyclical mind the part is a microcosm of the whole. Differentiation of mindsets is dealt with extensively by Marimba Ani in *Yurugu*. Of the western mindset she writes, “linearity was fundamental to the system of ‘logic’ that Aristotle introduced, which was thereafter equated with truth” (Ani, 1994, p. 68). She then quotes Vernon Dixon who

characterises European (Aristotelian) logic as ‘either/or logic’ which is based on the laws of absolute contradiction, and on the exclusion of the middle ground. He says that ‘either/or’ logic has become so ingrained in Western thought that it is felt to be natural and self-evident. He contrasts European logic with what he calls the ‘diunital logic’ of the African world-view, in which things can be ‘apart and united at the same time’. According to this logic, something is both in one category and not in that category at the same time [Umuntu, ngumuntu, ngabantu], This circumstance is unthinkable given the European world-view. (Ani, 1994, p. 68)

Earlier Ani quoted De Lubicz’s description of the rational European search for universal truth as “research without illumination”. For him the basis of all scientific knowledge or universal knowledge is intuition. “Intellectual analysis is secondary and will always be, at best, inconclusive” (1994, p. 67).

My point is that a human being has a choice and is capable of *both linear and cyclical thought*. Are both being catered for in the curricula of schools, training institutions and universities? With most of the encouragement in education being vested, understandably, in science and technology, are we not, by implication, discouraging teaching and learning in aesthetic education which is, ironically, the area of enquiry that speaks to our unique humanity? Revisiting the opening question, one could say that, “Who decides what is and what is not to be included in the curriculum” is, therefore, of supreme importance and, yes, it does matter because the essence of humanity is being questioned.

The kind of advanced intelligence in a super-computer that is envisioned as a site for possible attempts to upload human consciousness would still operate through a fundamental dualism of bi-polar antimonies (opposites). In essence, a computer recognises 0 and 1. Instruct a computer to collapse the duality and it would freeze. How then would it be possible for a computer operating on on/off signals to become non-dual in thought? My assertion is that currently, *the human being is the only entity with the capacity for non-dual, cyclical perception and thought*. I believe this to be true despite John McCarthy’s challenge to Hubert Dreyfus to put money on him not being able to write logical formulas for *ambiguity tolerance*.⁹ The point is that this has not as yet been achieved. When it is achieved, we are definitely in trouble! The same applies to non-linear mathematics and science because these fields still rely on

...cleverly conceived computer-based numeral simulations giving insights into problems that are at present intractable. (Campbell, 2006, online)¹⁰

Whether uploading will ever become a reality remains, for the moment, an open question, but with the example before us of Wilbur Wright, who once declared that man would never fly, we would be wise to keep an open mind on the subject. Considering also that the time between the Wright brother's famous flight and man setting foot on the moon was a mere sixty years, and the fact that technology is advancing at a demonstrably exponential rate, who knows where we will be in 2066.

CONCLUSION

Having placed faith and trust in the assertion that linear logic, western science, and technology can in the end explain all things,¹¹ western humanists are fast approaching the position in which a 'yes' or 'no' answer will have to be given to the question: Is there any unique, inimitable quality possessed by *Homo Sapiens* alone? A capacity for non-dual thought is what I propose ironically enough to back up a positive answer to this essentially dualist question. The implications are profound and, if accepted, there would be a need to redefine humanism while the ripple effects on education, teaching and learning would be shattering. A negative response will have equally profound implications for, with no apparent claim to any unique quality, human kind might very well be logically advised to follow the yellow brick road to the mechanical wizard that will make it possible for us to leave our human bodies to live an idyllic, super-intelligent, disease-free life in hedonistic virtual reality forever. What posthumanists regard as the dark days of man's ignorance, used to be referred to as heaven, moksha, nirvana, or some other culture-specific term. The posthuman version though will be a godless existence without transmogrified beings with wings. But, it is also useful to bear in mind that this 'yes' or 'no' answer will only be required of those with linear mindsets. The rest will be left to carry on in their non-linear, cyclical way, pursuing strangely similar though radically different ends; an entirely appropriate position to be in for a non-dualist... myself now among that number until the inexorable tide of changing insights and awareness sweeps me away to welcome new perspectives. I wonder what a postposthuman perspective will involve?

Could it possibly involve a re-incorporation of the aesthetic world of creativity, imagination and fantasy into the new perspective? Perhaps a re-reading of Schiller is called for.

NOTES

- ¹ Braingate "relies on a direct link to the motor cortex by an implantable chip which then works to collect neural impulses and translate them to an external monitor. This then reads the transmission and performs the desired action" (Martin, 2005, online).
- ² See <http://glossynews.com/science-and-technology/201104010530/nano-chip-brain-implant-allows-users-to-instantly-speak-foreign-language/>
- ³ BRAIN is an acrostic for Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies.
- ⁴ See Massachusetts Institute of Technology as an important example.

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- ⁵ In all of this discussion the term ‘man’ and ‘mankind’ are used. The implicit sexism in the use of such terms could derive from the establishment of the Bible and Christianity with the Council of Nicaea in 325AD. The Nicene Creed did not accept that women had souls. The church only accepted that women had souls in 1545. www.churchinhistory.org/pages/booklets/women-souls-1.htm
- ⁶ Whilst the phrase ‘apocalyptic eschatology’ is used here in the sense of ‘catastrophic end of the world’, and in some religions the destruction of the planet (or of all life on earth) is in some way or another predicted, this does not necessarily imply that the human race will not survive in some new form (Collins, 2007).
- ⁷ The objection could be raised of course that the Mahabharata also has a beginning and an end and, within the work there are narratives that are linear, but this is to miss the point. It confuses the pointing finger with the direction indicated. The same kind of objection is sometimes raised to Ionesco’s attempt to deal with linguistic absurdity in a play such as *Rhinoceros*. The play script employs meaningful words in meaningful linguistic structures. The reflection of linguistic absurdity is nevertheless conveyed if one does not prioritise form over content. The play script should be read as a meta-absurd document in the same way as the Mahabharata should be read as a meta-cyclical document.
- ⁸ Earlier Bharucha suggests: “If Brook had been concerned with the context of the Mahabharata, he might not have attempted to summarise the entire ‘story’ within nine hours. For an epic that is fifteen times longer than the Bible, nine hours is really not that long; in fact, it is pitifully short. To attempt an encapsulation of the Mahabharata in its entirety is a hubris of sorts, but to limit that encapsulation to nine hours is the reductio ad absurdum of theatrical adaptation. It would have been better for Brook to focus on a few scenes” (Bharucha, 1993, p. 74).
- ⁹ McCarthy, J. (2006). *The Degenerating Research Program* [online]. Retrieved on 15 June 2015 from: <http://www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/reviews/dreyfus/node4.html>
- ¹⁰ Campbell, (2006) [online] Retrieved on 24 June 2015 from: <http://chaos.aip.org/chaos/staff.jsp>. Accessed 24/06/06

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Dennis Schaffer
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

FRANCO FRESCURA

5. VISUAL COGNITION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE SOUL OF ARCHITECTURE

INTRODUCTION

It is a truism that change and the inevitability of change is one of the *givens* of human society, yet it remains one of the most difficult and most painful processes known to us. Whether it is brought about by the introduction of new ideas, new practices, or new technologies, the need to meet changing social or environmental conditions is constantly with us and, as the cliché suggests, is as inescapable as death and taxes. Despite the fact that many changes are not revolutionary in nature, but are merely the result of an evolution of ideas whose time have come, acceptance is seldom immediate, it is usually slow, and is commonly preceded by anxiety and even violence. As a result, we now use periods of transition as an acceptable means of minimising the impact of change

When dealing with the collateral issues of change, disciplines from divergent backgrounds often find that they share in a number of commonalities. Since the 1970s, for example, a number of feminist authors have questioned whether feminist mothers were capable of raising gender-liberated sons in a society that remained essentially patriarchal in nature (Dworkin, 1978). More recently a number of feminist researchers have commented on the fact that,

(t)he work of raising anti-sexist sons has proven to be more difficult and daunting than the task of rearing feminist daughters. The task of raising a new ‘generation of men’ is seldom supported by fathers or the world at large. Furthermore, many mothers worry that their feminine/feminist sons may find themselves misfits in a patriarchal society. (Thomas, 2001, pp. 121–140)

Concerns of a similar nature were also voiced by Hassan Howa in the 1970s when he stated that there could be “no normal sport in an abnormal society” (Black & Nauright, 1998, p. 73), and that such changes would not become possible without a radical reconfiguration of South African society taking place. Since 1994 it has also become obvious that these changes could not be legislated into being.

Today architectural education finds itself in a similar quandary: nearly fifty years after Amos Rapoport published his seminal work *House Form and Culture* (1969), South African schools of architecture are still graduating students who, contrary to all they have been taught, continue to follow modernist patterns of architectural

practice, unencumbered by thoughts of cultural colonialism, environmental degradation, globalisation and historical context.

As in the case of genderised and racial patterns of behaviour, the answers to such questions probably lie in the nature of society itself, which is normally monolithic and bound by social inertia, and is thus resistant to most forms of non-revolutionary change. Faced with a society which has been hardened by a century of systematic exposure to racial and patriarchal values which appear to have found a natural home in the modernist movement, architectural education in South Africa has found it difficult to make headway against social values that predicate an anti-historicist and supposedly culturally neutral philosophy. In reality cultural neutralism is an oxymoron, and is merely another means of maintaining the status quo.

While many architectural educators in institutions of higher education have attempted to introduce the values and practices inherent in a context-based design methodology, architectural institutes remain firmly bound to the precepts of a service-orientated industry. Their corporate philosophy is modernist, their journals publish glossy modernist buildings with little intellectual substance, their prizes are awarded to modernist designs, and their architect-in-training programme is intended to induct young graduates into the modernist compound.

They have been assisted in this by the fact that many architectural educators were, at one stage, required by universities to continue in private practice while teaching academic courses. In many cases the idea of a private architect who is a part-time teacher has created a dichotomy in the educational system which has left many architecture students in a quandary as to which set of values to follow: practice or theory. The choice has invariably fallen on the practice side, the non-intellectual side, the side that passes off the aesthetics of modernism as *architecture*.

In this chapter, I examine the rise of the architect as a *heroic* figure in the field of creative thought, and the concomitant rise of modernist attitudes in the profession. I argue that *cognitive* and *contextual* thinking has always been a component of architecture since time immemorial, but that the rise of a modernist architectural philosophy during the early 20th century has led to the suppression of historical, regional and cultural identities, and to the alienation of architecture, and architects, from their wider social contexts. Finally, I posit that the future of Architecture as a positive force in the design of built environments rests with a return of undamaged cognitive domains of our educational process. It follows that this future lies in academia and not in the mono-dimensional values of a service-orientated industry.

THE PROCESS OF TRANSMISSION OF ARCHITECTURAL IDEAS

The generation of form, be it in art or architecture, is the outcome of a cumulative historical process whereby the foundations of the new are firmly planted in the rubble of the old. Whether the ideas of one generation are transmitted to the next through material inheritance, ideological constructs, or even a mystical process of osmosis,

VISUAL COGNITION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE SOUL OF ARCHITECTURE

the transfer of concepts, forms, textures and tastes runs like a thread through history, linking one era to the next, passing its aesthetics and building methods through learnt patterns of behaviour, regional traditions, marriage custom, social mores and economic activity. The transfer need not be made as part of a transformative or evolutionary act, but it may also be revolutionary in nature. Whatever its form, it is the result of a reaction, for or against, a previous order and remains firmly based on historical precedent.

Few of these aesthetic patterns ever become the subject of documentation or formal research. Mostly they are accepted as being *just so*, and as such remain part of an unspoken traditional knowledge system, much like codes of etiquette or the social taboos of a society. Their existence is acknowledged in custom but they are seldom codified, representing values held in common by the group, and often gain the status of *tribal secrets*. In many cases they perform the role of a *shibboleth*, separating strangers from the inner group.

It follows that over a period of time, aesthetics should become subject to a symbolic language, an order or a *maniera*, a way of doing things, whereby specific methods of representation are assigned social, group or national identity. As a language they have their own idioms and structures and, like most languages, are transmitted as part of early cognitive learning behaviour, which is later reinforced by apprenticeship or a structured educational system.

It is my contention that the built environment as a whole constitutes a cognitive language of forms, of textures and of spaces, which is untaught and little recognised, but is omnipresent in any built environment, and is transmitted from one generation to the next by social custom, use and values. The failure by most schools of architecture to recognise the existence of a language governing the built environment probably contributes to a state of ambiguity in our students with regard to their own cognitive heritage and the values that they are then expected to apply as part of their university training and professional practice. This probably accounts for the sense of frustration that many architectural students repeatedly express today towards the modernist and anti-historicist system of architectural education they are expected to follow.

TEACHING THE CONVENTIONS OF SPACE AND FORM

Traditionally histories of architecture have followed a pattern of analysis which forefronts the outward aesthetics of a building while largely ignoring the use of the space it encloses. This is demonstrably wrong, for while the appearance of a building can provide valuable clues as to the era it was built in, the region where it is located, and the technology of its builders, such analysis fails to take into account critical factors like social hierarchy, symbolic meaning, sacred axes, gender roles, site orientations, and the correlation between assumed culture and architectural features. Indeed, if symbolic representation is at all acknowledged, it is normally treated as an idiosyncratic reflection of the individual case rather than as part of an overriding whole.

In reality sufficient historical evidence exists to show that the outward appearance of a building can be manipulated to reinforce political rivalries, tribal loyalties or family connections. Thus any theory which attempts to equate aesthetics to the culture of its builders must be rejected.

On the other hand, it will be found that the use of space, symbolic or otherwise, acts as a direct reflection of the spatial norms and economic activities of a people, and is therefore a more reliable guideline as to their cultural norms. Indeed, were we to take the latter assumption to its natural conclusion, it can be shown that the spatial architecture of a people is a direct reflection of their cosmological belief structures. A number of case studies can be quoted to prove this point, but for our purposes here just two will suffice.

The Egyptian Concept of Heaven and Earth

An Egyptian creation myth tells how “before the existence of the sky, before the existence of the earth, before the existence of men, and before the existence of death” was Nun, a nothingness or void (De Beler, 2004, p. 71).

Within that void lived the snake Kamatef, who thought himself into being out of the Nun. Thus, from early times the power of creation, or the birth of original thought, was believed to be divine. Kamatef gave birth to the god Irta, who then went about the business of creating the known universe, including Ra, the sun god, and all other deities. Having brought order to the world out of chaos, the three, Nun, Kamatef and Irta all retired to long sleeps. However, they left behind the concept of a *nun*, or an area of darkness and chaos, which remained central to Egyptian belief systems.

The idea that knowledge, inspired by Ra, could banish the forces of evil, ignorance and darkness remained a powerful force in local mythology where Egypt, located at the centre of the known world, represented knowledge, order and hence culture, whereas all lands beyond were seen to belong to a *nun*, where disorder and ignorance prevailed. The task of Pharaoh was to keep the *nun* at bay and to ensure that the balance between order and disorder was maintained.

Should the pharaoh fail in this task then his status as a leader was called into question. The job description of a pharaoh, therefore involved a fair measure of magic and ritual, as well as the ability to implement the construction of capital works, where worship could take place. Temples were metaphors for the primeval swamp and incorporated many of the features, in a symbolic manner, of the creation myth (Davies & Friedman, 1998, p. 14). These were carried over to other aspects of Egyptian architecture and town planning.

The South African Homestead

The close relationship between power, faith and architecture, is further illustrated by indigenous settlement in southern Africa. Amongst Nguni, Sotho and Tswana-speaking groups, the prevalent settlement form is the circle. At its centre is the

cattle byre which is also the place for men to gather, and for burial of the deceased. Therefore, it is a place inhabited by ancestors, where wisdom resides, where laws are formulated and where tradition is maintained. It is a place where surplus food is kept and which is deeply associated with the concept of life. In other words, it represents the inner core of their society. Gathered around it, in a wider circle, are the dwellings of the various wives placed in alternating descending order from the top where the Great Hut, the residence of the First Wife, or the father is sited. Although the settlement as a whole comes under the nominal leadership of a father or husband, this broad belt about the inner core, is governed by the women. Beyond this second circle will lie a belt which the women keep free from all vegetation before reaching an area where nature is allowed to govern. Beyond this, the landscape is considered to be the home of wild animals, enemies, and the preserve of lawlessness, danger, hunger and death. Therefore, the relationship existing between inner core and the wider world beyond is one of order versus disorder. This space is mediated by women thereby giving them a direct voice in the affairs of the group.

The settlement itself is usually sited facing east on a downhill slope and the dwellings themselves will not look to the centre but to the rising sun. This transitional belt ruled by women hinges about a vertical central axis which separates the settlement into a left-hand and a right-hand side. This arrangement can be considered to be the axis of power, the axis of inheritance, and the axis of entry whilst the relationship between wives inside the circle also governs the laws of family succession.

A second axis, or rather a cross-axis, then governs the rules of residence where the permanent members of the family, the parents, reside on the top, whereas children and visitors to the group, who are considered to be impermanent, reside at the bottom. A further element may be perceived to exist in the relationship between men and women. Traditionally gender politics have held that women occupy a lesser position in rural society but in fact such relationships are much more sophisticated and open to interpretation. The central area, normally held to be the preserve of men in the group, is not as well defined as gender distinctions would seem to indicate. It is true that women who are still of a child-bearing age are not allowed into the central area, but older women whose age of menstruation has passed, are considered to be an integral part of meetings of the men held to discuss important group issues (Frescura, 1983).

Such spatial organisation is not unique to pre-industrial society, and might go a long way to explain the sense of disorientation, and even alienation that one feels when visiting an alien built environment. James Deetz once described a visit to Boston, or Rome or Florence as “comfortable, like slipping your foot into an old slipper”, whereas he found new cities such as Tel Aviv (Israel) and Phoenix (USA) to be alienating environments (Personal communication, San Francisco, 1986).

THE DICHOTOMY OF MODERNISM

Traditionally modernist architecture has come to be characterised by cubic, white, flat-roofed forms, usually set in an arid landscape, and has come to reflect the

theories of social engineering prevalent in Europe during the early 20th century. The first model was put forward in 1904 by French architect Tony Garnier whose socialist utopian design for *Une Cite Industrielle* became the first of a series of housing schemes aimed at working class families, whose rules of behaviour related to the individual's material needs and moral values were firmly entrenched in its town planning regulations (Garnier, 1917). It was followed by a number of similarly *utopian* designs most of which, fortunately, never progressed beyond the drawing board.

Despite its utopian aspirations, the concepts of architectural modernism were also linked to a number of totalitarian ideologies of the 1920s and 1930s. Individual members of the *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM), for example, took up an unequivocal socialist stance and, as a group, modelled themselves as an architectural counterpart of the *ComIntern*, a Russian-based committee established with the objective of promoting international communism. Italian fascism embraced modernism as the "revolutionary architecture of a revolutionary movement" (Falasca-Zamponi, 1997, p. 16), while crypto-Nazi architect Mies van der Rohe tried, without success, to persuade Hitler that modernism embodied the vigour and spirit of the German national socialist movement (Hochman, 1989).

Ironically when Van der Rohe emigrated to the United States in 1937, he was welcomed with open arms into the American multi-national corporate establishment. Even more ironically the Soviets decreed an end to modernism in 1934, the Nazis criminalised it in 1937, and American Senator George Dondero denounced it as a communist plot in 1949. American architect Philip Johnson, whose own philosophy was very similar to that of Mies, put it aptly when he said "Nazis, schmatzis, Mies would have built for anyone" or, more to the point, "Whoever commissions buildings buys me, I'm for sale. I'm a whore. I'm an artist" (Hochman, 1989, p. 283).

When it came to state-sponsored architecture a similar confluence of attitudes emerges. Hitler propounded in 1943 that,

(t)he spirit of our times is embodied here ... in this eternal monument to German rebirth, in this stone symbol of German greatness, German vitality, and German culture. (Goodman, 1971, pp. 104–105)

His sentiments sounded startlingly similar to those voiced by President John Kennedy only nineteen years later, in 1962, when he stated that,

(t)he policy shall be to provide requisite and adequate facilities in an architectural style and form which is distinguished and which will reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigour and stability of the American National Government. (Goodman, 1971, pp. 104–105)

Such coincidences did not stop with Kennedy. In 1969, Daniel Moynihan, President Nixon's chief planner-in-residence, addressed the Joint American Institute of Architects and the Royal Architecture Institute of Canada, bemoaning,

a steady deterioration in the quality of public buildings and spaces, and with it a decline in the symbols of public unity and common purpose with which the citizen can identify, of which he can be proud, and by which he can know what he shares with his fellow citizens. (Moynihan, 1969)

Unknowingly he was echoing the words of Adolf Hitler who, some years earlier had written in *Mein Kampf* (1925) that,

(o)ur cities of the present lack the outstanding symbol of national community which, we must therefore not be surprised to find, sees no symbol of itself in the cities. The inevitable result is a desolation whose practical effect is the total indifference of the big-city dweller to the destiny of his city. (Goodman, 1971, pp. 104–105)

So perhaps Mies van der Rohe was right: Modernism did reflect, after all, the vigour and spirit of the national socialist movement. Such apparent ambiguities can probably be attributed to the fact that, from a theoretical standpoint, modernism is open to very broad definition: a doctrine, ideology or system of ideas, principles and values subscribed to by all those who consider themselves modern architects, artists, designers and writers. Because these disciplines encompass a wide range of concerns, this has made modernism difficult to describe, even within one discipline itself. The divergence of schools that have evolved within modern art, for example, means that not only has modernism been subjected to a wide range of interpretations, it has also been subject to a measure of historical evolution within the movement itself. This means that, over the years, a number of tensions and debates, often at odds with each other, have developed within these disciplines.

In architecture modernism has implied, at different times, concerns for urbanism, technology, the dehumanisation of the built environment, the honest use of building materials, and the harnessing of architecture to parallel forces of social justice and social change. In 1923 one of the modernist movement's better-known propagandists, Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, known to his contemporaries as Le Corbusier, proclaimed that "it's architecture or revolution" (Le Corbusier, 2007, p. 307). He argued that, by using improved design techniques and more efficient means of industrial production, architects could bring about improvements in the social order, thereby removing the causes of social unrest. This belief placed modernist architecture firmly in the camp of social engineering, an ideology embraced by a number of totalitarian regimes during the 20th century. Consequently, it became the preferred state architecture of pre-Stalinist Russia, fascist Italy, communist China, Ceausescu's Romania and, later on, apartheid South Africa.

One of the features of modernist architecture has been its self-proclaimed recognition of regional and vernacular architectures, and its promotion of their environmental design adaptations. Critics have pointed out that, in retrospect, this was based on a Eurocentric geographical pre-determinism favoured in the 1930s (Forde, 1934) which fore-fronted elements of the natural environment, such as found

materials and climatic conditions, but generally refused to enter the wider house form and culture debate which developed during the 1960s and 1970s.

In reality modernist recognition of vernacular forms has seldom exceeded the use of fenestration and the occasional sun-protection device, and has wholly ignored the social and cultural implications of built space. Few modernist architectural historians, it seems, have been able to perceive that the countries where modernism was promoted as a state architecture have also been the most active in the suppression of ethnic minorities, and that the destruction of historical and vernacular built environments were a necessary prerequisite in the suppression of regional identities. During the 20th century Russia, China, and Romania followed similar policies of rural collectivism, requiring the demolition of historical villages and the centralisation of farm workers in newly-built and remarkably similar regional administrative centres. In this way modern architecture was used as a unifying force against ethnic divisionism, with the concurrent destruction of regional symbols and identities.

In the final analysis, however, the longest-surviving legacy of modernist philosophy has been in the field of education, social identity and social change, where the laudable concepts of equal human rights, a break with previous discriminatory structures, and nation building have been translated into an anti-historicist disregard for older built environments. The idea that all people are born equal has been reconceptualised as all people are born the same, thus disregarding the variables of personal identity, aptitude and talent. Change in ideation has had wide repercussions in architectural education, professional practice, and the conservation of historical built environments.

By comparison, postmodernism arose during the latter part of the 20th century, largely as a reaction to the modernist school of philosophy. Central to its processes is the sense that the revolutionary energy which had characterised the early years of modernism had hardened into conventional artistic procedures and institutional conventions. More importantly postmodernism rejected the sterile and seemingly facile use of cubist forms and turned for inspiration to the neglected traditions of Art Nouveau (also known as *Jungenstyl*), and Art Deco, stating that a language of the arts was inherent in the popular understanding of both art and architecture, and that both could only be returned to public ownership through the re-instatement of such a language. This was supported by a revival of the historicist and conservation movements of the 1980s which sought to recycle old and often neglected urban neighbourhoods in the face of demolition and modernist-driven town planning developments.

It is necessary to point out that any references in this chapter to the theory of postmodernism bear no relationship to the brand of architectural postmodernism, sometimes referred to as PoMo, put forward in the 1970s by Michael Graves, Robert Stern and Charles Moore. The latter was a glossy supplement to the modernist menu rather than a serious challenge to its elitist modernist precepts. As such it has been ignored.

STRUCTURALISM VS POST-STRUCTURALISM

Structuralism is a method of enquiry which proceeds from the premise that cultural activity can be analysed objectively as a science (Leach, 1970, p. 21). Structuralists usually attempt to identify the elements in their area of specialisation which abide by the rules of unitary organisation. Once these elements are found, they are located within a framework or an inter-connected grid. The relationships are then held to constitute the overall structure which is assumed, ultimately, to be at the root of the cultural phenomenon. Once this structure is established, all activity in this field can be explained in its terms. Because of this, some of its practitioners have been led to assign to it the status of an *objective science*.

However, this position is contradicted by structuralism itself, where the use of deconstruction as a means of arriving at the constituent elements of a structure, establishes a position whereby the constituent elements themselves are subject to textual, contextual and inter-contextual readings of a non-objective nature. This, then, establishes the premises of poststructuralism and deconstruction, which use structuralism as a starting point but do not accept its basic tenets. Nonetheless structuralism remains an important method of analysis in western academia, probably because of its acceptance of humanist principles.

The turn towards deconstruction and poststructuralism appears to have had little effect in disciplines traditionally covered by its parent theory, and in architecture, at least, a reversal since the 1980s to the phenomenology of the early modern movement appears to have privileged structuralism in the curriculum of design and history in western schools of architecture. Nonetheless the teachings of the *House Form and Culture* movement linger on and the concept of *architecture as a text* has become an important component of archaeology and of history of architecture as separate academic disciplines.

Poststructuralism is a general term used to describe, often dismissively, the work of a wide range of discrete thinkers, including Barthes, Derrida, Foucault and Girard. The word was coined to refer to the intellectual movements that emerged from a colloquium held at John Hopkins University in 1966. Perhaps the most influential voice to arise from this event was that of Derrida whose work has stressed the reading of objects, words and events as texts, subject to sub-texts, silences and the inter-contextuality between texts, and even the texts and their readers themselves. Unfortunately, it is often identified exclusively with deconstructivism or, more misleadingly, it has been loosely equated with postmodernism.

Arising out of any discussion on texts and subtexts, a number of other theories also become pertinent to this theme. Linguist Noam Chomsky, has argued that the ability to learn a language is wired to the human brain. Although this was developed specifically in the context of verbal and spoken language, the theory he puts forward is equally applicable to cognitive, spatial, symbolic and manufactured forms. This has led to the study of symbols, or Semiotics, which argues that everything has meaning beyond simple outward appearance, and thus that a value-free built form or space cannot exist.

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It is possible to factor into this debate a number of other theoretical frameworks, such as historical materialism, Marx's arguments about structure and superstructure, Africanism, feminism and post feminism, and ultimately critical theory, but it is beyond the scope of this brief chapter to do so. Nonetheless these are theories that are relevant to the architecture debate but, whose study, as will be shown later, is sadly missing from the architectural curriculum.

THE RISE OF ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

The separation which exists today between client and builder, or consumer and producer, may be traced back to the early Italian Renaissance when the partnership between the two parties in the construction process began to diverge. Traditionally, in folk architecture, it was common for both roles to be embodied in the same person, and even when separation began to take place, the owner was literate in the construction process and often had the choice of participating in it. During the Middle Ages the role of a master builder began to emerge, usually in the person of a master carpenter or master stone mason, leading to the point where a specialised designer was needed to conceptualise the building as a whole, interpret its technology, and represent the interests of the client. On a building site they were referred to colloquially as *Mastro*, meaning master or teacher. It was thus, one building at a time, that the myth of the architect as a virile, potent and invariably male force began to assert itself (Frescura, 2011).

This had not always been so. The prevailing idea in pre-industrial society was that everyone could draw, or paint, or build, but there were some who could do so better than others. As a result, the distinctions between crafter, artist and client were relatively permeable. Today we know that in the early days of the Renaissance a Florentine could walk into an artist's workshop and commission anything, from a decorated button to a masque costume, from a painted altarpiece through to a marble tomb (Cronin, 1967, pp. 165–166). Although such people were bound by the strictures of the male-dominated guild system enough examples have been recorded to show that women, mostly the wives and daughters of master-crafters, could find a place in an artist's studio or a building site (Frescura, 1995).

Because everyone could participate, and had the visual literacy to comment, artists and architects were working in a critical constituency knowledgeable in the idioms then in use, and able to appreciate the language of artistic forms and the nuances created by the artist. Vasari tells us that once, after Cimabue had completed a painting of Our Lady, the panel was considered to be so magnificent as to be "carried to the sound of trumpets and amid scenes of great rejoicing in solemn procession" from his house to the Church of Santa Maria Novella where it was installed (Vasari, 1987, p. 53). Similarly, a building such as Durham Cathedral would have provided generations of townfolk with a template of the new technology being used as well as a yardstick against which all other building could be measured.

When construction of the duomo at Santa Maria Novella, in Florence, was reaching completion in 1445, its designer, Filippo Brunelleschi, was awarded by his grateful city an additional payment for the work, over and above his normal salary as construction supervisor. The second sum was in recognition of his genius for having invented the dome, and for having resolved a problem which other talented minds of his time had failed to achieve (Vasari, 1987, p. 155). By the 16th century artists and architects of known merit such as Michelangelo Buonarroti and Raffaello d'Urbino were regularly referred to by their contemporaries as "il divino", the divine one, to describe the fact that their talents were of such high order that they could only be the result of divine gift.

As architects began to be lionised by fashionable society, and their interests became ever more identified with those of the people they served, the rich and the politically powerful, they found that their voices on matters of aesthetics were becoming increasingly authoritative. As a result, the 16th and 17th centuries saw the rise of a new class: the architectural theoretician, comprised of architects who engaged in the practical production of buildings, but who also wrote about building. This was not a new phenomenon and can be traced back to Roman times. Vitruvius lived in the reign of Augustus, and his ten-volume treatise, *De Architectura*, was originally published in about 30BCE and was rediscovered by the Florentine humanist Poggio Bracciolini in 1412. Its obscure text and sweeping pronouncements had a strong appeal for the Renaissance intellect, and it rapidly became the most influential book on architecture of the time, being used as reference by Brunelleschi, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, among many others (Cronin, 1967, p. 203).

It was followed in 1452 by Leon Battista Alberti with a seven-volume *De Re Aedificatoria*, Francesco di Giorgio Marini's *Trattato di Architettura* in 1462, and in 1464, a twenty-five volume *LibroArchitettonico* by Antonio di PietroAverlino, better known as *Filarete*. Later, Andrea Palladio's *I Quattro Libridell'Architettura*, published in 1570, found a wide following both in Italy and abroad (Kruft, 1994).

More notable still were two architects who never built at all. Gianbattista Piranesi trained as an architect and was once described by a contemporary as "the best architect in Rome ... who never built a proper house" (Penny, 1978, p. 5). Instead he learnt the craft of etching and engraving, and having set up a studio in Rome, from 1748 to 1774 made a living by producing a series of large-format views of Rome, *Le Vedute di Roma*, which sold well to European upper class visitors and proved highly influential in moulding the aesthetic tastes of its ruling classes (Kruft, 1994). In 1750 he produced a series of sixteen imaginary views of prisons, known as the *Carceri d'Invenzione*, whose soaring vaults and mighty subterranean perspectives were to prove an important influence, shortly before WWI, on the proto-fascist futurist movement and the drawings of Antonio Saint'Elia.

Probably one of the most notable architectural theorists of the industrial era is Etienne-Louis Boullée, a French neo-classical architect who built little of note, but whose drawings of monumental imaginary buildings and sweeping urban vistas materially affected the planning of many capital cities such as Washington, Brazilia,

Paris and Beijing, and whose vast architectonic visions played an important role in formulating Nazi dreams for a reborn Germania (Spotts, 2003).

Not unexpectedly, the work of artists and writers also became the study of historians, and from the 16th century onwards a series of scholars and architects began to record events in the profession, beginning with Vasari (1511–1574), followed by Johan Winkelmann (1717–1768), Heinrich Wolflin in Berlin (1864–1945), and Alois Riegl, Franz Wickhoff and the Vienna School of the 1930s (Kruft, 1994).

They all shared in a number of common features: they followed phenomenological and structuralist philosophies, they reduced the aesthetics of a region or an era to a common style, and they held the buildings of the rich and powerful to represent the pinnacles of human cultural achievement. Because of their ideas an estimated 97% of all world architecture was relegated to the ranks of the primitive, the miserable, and the ugly. In essence they gave architectural significance to the concept of a class struggle.

Despite the vast changes taking place in the socio-political fabric of 19th century Europe, until the late 1800s its buildings were dominated by Greek aesthetics and Roman building technology based upon a powerful idiom of axes and cross axes punctuated by vertical elements. Like Italian palazzi, its buildings stood on rusticated bases and were terminated by projecting cornices, had a mandatory Piano Nobile, and their facades were articulated by applied pilasters and regular fenestration, and had central doorways and junctions marked by quoins, turrets, pinnacles or other devices. Proportions were commonly determined by geometrical principles and formulae, and architects played complex intellectual games meant to tease, stimulate and delight their audiences. Summerson has described it as “a classical language of Architecture” (1964, p. 7) and many of its principles can be traced back to the Flavian amphitheatre, the Colosseum in Rome, completed in 82 CE.

However, by the end of the 19th century architects were finding that the lessons provided by classicism were not giving them the means of coping with the added inputs of revolutionary new building technologies, the ergonomics of design, and the recognition of climatic variables. The proportions of classical orders were no longer able to offer the guidelines towards what was obviously becoming a new order of architecture. A new and modern architecture was emerging which would, inevitably, require a new language of expression.

Initially the buildings of the modern era could permit themselves the luxury of using old idioms, and the first skyscrapers in Chicago and Buffalo continued to be designed with a rusticated base, a symbolic Piano Nobile of four to six floors, and a set of multiple upper storeys finished off with a well-defined projecting cornice. The aesthetic and symbolic links to the Renaissance palazzo before them are too obvious to elaborate. Before long though, the economics of construction and the use of new materials, glass, steel and concrete, began to establish a rationale of their own and the symbols of the classical orders were rapidly swept aside.

It was at this point that a new order, a new language of architecture began to emerge, based upon the rational use of new materials, new forms and new textures.

Leading the way in this new typology was the skyscraper, a building type which arose in North America to meet the needs of an emerging corporate culture requiring centralised management, concentrated lines of communication and the optimal use of urban land in Central Business Districts (CBDs). This new architecture was made possible by the introduction of steel-framed building technology and the invention of the lift. Arguably this worked well in the provision of office and commercial facilities, but when architects attempted to use the same technology to provide housing, the concept of high-rise living immediately created a class of social problems unique to high-rise accommodation.

The first generation of modernist architects were trained in the classical orders, understood the concept of an architectural language, and their buildings successfully transitioned from past traditions to the present. Their client base, as well as the general public, were literate in the old and were thus able to understand the nature of the new: after all, the language remained the same, it was just a matter of adapting to new forms and new materials used in a new manner. The subsequent, and more radical generations of modernist designers that followed them after WWI however, rejected historicism and any links to the past, and in twenty years sought to replace the language and traditions established by 200 generations of builders over a period of 5000 years with new ones of their own invention. For a time, avant-garde Schools, such as the Bauhaus, in Germany, dropped Architectural History from the curriculum, but were eventually forced by circumstances to reinstate it.

What could not find translation in any manner, and was destroyed in the process of transition, was the tradition of *artigianato*, of building artisans and skilled crafters whose plastering, wood-carving, stone-cutting and wrought iron work had made previous architectures possible. Within a generation centuries of building skills were irreparably lost, and by the time this was realised, traditional building practice had become an expensive optional extra. More importantly, this was a link between the general public and the building site which had allowed them an understanding of the processes of construction. The departure of the building artisan as an appreciated and honoured member of the community reduced these connections, and hence the levels of understanding existing between users and the design process, and ultimately with designers themselves.

In the social and economic upheavals that filled the inter-war years, the general public, who looked to architecture to provide it with the stage set for their everyday lives, might have been forgiven for allowing these changes to pass with little comment. Their sense of the aesthetic would have been sustained for a while by the Art Deco movement of the 1930s, whose language of articulated forms and decorated surfaces was new and yet made comfortable reference to the historic past, but in the austerity that followed 1945 all of that was swept aside and all that was left were brutalist buildings of barren concrete, steel and glass, bereft of any decoration and functional textures that might have allowed for contextual readings. The new language of architecture became the non-language of architecture, and the public

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was faced with new idioms that it neither understood nor liked. The press attempted to follow these events and for a while even supported the wholesale destruction of historical environments for the sake of *modernity*. Eventually they gave up, and by the 1970s had retreated into the comfortable sentimentality of pre-1920 architecture, which they still understood and could appreciate.

In this way each succeeding generation of architects created its own exclusive compound, invented its own separate language, predicated an aesthetic that was uniquely its own, bred its own chroniclers, and derided all those who stood beyond the compound walls, leaving behind a bemused public.

Perhaps the Abbe Laugier was also concerned with the future of architecture as a whole when, in 1753, he asked in obvious anguish,

(s)hall we never see an architect brave enough to rise above the false prejudices learned in the schools of architecture? (Laugier, 1977, p. 149)

Certainly Amancio d'Alpoim Guedes could not have been too far behind him when, in 1977, he proclaimed that,

I claim for architects the rights and liberties that painters and poets have held for so long. Architecture is not apprehended as intellectual experience but as sensation – an emotion. Buildings must become presences – be like vast apocalyptic monsters or gently floating albatrosses. Buildings should be so invented as to be remembered forever like the temples of India and the pyramids of Egypt. (Guedes, 1977, p. 5)

HOUSE FORM AND CULTURE

Working on the premise that the built environment is a manifestation of a people's culture, Amos Rapoport concluded that the history and theory taught at schools of architecture was "concerned with the study of monuments...the work of men of genius, the unusual, the rare" (Rapoport, 1969, p. 1). As a result, architecture has come to celebrate the buildings of a small elite, while ignoring the self-built, the folk vernacular and the traditional; in other words, the buildings that to this day constitute the bulk of the human built environment.

Galvanised by the publications of Papanek (1971), Oliver (1968, 1971, 1975), Brunskill (1971), Hall (1959, 1966, 1976), Schumaker (1973) and Guidoni (1978), as well as the work of Fathy (1973) and Venturi (1966), the academic and cross-disciplinary study of indigenous habitats began to gain ground. Most importantly, the idea that such environments are the product of a clear and cognate language of architecture became accepted in hitherto modernist academic environments. In South Africa at least one university, the University of the Witwatersrand, incorporated the subject in its curriculum; in History of Architecture at a first year level and in the History of Human Settlement in Fourth Year. Later on the universities of Cape Town, Natal and Port Elizabeth followed suit with similar courses. Occasionally the subject

was allowed to spill over into the teaching of Architectural Theory and the design studio, hitherto the strict preserve of modernist thought.

At an international level it appeared that the *House Form and Culture* movement had gained international academic acceptance, and for a while its annual meetings regularly featured papers from Paul Oliver, Labelle Prussin, Jean-Paul Bourdier, Soheir Hawas, James Deetz, Ron Lewcock and, of course, Amos Rapoport and Victor Papanek. What brought them together was a common belief that indigenous architecture offered a number of important lessons which could find application in the modern practice of architecture, in research and research methodology, and in defining the role that community-based architects could play in economically disadvantaged societies. The term *barefoot architecture* became a popular point of reference in discussions on low income and self-built housing schemes.

At the same time the movement created a forum for the presentation of gender-based studies, research into traditional *green* building technologies, the documentation of oral histories, and the importance of traditional knowledge systems. Eventually each one of these hived off to establish its own field of expertise, but their origins may be traced to events in the 1970s and 1980s. These constituted new directions in the architectural curriculum, thus establishing a narrative which infused concerns of social justice into the curriculum and challenged the legitimacy of modernist thinking.

Unfortunately, the group remained a loosely defined gathering of individuals with no formal structuring or secretariat, and when the University of California at Berkeley founded the International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE) in 1990, the focus of the group moved to the wider study of human settlement. To all intents and purposes IASTE conferences became meetings of the *Built Form and Culture* group in all but name. This was a natural progression and followed the shifting emphasis demonstrated by conference papers and plenary discussions where participants questioned the direction that their research was taking, its relevance to architectural practice in developing economies and, more realistically, its value to their future career paths.

Once again the intellectual lead fell to Amos Rapoport, whose position on architecture since 1969 had gradually been coalescing around the idea that the built environment was governed by a non-verbal language of communication, and that our understanding of built forms, textures and spaces was guided by cognitive processes of learning and transmission similar to those of language, mores, norms and culture. Building on the work of Hall (1959), Rapoport stated that,

(p)hysical clues, such as walls, gates, colours and materials, and house styles, reinforced by kinds of people, their dress, language, activities, sounds and smells ... combine to communicate social meaning. (Rapoport, 1982, p. 149)

Given the popularity enjoyed by his first book, *House Form and Culture*, published in the United States in 1969 but distributed widely overseas, it is difficult to understand why Rapoport's latter work did not enjoy greater currency in South Africa. Local academics such as Harhoff and Radford had met him at conferences in the USA, and

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in 1985 he toured all the major schools of architecture at the invitation of the local Institute of Architects. Unfortunately, his visit had been preceded in 1982 and 1983 by American postmodernists Charles Moore and Robert Stern, whose glossy pseudo-intellectual rationalisation of the classical orders had found a wide following among local students. By the time the varnish had dried on their postmodernist confections, the study of vernacular environments had been superseded by the need to survive the cultural boycott, and the social and economic upheavals of the 1980s and early 1990s. By 1994 the idioms of local architecture had been altered perceptibly by the realities of a new, democratic South Africa.

JENKS' SIX TRADITIONS

In 1973 architectural historian Charles Jenks categorised modern architecture into six convenient traditions, including the *Logical and Functional* (Pier-Luigi Nervi and Buckminster Fuller), the *Idealist and Heroic* (Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe), the *Self-Conscious* (the Beaux Arts and Fascism), the *Intuitive* (the Bauhaus and Art Deco), the *Activist* (Futurist and Communist), and finally the *Unselfconscious* (Folk and Vernacular). The latter, he reasoned, constituted an estimated 80% of the built environment (Jenks, 1973). Significantly, the first five categories make up an estimated 95% of the architectural history syllabus taught at architectural schools throughout Western Europe and North America.

Sadly, Jenks categorisation failed to include the *Criminal* and the *Megalomaniac*, which might have listed Albert Speer's plans for the building of Hitler's *Germania* in the 1930s, the planning of Brasilia in the 1950s, or the equally ill-conceived housing project built at Pruitt-Igoe, in St Louis, in 1952, and demolished 20 years later. There is a growing list of case studies illustrating the failures of modernism and social engineering, but none are included in the education of young, would-be architects. On the other hand, the theories propounded by their originators, such as Boullée, Niemeyer and Le Corbusier, are still held up as seminal reference points of the modernist movement.

Similarly, when Jenks (1973) acknowledges the existence of a vernacular tradition, he was making specific reference to *urban vernacular*, and his narrative was rapidly subsumed into sub-plots of industrial, prefabricated and ranch-house traditions. In other words, an architecture exemplified by Hollywood *high-camp*, Las Vegas *kitsch*, and tourist theme parks. By contrast Pueblo *kivas*, Apulian *trulli*, Zulu *indlu*, and Mongolian *yurts* do not feature in his modernist lexicon of forms, nor do the earth mosques of Mali, the hand-hewn dwellings of Anatolia, or the monasteries of Nepal. Though Jenks (1973) does make reference to the vernacular, it only to the vernacular traditions he has personally invented. Nowhere in his book is the word *cognitive* to be found.

UNCHANGING PATTERNS OF EDUCATION

Historically, architecture used to be taught in the workplace, where a young student was accepted into a practice as either a lowly-paid apprentice, or as an articulated pupil

who paid for his tuition. There he underwent training at a practical level and over a period of four to six years gained experience until he could be entrusted with increasingly greater responsibilities.

The first school of architecture in Britain to offer a structured programme of education was the Architectural Association (AA) in London. Started by disgruntled architectural assistants in 1847, it only began to offer a full-time four-year course in 1889. Meanwhile the apprenticeship system persisted well into the 20th century, while the accreditation of architects based upon practical experience and a portfolio of work, had begun by the 1880s. By the 1920s most architectural education had been absorbed into either the universities or the polytechnics, and in Britain the Architects' Registration Act of 1931 made registration with The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) compulsory for anyone wishing to use the title of architect.

It is evident, therefore, that from the outset architectural education has been in the hands of practitioners, and even after its translation into an academic discipline, its teaching has remained in the hands of people with a practical background and variable levels of expertise as educators. It follows that the discipline has never laid particular stress on either original research or higher academic degrees. Generally, students were expected to pass through a vertically-structured studio system, graduate, and move on into private practice, and although post-graduate degrees could confer added social and professional status, they seldom translated into higher incomes. A willingness to write, conduct research and read towards a higher degree was, and still is, seen as the mark of someone wishing to progress into academia, but there are no programmes in place to train succeeding generations of architectural educators. Lecturers enter academia through an organic process of assimilation, but senior positions are invariably given, as a matter of policy, to practitioners or former practitioners with little didactic or research experience. This has ensured that biases and practices of the past continue to be transmitted into the future.

Unfortunately, a succession of university administrations has been complicit in the appointment of practicing architects to senior academic positions in architecture. Panels interviewing candidates at a senior level invariably include at least one representative from the local Institute of Architects, whose voice is influential in subsequent confidential discussions. Often this results in the appointment of the candidate with the best practice credentials, which are not equivalent to academic qualifications.

Appointments based on practice rather than academic credentials has had serious repercussions for architectural education as a whole. The appointment of school leaders trained in a structuralist tradition with few academic skills or higher tertiary qualifications has forced such people to move into an environment where intellectual patrimony is at a premium, and has thus induced a state of insecurity and an inherent feeling of inferiority in its incumbents. The fact that the professor of architecture is often the only senior academic leader wearing an undergraduate gown at a graduation ceremony does not go unnoticed among status-conscious colleagues. The resulting sense of inferiority manifests itself in isolation from other academic

disciplines, a failure to participate in the academic affairs of the university, a total absence of research publications, and an unwillingness to appoint junior staff with higher academic qualifications, leading ultimately to an inability to undertake post-graduate supervision.

It also means that student admission policies are geared to accepting candidates who will tacitly accept a structuralist approach to education, and graduate not as community leaders, learned in matters of culture, aesthetics and social issues, but as technicians, employed in larger practices and without the ambition to enter into private practice.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

One of the unstated deductions of the House-Form-and-Culture movement relates to the relationship existing between folk architecture and the high-design tradition of a region. Poststructuralism acknowledges the fact that architecture cannot arise in a vacuum, but is the result of any number of interacting factors which influence its forms, textures and technologies. It follows then, that a high-design tradition must be deeply embedded in the regional architectures that have preceded it, and that the documentation of such buildings needs to be contextualised in its local historical and cultural mien. Seen in these terms the vernacular built environment can be regarded as the common matrix which gives rise to the high-design buildings so beloved and admired by modern architectural historians. This means that the latter cannot be studied without making reference to its populist roots.

The fact that modernist architectural historians continue to study high-design architecture in isolation of its historical context gives rise to an insoluble conundrum. The modernist world view does not acknowledge historical origins, and views all architectural forms and textures to be the product of original thought, grounded only in the mind of its originators. Its advocates believe that, by definition, architecture can only be built by architects, and constantly need to revert to the manufacture of anti-historicist myths to justify its existence. Postmodernism, on the other hand, considers the vernacular to be but one of the contextualising factors which frame our understanding of the built environment, then, now, and in the future.

Modernism cannot acknowledge the existence of an open-ended framework for that would be an admission that historical processes are, indeed, at work. As a consequence, modernism is constantly at odds with the vernacular, questioning its status as a legitimate form of architecture. By definition then, the modern movement cannot exist alongside its vernacular roots, as it is a painful reminder of its humble origins. By extension, modernist philosophy cannot survive the probing questions and analysis that are bound to arise in academia, and demands the removal of vernacular-based subjects which promote cognitive processes of design and understanding, not as a question of proven fact but as an act of faith.

This leads to the conclusion that the only way that historicist subjects can survive the toxic air of a modernist compound is if they can find accommodation

in a modernist and structuralist framework. History of Architecture, for example, is explained as a series of encapsulated eras, normally defined as styles which, for didactic purposes, are laid out sequentially like a set of beads, with no overlaps and devoid of context. Theory of Architecture, on the other hand, is too open-ended to fall into a set of neat categorisations, and is either avoided altogether or is limited to the study of a small group of modernist texts. Little effort is made to locate architectural thinking in a historical context, and the teaching of social theory, as a subject, is virtually unheard of. Although post-graduate students are expected to read more broadly at a master's level, most graduate with no knowledge of research methodology or field work.

This debate can thus be reduced to a simple choice: does the discipline of Architecture continue to survive as a self-perpetuating fiefdom governed according to principles defined in the 1950s to meet the needs of the 1920s, or does it accept the realities of a changing academia, where research is underpinned by theoretical grounding, where thinking cuts across the narrow lines defined by a single discipline, and where the definition of 'architectural work' can be broad enough to encompass any number of disciplines.

The idea that change can still be achieved by a slow evolutionary process may no longer be feasible. The divergences between modernism and poststructuralism became evident sometime in the 1990s, and while the introduction of a professional Masters' degree in architecture in South Africa early on in this century could have brought about positive results, that opportunity has also been missed. Too many Schools have merely changed the lipstick for their dancers, but continue to employ the same old troopers to work the same time-worn dance routines.

Today the reputation of architecture as a profession in South Africa stands at an all-time low in the forum of public opinion. State institutions and corporate clients, eager for the cheap deal openly defy provisions in the Architect's Act of 1999 by employing unqualified firms to undertake work reserved for architects; the voice of architects in the cultural affairs of the community has fallen silent; the historical conservation movement has been killed off by state incompetence and commercial self-interest; architectural books can only find publication as vanity printings; public lectures and adult education courses on architecture are seldom, if ever, presented; architects have been excluded altogether from the national housing debate, and multi-disciplinary NGOs which once represented the interests of low-income communities against dishonest builders have disappeared. Architects no longer appear on public forums and their opinions are no longer sought by the press. Architectural students generally cannot draw, and are seldom required to do so, and the concept of the architect as a civic leader in matters of aesthetics, city planning, art, and any of the skills that were once our own is no longer recognised.

Instead architects have become self-serving business brokers, grey-faced and grey-suited civil servants, technicians doomed to sit in reception rooms while the real decisions are taken in the board-room by accountants, lawyers and engineers. In academia architectural research is looked upon as an activity slightly more

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elevated than stamp collecting, occasionally producing something rare and exotic, but otherwise pedestrian and predictable. There is only one refereed architectural publication in this country, and research articles have to compete for space with glossy images of commercial projects.

The fault for this inexorable fall into hell must be laid at the door of modernism, a philosophy which, in the name of progress and technological change, has encouraged six generations of architects to produce a sequence of tired glass boxes, devoid of character and unwilling to follow even the most basic of rules of urban etiquette towards one another. Instead of hobnobbing with the great and inspiring, in the 20th century architects have chosen to become the travelling companions of homicidal mass murderers, delusional dictators, megalomaniac politicians, stupid industrialists and greedy bankers. In short, they have befriended the very people that have landed humanity in the social, political and environmental mess that we are in today. It is no wonder then that, in 1963 Victor Papanek was led to exclaim that,

(i)n an environment that is screwed up visually, physically and chemically, the best and simplest thing that architects, industrial designers and planners could do for humanity would be to stop working entirely. (Papanek, 1971, p. xiii)

Dire as this scenario might be, a change of direction must eventually come, and if the profession cannot bring about the necessary perceptual shifts, then ultimately this role must devolve upon the universities. The Institute of Architects might arguably know what is good for the profession, but academia is best positioned to set intellectual standards. The question remains whether it is prepared to do so.

The choice ultimately is not a choice at all, but a simple matter of sound common sense. Can intellectual compounds, or ghettos, that set intellectual standards that are at such variance with the institutional norms of a national university have a place in an academic institution? Sadly, I think that this choice has already been made.

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Franco Frescura
Centre for Communication and Media Studies
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

KRIBEN PILLAY

6. THE ILLUSION OF SOLID AND SEPARATE THINGS

Troublesome Knowledge and the Curriculum

If (man) thinks of the totality as constituted of independent fragments, then that is how his mind will tend to operate, but if he can include everything coherently and harmoniously in an overall whole that is undivided, unbroken, and without a border then his mind will tend to move in a similar way, and from this will flow an orderly action within the whole.

(David Bohm, 1980, p. xiii)

SECTION ONE

One of my prized magical illusions¹ is an inexpensive effect that shows an apparently solid box of playing cards that is contained within a card case. The box of cards can be removed and opened and can be shown to contain a real playing card, which the spectator sees, apparently as one of many. The box of cards is then returned to the card case and in an instant... it has vanished. The astonishment that usually accompanies this artful illusion arises because the spectator is given the close appearance of solidity where there is none.

The mystery of the vanishing box of cards is the metaphoric subject of this chapter on learning and the illusion of solid and separate things, and the challenge this troublesome knowledge (Meyer & Land, 2003) poses for developing a mature curriculum that speaks to a vision of life that is non-separate, rather than, as it is currently conceptualised and experienced, a world of distinct, separate things that needs to be manipulated and exploited in order to ensure the safety of the individual in competition with other individuals and other life forms. While I feel that this exploration has particular relevance for higher education, in actuality, it has relevance for all the domains of life.

I make no apology for not strictly adhering to the accepted scholarly convention of referencing every statement with the work of another specialist in the field, because, in part, this is the problematic that this chapter questions. In brief, the apperception of non-separation is an experiential, ontological insight; it is diametrically opposite to the thought bubble of intellection, to which modern education pays so much homage, but with clearly dubious results. In this inquiry, intellectual sense-making is, at best, a tool to point to that which is beyond the conceptualising process. In this regard, then, I am echoing Steven Harrison's *modus operandi* in his engaging book

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The Happy Child (2002), where he openly states that there is “only passing reference to expert theory on education” (Harrison, 2002, p. viii). This piece is not identical in style to Harrison’s work; it does draw on the research of others where necessary, but it certainly attempts to eschew the worst kinds of academic practice of creating the illusion of authentic intellectual inquiry where there is none.

Harrison (2002, p. 101) also cautions against sophistry in education, and what he has to say is so pertinently instructive:

In Socrates’ time, teachers – known as Sophists – gathered students by means of impressive promises of knowledge and elaborate philosophies – for a fee. Teachers were paid only if the students stayed, so the Sophists generally gave long-winded, self-assured discourses using reason to prove just about anything. Their legacy is the term sophistry, meaning deceptive reasoning, and their shadow still falls on education today.

Socrates, in yet another expression of his greatness, refused all fees for his teaching and continued to challenge the veracity and integrity of sophistry. He was eventually put to death for his outspokenness, sending a clear signal to everyone else that those in power would rather not deal with too many questions.

Thousands of years later, Socrates’ questions and death still resonate through our cultural milieu. Today, our educational institutions have largely forgotten the importance of the question and have supported new and complex forms of sophistry. Those in power have continued to make clear that questions are not in favor.

It would be important to read this piece and ask if it is also just another form of sophistry, or whether it poses a truly authentic question.

Non-separation Is Not New

At the heart of this inquiry is the radical assertion (but radical only to our conventional way of experiencing self and the world) that the world is not just a system of interconnected objects and processes – a concept that has been pioneered by systems thinking for more than six decades – but that there is no separate, solid, physical world existing independently of consciousness.

This is not a new perspective; it is there in all the wisdom traditions, especially Buddhism, and in the West it was more prominently re-discovered by Bishop Berkeley, but the dominant cultural narrative, as described in great detail by Charles Eisenstein (2013) is that of separation. But we cannot continue with this story, which we perpetuate in a myriad of ways² through one unquestioned perception – that there exist separate and solid things apart from me (and I am another solid and separate thing), – because this story is now threatening to annihilate us through its core manifestations of greed, ill will and delusion (Loy, 2003), which in turn have

structured all our systems: economic, political, cultural, educational and so on. This is the common realist view of the world (Goode, 2012).

But the Problem Is...

The problem, for whatever reason that we would like to speculate upon, is that we are not wired to easily experience the illusion of solid and separate things *as* an illusion. At best, when one is not totally experiencing oneself as a separate, flesh-encapsulated ego, there can be feelings of connection with others and with the world in general. This in itself can be very transformative where we seem to naturally want to give rather than take. But the story of separation, as real as the vanishing box of cards, is very convincing, so we accept the illusion as real, because nothing really tells us that it is otherwise, and in fact, all our social systems go to great lengths to convince us of this reality; the greatest of them all being orthodox science, which has rubbished most belief systems and validates what is apparently real, the solid box of cards. But science is also schizophrenic; there are other sides to it that have been whispering about alternative realities, but these, largely, have been muted, except when co-opted by the New Age spiritual movements and presented in rather dubious ways to assert all kinds of magical thinking. But the real magic – the real sleight of mind – is in the uninvestigated perception itself. That's how it always is with a good illusion; the misdirection is happening right in front of you, but because it is misdirection you will always see what the magician wants you to see.

For thousands of years it has been asserted that the magician who has been misdirecting us is consciousness, but this need not concern us if we are to derive extremely deep learning from this investigation, for any answer to the question of consciousness would simply be a story, and any story can only exist where there are apparently two, that is, the story and the storyteller. A story cannot exist without the *other*. This inquiry is about the fact of One, and even this is not totally accurate.

Unpacking the Illusion

So, while there appears to be a world separate from me, what is the basis of this assertion? The common response would be that I can see, hear, touch, taste and smell the world (perhaps not always using all the senses at once at any given time). And *that* is my so-called proof. And *that* is exactly what a magician relies on; an appeal to your senses to convince you of one thing while, in fact, what you are convinced of does not exist at all in the way that you apparently sensed. Like the solid box of cards.

We could digress here and look at the numerous examples of psychological and visual illusions that prove the above point, but there is no real need to, except to point out that even these well documented illusions, while suggestive of cracks in our perception of reality, are still grounded in scientific research held firm by the core story of separation. The positive outcome is that the story is now beginning

to undo itself, not because it wants to, but because an illusion cannot survive very close scrutiny. In this case, the scrutiny is an intellectual deconstruction that requires verification by paying close attention to the qualities of experience itself. There is another, emergent, ontological awakening that provides experiential proof, but more about this later.

This intellectual deconstruction is the primary objective for writing this piece; to show that it is possible, using logic in a precise way, to perceive the operation of the senses more closely. And here, science is helpful. It can prove that what I am apparently seeing is being produced by the brain; that all experience is a sensory production. I experience the world because I sense it. But it is here that this inquiry takes a different path to that of science, because science, while acknowledging that what is being sensed of the world is being produced by the brain, still, nevertheless, accepts the premise that there is a self-existing world *out there*, and that what we are experiencing is a reasonable approximation of it.

But here comes the difficult part: when you see that the levitating lady is not being held up by any invisible wires or hidden contraption. She is really levitating! So, this is where science has been missing the boat. (Perhaps, it's not the scientific method per se that has been missing the boat, but the all too human scientists who just flatly refuse to disbelieve their senses, who are, like all of us, enamoured by the story of separation that our senses enact.) We can now, on scientific evidence, accept that my experience of the world is a sensory production, and that even my experience of the world may not quite be the same as yours (e.g. colour blindness and other forms of sensory anomalies), but we are convinced that there exists a separate, free-standing world, made up of separate, free-standing objects. This is the truly great sleight of mind, the great feat of misdirection. We are so busy looking at the appearance – it is such an act of wonder – that we have never paused to look closely at the sensory process that has produced the miracle.

Let's take any object that you are now sensing. For instance, in front of me is my cell phone, amongst many other things. I know it has a certain shape and colour because of the sense of sight. I also know it has a certain density and texture because of the sense of touch. If I pick it up and smell it, it has a certain smell; if I taste it, it has a certain taste. If it rings, I hear a sound. Collectively, the senses provide evidence of a self-existing object that resides outside of this defined physical organism that I call 'me'.

Now here comes the trick(y) part. All that I know of an object, any object,³ is my sensing of it. That is, there is no cell phone – in sensing, in perception – that exists independently of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. The sensing and the thing sensed are one seamless experience; the observer is the observed (Krishnamurti, 1992). I am aware that I am stating this fact as if it's the easiest thing to comprehend; it isn't. It requires deep contemplation to see the actuality of the fact that there is no thing sensed apart from the sensor; that it is one unitary movement. You are literally the world. This is so counter-intuitive that in some traditional nondual teaching systems – whose pedagogic objective is awakening students to

the actuality that there are not two separate things in reality – students were only exposed to this knowledge when they were absolutely ready to investigate it. The reader might want to engage with Greg Goode's *The Direct Path* (2012), or Peter Dziuban's, *Simply Notice* (2013), both written for the modern mind.

The complaint that I often hear is that this is too philosophical. I think not. It just appears almost impossible to grasp because it not only explodes the illusion of absolute separation and differentiation, it also implodes that one thing that we dearly hold to be solid, separate and (hopefully) permanent – the self. In Buddhist thought this is the core delusion, out of which arises greed and ill will, the primary modes of self-interest to protect myself in a seemingly hostile world. And yes, I submit that the world appears hostile, but only because we are creating it in our own image; that of never-ending separation. But no matter how we experience the world, it is still a sensory appearance and there is no self apart from the appearance.

The Fact of One and the Appearance of Two

All this begs the question: so how do I realise this seamlessness of reality? The answer, surprisingly, is not in any esoteric practices; by just paying attention to perception itself, you will notice that the stuff of perception is awareness or consciousness,⁴ and that this field of perception is always undivided, always whole. You can look at what appears outwardly as the most broken, ravaged scene imaginable, littered with apparently separate objects, and the *awareness* of it all would still be seamless and undivided. And, given our deconstruction of sensing, you would be intimately a part of everything.

In conventional perception, we are absolutely convinced of the reality of the two, and may consider oneness as a fanciful concept, perhaps true in some mystical non-material dimension, but certainly not a fact of present experience. Yet, it is the other way around. There is only the fact of One giving rise to the appearance of two.

What Has This Got to Do with Learning?

Everything.

Firstly, we should be introducing this perspective into our education. We should make the deconstructive analysis as robust as we can, and out of this we could start introducing the experiential modes that prepare the ground for a transformative shift in perception, so that I actually experience myself as awareness, and I actually see that this awareness is the stuff of everything observed, including the observer.

Would we then behave in the ways that we do, enacting repeatedly the story of separation, with all its unnecessary manifestations that are potentially turning life into a wasteland?

The beauty of this perspective is that it is a scientifically verifiable mode of experience, not another belief system. It is the end of belief, and therefore the end

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of the illusion of separateness. Of course, I'll still experience the appearance of separation, but now I know how the trick works, and so I just marvel at the wonder, the play, of it all.

There will still be unanswered questions. Life will be more of a mystery, not less. We will still explore what appears to be real, if only to touch even more deeply the *unknowing* that is Life. This *unknowing* is impossible for the mind to comprehend; it is about ontological *beingness* with no epistemic qualities.

SECTION TWO

Shifting the Gaze

...we are not creative because our whole social and moral culture, as well as our educational methods, are based on development of the intellect. (Krishnamurti, 1973, p. 117)

If the first section of this chapter was more expository using logic and a call to directly investigate experience in unfolding the primary thesis of non-separation, then this part, in addressing the vision of a transformative education, explores how such an education may be served by the curriculum, and in what ways. And in setting this context, it is pertinent to refer to this exploration as "*troublesome knowledge* – knowledge that is 'alien', or counter-intuitive or even intellectually absurd at face value" (Meyer & Land, 2003, p. 2).

To begin with, we must honour the current academic convention that privileges theory by clearly stating that the core theoretical framework is nonduality (Bhaskar, 2012),⁵ which is mainly associated with Eastern spiritual traditions such as Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta (Loy, 1997). My own work on nondualism and educational drama and theatre (Pillay, 2007) rests heavily on David Loy's precise scholarship into nonduality, but nowhere, in either Loy's or my work, is there any deconstruction of the senses and perception as given here. This is an important observation, because it speaks to the possible developmental aspect of this deconstruction; that is, it has been not focused upon historically because it was either not seen (or experientially seen but not conceptually formulated), or, if it was, it was considered too difficult to communicate to the intellectually unprepared student.

So, traditional spiritual curricula concerned with nonduality, which were enacted mainly through the teacher-disciple dynamic, were in the main concerned with effecting change in the affective domain. There is no place here to give an overview of the innumerable teaching methods that were used in this endeavour, except to say that even in a recent call for a transformed education, Goleman and Senge (2014) make a strong case only for social and emotional learning and systems thinking. The deep cognitive deconstructive aspect, outlined in the first part, is not addressed. This is important to note, because the project of a transformed curriculum that is required to replace the story of separation with that of non-separation can only be effective,

as will be argued here, if all the domains of our being – affective, cognitive and ontological – are addressed.

Probably the most pioneering modern work that communicates the spirit of the nondual perspective for education, without any attendant outlandish esoteric notions that are found, for instance, in the writings of Rudolf Steiner (on which the Waldorf Schools are based), is Krishnamurti's *Education and the Significance of Life* (1973). A brief analysis of this work is relevant at this point because it supports the scaffolded, developmental notions of a meta-curriculum; one that seeks to enact an education that speaks to the narrative of non-separation rather than the currently entrenched one of separation.

Krishnamurti's work is visionary and poetic, yet grounded in an undeniable surface logic that functions effectively in its sense-making primarily because the overall picture creates mirrors of what we can observe for ourselves. This is a particular trait of Krishnamurti's writings; that its mirror-like quality, at least in the moment of deep engagement, has the capacity to shift awareness from the outer to the inner; there is not just a cognitive grasp, but the intuitive realisation of the ontological actuality of awareness prior to thinking. When he writes that "there is no existence without relationship, and without self-knowledge, all relationship, with the one and with the many, brings conflict and sorrow" (Krishnamurti, 1973, p. 38), he is pointing to some of the requirements needed for a transformed curriculum, as envisaged by Wilber's (1995) integral theory and Goleman and Senge's (2014) recent monograph. These requirements are the cultivation of social, emotional and cognitive capacities underpinned by Goleman and Senge's (2014) focus on systems thinking. But Krishnamurti, at the time that he wrote this piece many decades ago, was also aware that to fully unpack the nondual perspective, "to explain this fully to a child is impossible" (Krishnamurti, 1973, p. 38).

This fact, of the difficulty of cognitively reaching the young child with the givenness of non-duality calls for a developmental approach that is prominent in Wilber's integral theory model. But Wilber's (1995, 1997) integral theory is more than just a developmental project; it is, in fact, also important as a guide to clearing up the postmodernist confusions around our conceptual divisions and knowledge systems. For instance, his four quadrant model allows us to see that knowledge about the brain is important for a neurosurgeon, and that this knowledge is of the outer, physical world. It is not the same as interior awareness, which is cognition of a different order. This perspective helps guard against the tendency in nondual teachings to collapse different kinds of knowledge into the melting pot. This brings in the notions of the absolute and the relative. At the level of the former, there is no division, but at the level of the relative there are apparent divisions that have to be acknowledged. Current education pays much attention to the latter, because in a sense it is more accessible, and appears true. But this is an illusion that needs precise investigation, as set out in this chapter.

The question that we need to ask is whether only acknowledging the relative, the world of apparent division, is sufficient for education's purpose to help develop a

creative and fulfilled human being. A close scrutiny of current education practice and its outcomes shows it to be largely functionalist, that is, serving the needs of society which, in turn, are being manipulated, arguably, by an economic paradigm (Eisenstein, 2013) that is characterised by self-interest and a model of unsustainable growth. The answer about what education should do is now self-evident; it needs to accept the fact of non-separation and find a workable approach to embed this within the curriculum. My proposal here is that we need a curriculum that takes cognisance of the stages of human development and thereby structures access to the fact of non-separation through a developmental stance. This piece is not about the details, but rather about identifying a huge gap in our current education that needs to be urgently addressed because the story of separation is patently not working anymore.

It is also important to note that systems thinking is not nonduality thinking per se. It is a useful tool to use in a developmental curriculum because it emphasises the utter inter-connectedness of things; it allows us to see the map more clearly, and as a cognitive tool for seeing the myriad ways in which all things are connected, it aligns with social and emotional learning (Goleman & Senge, 2014).

A simple schema for an overall meta-curriculum might look like this, but obviously fleshed out by in-depth research into the best constructive alignment of human developmental stages with developing the capacity for recognising the nonduality of things.

- Primary School Education – Social and Emotional Learning
- High School Education – Social and Emotional Learning, Systems Thinking
- Tertiary Education – Social and Emotional Learning, Systems Thinking, Nonduality

We currently have no template for how to teach nonduality in a modern educational setting, except courses that teach *about* nonduality, which happens most frequently in the academic disciplines of religion and philosophy, and perhaps on the fringes of transpersonal psychology. While this has its uses in the curriculum, it is not the same as taking the student on an experiential journey of seeing and experiencing the fact of non-separation. This also calls for a different kind of teacher and a deep awareness that a functionalist curriculum is bound to fail in the absence of educators who can mediate nonduality.

There has been some experimentation with Wilber's integral approach (Marrero, 2007), and Esbjörn-Hargens' revised and expanded version of his 2005 article which goes into great pedagogic detail about the finer distinctions of integral theory as a tool for transformative education and ways to use Wilber's all-quadrant approach in a sophisticated curriculum. However, this is not the place to interrogate this work, but to point to work already being done, albeit sparsely and on the fringes of mainstream education. More recently, Burack (2014) wrote about the challenges of a contemplative curriculum, and the scholarship here is positive for sustaining any kind of meaningful inquiry into a curriculum that helps dismantle the story of separation.

It is interesting to note, though, that none of the recent texts referred to above ever mention the terms *nonduality* or *non-separation*, although Burack (2014, p. 47) does write about teaching contemplative practices in courses where his aim is to develop, amongst other qualities, the ‘sense of oneness’. This is an important observation for identifying a pivotal challenge to a curriculum of non-separation, because it highlights our current ontological-epistemological gap, that is, we are still approaching ‘*holistic, transformative, and integrative*’ education (Burack, 2014, p. 36) from within the story of separation – from within the realist view – while perhaps thinking that we are doing the complete opposite, that is, that we are truly engaging nondually. This is not to denigrate the attempts thus far, and indeed, conceptually, the new nondual curriculum designers can learn much from these pioneers.

What is being emphasised here, however, is that the story of separation will always creep back in if there is no ontological and conceptual clarity. Attaining ontological acuity, which aligns with Burack’s (2014) endeavour to create a contemplative curriculum is, for the present, a much more difficult task. However, conceptual clarity, as demonstrated in the first part of this chapter, is attainable, albeit that on its own it is just novel information (that is, the world that I experience is just a sensory production and that the observer is the observed), and will remain so unless grounded in non-conceptual awareness, which is the ontological stance.

Troublesome Knowledge

Lastly, because this exploration conforms to the critical notions of alien and troublesome knowledge in the curriculum, higher education would have to seriously address the conclusion reached by Meyer and Land (2003) in their research paper where “threshold concepts” are “an important but problematic factor in the design of effective learning environments” (2003, p. 10) That is, threshold concepts can prove to be troublesome because they are ‘transformative’ and ‘unsettling’, very often ‘involving a sense of loss’ and here, in this critique where the common consensus reality of experiencing an objective world separate from the observer is challenged, it will prove to be even more troublesome, unless we have educators that have awakened to the ontological actuality of non-separation, rather than simply holding an intellectually-derived conclusion. While conceptual clarity would be an important starting point in the deconstructive process, eventually this could lead to a learning environment where there is a “lack of authenticity” (Meyer & Land, 2003, p. 10); unless we have educators who can transmit, from their own being, the truth of a transformed perception.

And this troublesome knowledge does not end here with the recognition of the fact of non-separation. There are major implications for those academic disciplines that not only subscribe to individual free will, but whose very existence depends on this being absolutely true (for instance, law). But, “[f]ree will *is* an illusion.... We do not have the freedom we think we have” (Harris, 2013). The neurosciences are increasingly supporting this position, and in education we have not even begun to

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contemplate what this may mean for the educational project. What work is being done, suggests that societies will have to start embracing more authentic, selfless, cooperative social acts to nurture an emergent collective intelligence that appears bound to context (Harrison, 2002; Scharmer, 2007; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Pillay, 2014), where relationships in the relative world reflect the non-separation of the absolute. We have to transition, as Eisenstein writes, to *Interbeing* (2013). In more practical terms, education, in the light of the question of free will, will have to re-assess some fundamental assumptions from the time the child enters school (and indeed before then, in the home). Some of these are:

- Reward and punishment (various forms of gatekeeping in tertiary institutions are residual, disguised forms of punishment);
- Assessment practices which place responsibility on an autonomous individual to complete;
- The act of optimal learning;
- Various forms of ranking learners.

There are no glib, easy answers to these questions, but it is clear that they will require authentic collective responses, where the wisdom of the whole can emerge.

CONCLUSION

It is recorded that Samuel Johnson, when asked his opinion of the nondual view espoused by the philosopher, George Berkeley, kicked a rock to prove that there is a separate, self-existing, objective reality (Goode, 2012). This is an understandable reaction, and one which the majority of human beings will display because the sensory illusion of objectivity and separation is not only hard-wired into our perceptual system, but it also apparently takes us away from the slippery slopes of belief systems and into the realm of hard⁶ science and scientific fact where certain physical phenomena can be replicated and the senses provide the proof thereof. The exploration outlined here, while by no means new, challenges us to look into the nature of the experience as given by the senses, at which point the objective world as we conceive it, including the sense of self that is doing the investigating, starts to reveal itself as a mere appearance rather than as a solid, permanent reality.

However, if this illusion works, even though we might grudgingly acknowledge that it is an illusion, should we not just carry on as we are currently doing and ignore the fact that things are not what they seem? But the evidence for this approach, that is, the path of separation, shows that it does not seem to be working in the apparent world. We are reaching a tipping point; the centre cannot hold, and current higher education practices, with their emphasis on quality research and quality teaching and learning, may just as well be a training ground for warfare (as indeed it has been, and still is, in some of the world's major tertiary institutions). After all, the 'best' research and teaching and learning will always produce the best weapons and

soldiers. In higher education there is idolatry around the notions of quality research and quality teaching and learning, but can we really entertain what their real purpose could be, if our conception of reality is seriously flawed?

Ironically, a substantial amount of our educational activities are about fixing the endless problems created by the story of separation; a largely uninvestigated story in the multitudinous projects of research and teaching and learning in higher education. We are in an endless chase of our own tails, with the occasional voices intuitively calling for something else, dimly sensed as being truly creative and whole. But whatever is called for gets subsumed by the dominant narrative. Do we dare unpack this narrative and see that it is a lie? Or are we too invested in our beliefs, more so when they go by the names of objectivity and science?

Perhaps it is appropriate to end with an excerpt from a recently published book of dialogues between Gary Weber and Richard Doyle, a former industrial researcher and manager, and an academic, respectively, who are also active explorers of the nondual perspective:

... If you realize it's all one and not just metaphorically, or philosophically or intellectually, if you really do begin to understand that this is all one thing, not just me and the rest of the things, then why would you go around doing what you do? You just say, 'Oh. This is all one thing. Why would I mess this up?' and you behave differently. But you've got to somehow unwind that structure in a way that gives you that clear, true understanding that includes, but isn't limited to, the intellectual aspect. (Weber & Doyle, 2015, pp. 42–43)

NOTES

- ¹ The author has been using illusions in his teaching practice for many years, and is particularly interested in the variety of illusions that we are confronted with: visual, psychological, spiritual and performance – illusions about illusions (Neale, 2013). He is a member of the South African Magical Society, and the British Society of Mystery Entertainers (Psycrerts).
- ² I would recommend reading Eisenstein's book for the myriad ways in which we perpetuate separation.
- ³ I am indebted to both Peter Dziuban (2006, 2013) and Greg Goode (2012), whose writings and email communications helped me hone my ability to communicate this. Goode (2007) has also written an important monograph on nondualism in Western philosophy, and highlights the various Western philosophers who held this position, most importantly George Berkeley, whose deconstruction of the senses is probably the first in Western thought.
- ⁴ I am using these terms interchangeably, but I am aware that in certain nondual discourses they may be used in distinct, technically nuanced ways.
- ⁵ I am referencing Bhaskar because his is an acclaimed academic voice and he is the founder of the critical realism movement. While Bhaskar engages with nonduality in this work, there is no deconstruction of the senses as given here and in the works of Dziuban (2006, 2013) and Goode (2012). Göran Backlund's *Refuting the External World* (2014) is another accessible text.
- ⁶ The description 'hard sciences' is linguistically revealing of what we take to be true based on the senses. Apparent self-existing objects in the world are, by and large, hard and, therefore, by inference, real. The apperception that the sensory qualities of experience are simply sensations experienced by an awareness that itself has no qualities, is most often ignored, hence our fundamental ignore-ance.

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Kriben Pillay
Graduate School of Business and Leadership
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

MERSHEN PILLAY

7. DE-PATHOLOGISING HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

Jihadi John (Mohammed Emwazi), a British citizen who graduated from Westminster University in London, was described as the most barbaric terrorist in the world (Mendick, 2015). Emwazi is allegedly responsible for beheading captives held by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and was cast as yet another case of a higher education system that manufactured people damaged enough to hate (Sanghani, 2015). For the media, the comment was clear: Emwazi and others like him were the products of a higher education system that resulted in damage. They became radicalised (Barret, Sawyer, & Rayment, 2010). By examining how higher education was a site of radicalisation (Halliday, Gani, & Rawlinson, 2015) the inevitable connection was made to the University's role in permitting free speech and challenging prejudice (Sanghani, 2015). What these journalists did, inadvertently perhaps, was to raise a more critical debate about universities/higher education and its role in damaging students' learning. Could cognitive damage be what we mean by the production of a Jihadi John? Or is cognitive damage more about the process of how we damage, rather than on the production of a damaged mind? Put another way, does the academy (its academics, not just its students) facilitate the production of cognitive damage? Perhaps it does.

While student radicalisation is a complex concept to position, it does illuminate just how students come to understand themselves as subjugated but also what they choose to do about it. As a good subject living at the tip of Africa, I ably and obediently prescribe text books that are about North Americans/Europeans. I teach so that I may be heard in the good language: English. I respect my progenitors by adhering to a syllabus with similar content since its inception in the 1930s (my home discipline is in the health sciences, in audiology and speech therapy). I am good. But what keeps me being so good? More importantly, what if I want to say fuck you to being a good citizen?

Do I continue to comply with colonial commands that continue to influence how we speak, think and even what we do? And if I did say fuck you to it all, how do I practice *that* form of resistance in the academy?

For over two decades, I have focussed my work on how people relate to one another. I have considered relationships across various platforms mediated via

various forms of practices, policies and higher education curricular (Pillay, 1993; 2003b; 2009; 2013).

In this chapter, I revisit the specific relationship of the student/student and academic/university academic. Here, I present ways for us to re-consider this relationship toward one that heals cognitive damage, as discussed here and elsewhere in this book. In re-situating a healthier academic-student relationship, I offer a framework referred to as the ‘Relationship of Labouring Affinities’ (RoLA).

RELATIONSHIP OF LABOURING AFFINITIES

The RoLA as a conceptual frame may be used to mediate our past-present relationships with our future relationships. This relationship is confined to the student-academic relationship as affinities is a realist perspective on how we mediate what our higher education is currently dominated by (explained further below). This implies that peopling our affinities with students and academics enables the management of what may be conceptual or ideological affinities like curricular definitions of science and/or structural affinities to e.g., research report formats, curricular designs and research ethics committees. In higher education, our past-present is dominated by ideological positions such as reductionism, essentialist discourses and processes that manufacture the *other* (Pillay, Kathard, & Samuel, 1997; Pillay, 2003b). To de-pathologise higher education, a set of alternative ideologies was developed – initially for health professional education (Pillay, 2003a), but is believed to have relevance across the higher education sector. This ideological set, which is explored in more detail below, includes: *conflict*, *uncertainty*, and *moralism*.

As may be noted in [Figure 7.1](#), stability and conflict are loaded around the value of *conflict*, while I celebrate *uncertainty* as a necessary part of certainty. Finally, a term generated for this framework, viz.: unconscionability is pitted as being shared with *moralism*.

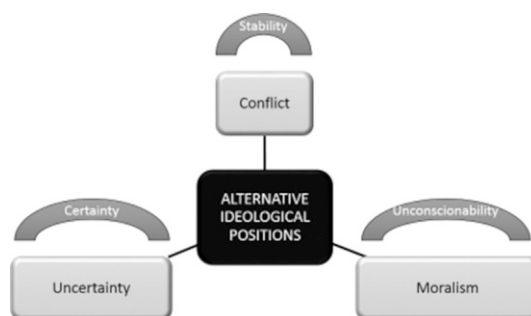


Figure 7.1. Alternative positions to dominant ideologies in higher education

A brief definition of these positions is necessary: Firstly, *conflict* is akin to Fanon's (Hussein, 1985) notion of violence. To explain, in higher education, I argue that knowledge (knowing) is often presented, rather uncritically, as a stable event. Knowing and knowledge production are posited as achievable by hardworking academics and compliant, obedient students who collaborate by adhering to (overt/tacit) principles of teaching, learning and assessment. However, and as has been argued, this kind of education is usually attained by engaging epistemological violence (Spivak, 1988; Teo, 2010). The subject of the violence is the academic (or researcher), the object is the Other (e.g., student), and the action is the interpretation of data that is presented as knowledge. Consider what this means when knowledge created with reference and deference to mainstream e.g., white European lives is used as 'truth' for Black American lives or Black African lives, for that matter.

In positioning *uncertainty* as an ideological position consider how, e.g., when engaging qualitative research, methods detract toward the participants' knowledges. As part of a broader trend toward valuing lay perspectives (Wallat & Piazza, 2000), this movement toward non-expert knowledge implies that the Practitioner is required to develop a "comfort level of not knowing" (Kao, Gell-Mann, & Galvin, 1999, p. 122). The process of (re)constructing the academic-student relationship involves serious questioning of our basic categories of knowledge. Certainties become destabilised when we begin to engage critical realities as we engage *relational* forms of knowing against a knowledge that espouses singular truths.

Moralism is about the scientific engagement of morality. Similar to our engagement of *imperial* within *imperialism*, and empirical within *empiricism*; so too can we engage moral within *moralism*. In higher education, I suggest that we engage *moralism* in a scientific manner, one that critically questions the moral nature of what we do and think. It will be immoral not to engage people as active agents in telling their story of learning via higher education. This implies that, in practice, academics and students would have to become competent at *moralism*. They would have to engage what it means to practice morally with the science that they are evaluated against. What, for example, does it mean to objectively disengage when teaching future health care workers how to deal with death and dying? What are the moral implications of such teaching when academics/students also experience these events? Would such a thing be considered a failure in professional higher education to practice *moralism*? Perhaps. So, *moralism* is also about being conscientised to the moral nature of our relationships. However, even when we engage *moralism* we should do so with *uncertainty*. As has been stated above, *moralism* interacts with *conflict* and *uncertainty* – and just as we move between stability and *conflict*; we need to admit that we may move between being unconscionable (or *unconscionability*) and engaging moralism – which is a continually negotiated process.

Our engagement of *conflict*, *uncertainty* and *moralism* in all that we do within higher education curricular does imply some kind of identity shift. As we begin to gaze outwards from our narrow disciplinary confines, a process I call '*exotropy*' we begin to re-subjectify, we engage a process of re-constructing persons/identities.

Exotropy and re-subjectification are posited as powerful enablers to engage the Academy. This means that as our knowledges change we need to engage academic networks that have assisted the development of traditional dominating ideologies through power nodules in the Academy— such as policies, conferences, ethics/ research committees, journals and related research, teaching and learning activities. The strategic engagement of these power nodules deserves its own chapter. However, for now, it may suffice to note that the dissemination of how we engage alternative ideologies must be programmed into our current affinities to structures like academic policies, higher education committees, journals and so forth in order to engender change.

In foregrounding one end of the position (e.g., *uncertainty*) this strategy allows for the backgrounding of the other (e.g., *certainty*) to be drawn into attention. In this way, mediation may be seen as a centering process, the thread that runs between these same-different constructs. Therefore, ideological positions that have historically dominated higher education may now be mediated with alternative ideologies to negotiate transformation. This has the sum effect of re-positioning traditional epistemologies relative to transformative actions. While it appears contradictory, even tautological, to centre an argument around only one element of the two component parts, the intention here is to highlight the favoured tenet. The nature of this continuum-like positionality (of seemingly oppositional constructs) serves as points of theoretical-practical tension for developing the *Relationship of Labouring Affinities* (see [Figure 7.2](#)).

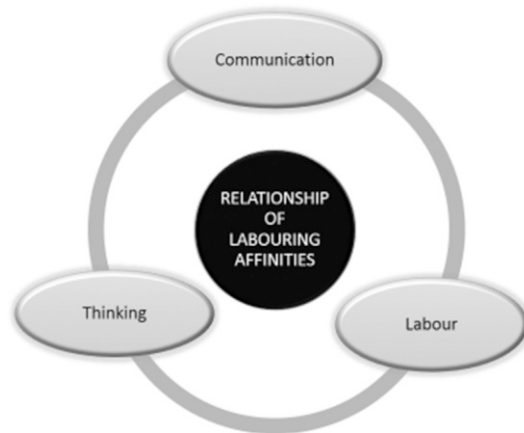


Figure 7.2. Elements of the Relationship of Labouring Affinities

As people belong to communities, the RoLA may be positioned as mediating individual perspectives relative to his/her community's perspectives. Therefore, the

individual may be located as interactive members of society, of communities', of cultures. For higher education, communities' meeting sites (for academics/students) is where each make and re-make their social contract. Positionality is critical here as one may construct one's identity in relation to site/location depending on whether they see themselves as on the liberalised, radicalised margins or in the tarnished, power-hub: the centre of academia, employed and identified as 'academics'. However, here, I wish to emphasise that I mistrust these boundaries because I consider them false boundaries between individuals and communities. Here, communities are promoted as integrated locative case concepts allowing for agents in higher education to shift identities as students or as academics, and between marginal or mainstream sites. Therefore, academics' and students' conversations are regarded as hermeneutic covers that (simplistically and simply) pull all and sundry into it. It is then, within this RoLA (see [Figure 7.2](#)), that we may engage three core elements, i.e. *communication, thinking, and labour*.

COMMUNICATION AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF LABOURING AFFINITIES

I emphasise that the student-academic relationship (like any other) engages a form of communication, making it an inherent communicative act. As such de-pathologising the curricular implies the need for a certain level of competence to be attained by all (academics/students) in order to show ownership of what is been negotiated as knowledge. Here, *communication* is considered in two ways.

Firstly, *communication is the object* of the RoLA. By object, I mean that *communication* (or rather a type of *communication*, e.g., academic communication) is the aim that validates the existence of the academic and student. Specifically, the object within this Relationship is how effective *communication* may be achieved.

Secondly, *communication is also the subject* of the relationship. The subject refers to this social act, the idea of communication, which is the fundamental social unit of the academic-student relationship. Within the act, *communication* is simultaneously the *source, medium and resource* of the RoLA. [Figure 7.3](#) is a diagrammatic representation of this meaning of communication.

What is being illustrated is that the academic and student employ communication when engaging their object and their subject. My reference to communication may best be described as engaging autopoiesis. Maturana and Varela (1980) refer to autopoiesis as a process within a system that manufactures its elements by engaging these same elements in a recursive fashion. This implies a kind of production network by which these elements themselves are (re)produced.

The idea of understanding the fundamental element of a social relationship as a communicative act is not new. In the 1940s, within sociology, the notion of communication as the constitutive element of social interactions/relationships was mooted by Niklas Luhmann (in Stichweh, 2000) who argued for the replacement of "action" as the element of analysis within sociological theory. He has alluded

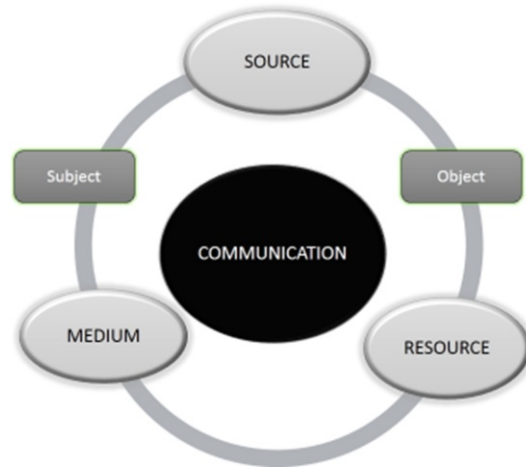


Figure 7.3. *Communication and the Relationship of Labouring Affinities*

to the rise of theories and methodologies from Searle’s (1969) popular “speech act theory” to the more recent (1960s/1970s and beyond) ethnomethodology and conversational analysis. Indeed, one may add to this list other theory-methods, such as discourse analysis, and even the advent of the narrative turn in sociology that has influenced research in many fields of inquiry such as teacher education (see, for example, Samuel, 1998), nursing (e.g., Madjar & Walton, 1999), and medicine (see for example, Frank, 1995; Greenlagh, 1999). Today, subscribers of communication as a core unit of (social) analysis may contest its genesis within sociology, offering the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas as the real father of this idea.

In the 1950s Habermas’ work in Frankfurt’s Social Research Institute led him to reject the work of philosophers Theodor Adorno and Max Horkeimer. Habermas believed that the project of critical theorists (i.e., emancipation) resided in everyday language, in ordinary communication: a belief that led to his theory of communicative action (known as Universal Pragmatics). Habermas has asserted that people (interlocutors) within a process of intersubjective generation engage issues like truth, justice, intelligibility and identity (Pusey, 1987). Consider how Habermas’ assertions allow communication to be positioned as necessarily disruptive for higher education in everyday language. I find this a highly seductive, very appealing thought. It allows for a variety of possibilities to transform *communication* in higher education – as it would be in other educational contexts like schools (see Kathard, Pillay, & Pillay, 2015). Importantly, the shape that communication has taken in South Africa and elsewhere has developed pathologically. Consider the following language-specific dilemmas: isiZulu/English in KwaZulu-Natal; French/English in Quebec; Arabic/French in Tunisia; Hebrew, Arabic, English or Amharic in Palestine/Israel. I argue that as part of various political histories these examples of languages

used in higher education represent a pathological state, a form of epistemic violence. Communication is central to the project of depathologising the curriculum given its multiple functions as subject/object, medium source and resource. Practically transforming the nature of *communication* for higher education will be, arguably, an economically viable option for especially resource-constrained contexts. This does not imply that such a re-designing of *communication* in higher education spaces is bereft of riches. What does this mean for depathologising the curriculum?

I have found the use of “*critical conversations*” (Pillay, 2003a) a valuable method for academics and students to engage ordinariness. *Critical conversations* refer to a form of dialogue where participants overtly challenge the social, political, and cultural nature of knowledge/practice. Mundane knowledges that are contextually relevant to e.g., Africa – and the Other – become highly valuable within a *critical conversation*. Cultural, economic, social, gender, sexual and historical knowledges are but some of the knowledges that may be engaged in higher education to specifically challenge the use of Eurocentric epistemologies allowing for useful conflicts to occur. Consider where Black African knowledges are located in current, higher education systems with colonial affinities. And even between and betwixt Black African lives, how and how much knowledges reference the urban or rural poor? What of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, intersex or asexual lives and their centrality to higher education curricular? Where are people living in low/middle income spheres in our much-relied upon North American/European academic journals, books and suchlike? Consider how easily we erase (or at best minimise) persons with disabilities in higher education curricular. So such conflict, carefully re-engineered within critical conversations, may become a moral occasion for the educator and student. The admission of marginal curricular voices from academics/students – in as simple a form as a life story or event – is a deeply transformative act to disable cognitive damage, to depathologise a higher education system that largely privileges colonial textual voices as authoritative knowledge.

THINKING AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF LABOURING AFFINITIES

Extrospection, alluded to above, is a neologism created to foreground the direction of our thinking away from a mainly introspective act. The point is that *extrospection* really refers to the simple-complex act of *thinking*. As such this element may be viewed as the ‘thought’ aspect of the (now) well established ‘language and thought’ debate – which refers to how language and thought represent an interconnected, semantic conundrum resulting in Aristotelian style ponderings such as “Which comes first? Language or thought?” In this way, Thinking may be viewed as the balancer to the language focus of *communication* as positioned within the RoLA. I have chosen to refer to an understanding of Thinking as a social, cultural, communicative element within the RoLA and, one that engages *communication* itself.

Simply expressed, *thinking* embeds many elements around what, why and how we engage cognition. I focus, here, on the aspect of where we think. Where we think refers to social, cultural, political, and related contexts in which thinking occurs. Locating *thinking*, as a social/cultural process has been the object of much interest within several fields, including *thinking's* most comfortable intellectual home: psychology. Thinking as a cultural process was focussed as early as the 1920s and 1930s via the works of Russian psychologists such as Vygotsky (1978, 1987) and Luria (1976) [These references are later English translations of Vygotsky and Luria's works]. Researchers/theorists have continued to pay vigorous attention to this aspect of psychology (for example see, Price-Williams, 1980); and in the sub-disciplines of cognitive psychology, and of cognitive science the move toward understanding 'where' thinking occurs has resulted in the generation of many theoretical notions, such as situated or distributed cognition (e.g., see Salomon, 1993) which refers to a theoretical turn in the field of cognitive science to understand learning as a cultural/contextual phenomenon. While connected, cognition may be unsuitable for my purposes because it either overtly/tacitly references a biological metaphor to create a conceptual schism between *communication* and *thinking*. Perhaps, the concept of 'cognitive damage' has roots in the biological framing of thinking – although Spivak has stated that this is not the case, that her use of cognitive damage has no relation to a specialised sense of the concept (Spivak, 2014). Thinking may be highlighted as a perceptual process rooted in beliefs, ideologies about people and the world at large. Thinking is a specific reference to the contextual nature of thinking within the academic-student relationship. In terms of de-pathologising this aspective, consider that – meta-theoretically – our affinity to *thinking* has centred on *certainty*. We have engaged *certainty* (and its associates, e.g., predictability) within a realist illusion intended to forge the belief that knowing about people and their e.g., lives, is indeed a possibility. As illustrated in [Figure 7.4](#), it may be noted that *thinking* mediates *uncertainty* and *certainty*. Therefore, the element of *thinking* (similar to *communication*, above) is positioned as the source, resource, and medium for addressing the many ways we engage *certainty* and *uncertainty*.

When academics and students enter their relationship, when 'strangers' meet; they seek to find common ground, they seek to reduce *uncertainty* in their initial meetings. Thinking may be understood with reference to Berger and Calabrese's (1975) *Uncertainty Reduction Theory*. This theoretical view has posited that there is a linear increase in *certainty* as we engage *thinking* that attempts to reduce complexity, and *uncertainty*. In considering that Labouring Affinities may be primarily viewed as a mediational construct (cf. mediating *certainty* with *uncertainty*) we can say that when we interact with these *thinking* constructs they always exist in varying degrees of conflict. Furthermore, I am suggesting that there are periods within our relationship when there may be a need to create closer alliances with either *uncertainty* or *certainty*. I am making a rather critical suggestion that we engage *Thinking* relative to the dominance of *certainties* (an *affinity*). I am also suggesting that we must (iteratively) work through this *affinity* toward the usefulness of *uncertainties*.

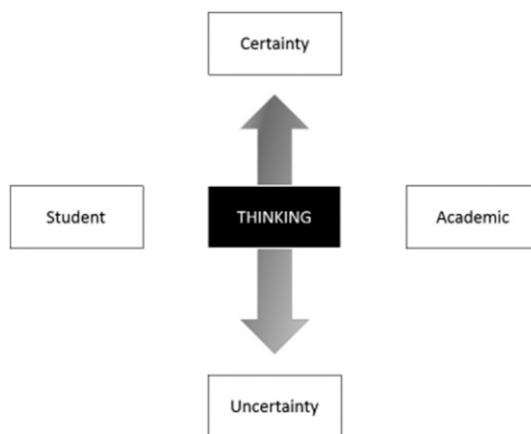


Figure 7.4. Thinking and the Relationship of Labouring Affinities

In situations, e.g., regarding academic failure, ejection from the *academy*; it may be that the academic-student relationship shifts toward *uncertainty*. Drawing from a health care example, consider illnesses/diseases such as motor neurone disease, multiple drug resistant tuberculosis and AIDS. Many people living with such illnesses have co-occurring communication problems. Thinking within the RoLA requires that we engage a variety of *thinkings* of, and about people with progressive/terminal illnesses. Such *thinkings* may allow multiple communication situations to occur. To explain: In such *thinking-communication* situations every interaction may be simultaneously loaded with *certainty* and *uncertainty* regarding the progression of the illnesses. In such situations, how may we best manage such *uncertainty*? How may we Labour our Affinities toward a useful valuing of *uncertainty*? How could academics ‘teach’ students about *thinking* so that they meaningfully engage people? Perhaps, we may consider Babrow’s (1995) *Problematic Integration Theory* for such a purpose. Babrow has argued that people assess probabilities, e.g., ‘The patient probably can’t retrieve words or ideas from his memory’. Additionally, they evaluate the more/less probable possibilities, e.g., ‘An AIDS patient has an unreliable memory’. These assessments of probabilities interact with evaluations, and they often co-occur. In other words, probabilities (or for purposes of this discussion: *uncertainties*) and evaluations affect each other. They are integrated. Bradac (2001), in reviewing this, and other theories of uncertainty, has asserted that *uncertainty* (specifically, “probabilities”) occurs within a framework that accounts for the emotional context of *thinking*.

So, in complex ways *thinking* interacts with emotions. And as such the social, political, and cultural meanings of *thinking*, are really imbued with emotion. The way we energise *certainties*, beliefs, is intertwined with emotions. Positioned in this way, we may then understand how the practitioner who engages *uncertainty* may

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perhaps negatively engage *thinking* felt as professional insecurity. In this way, health care practitioners – like speech therapists – may find it useful to disregard *certainties* formed as, e.g., medical clarities. This is an example of the negative engagement of *uncertainty*. Such *thinking* may not only be engaged negatively. As Bradac (2001) has argued, the practitioner may favour *uncertainties* (e.g., experienced as ambiguity, and confusion) as a useful, positive, constructive resource. But, how could we engage *uncertain thinkings* for positive, perhaps even creative ends? To explain:

Practitioners are destabilised by their inability to know, to predict and to manage people with such illnesses. And this destabilisation is good! Indeed, this is one of *many* responses that practitioners may have in relation to patients, when considering the nature of *thinking*. This perspective, that people have a variety of responses to *uncertainty*, makes direct reference to *Uncertainty Management Theory* (Babrow, Hines, & Kasch, 2000). This theoretical frame may be useful because it allows practitioners to engage with patients (as in the case of extremely ill patients) in a way that has meaning to *both* practitioner and patient. In such situations *uncertainty*/not knowing may be manipulated by *thinking* (relative to *emotion*) so as to engineer and maintain a meaningful relationship. Neither the person with AIDS, nor the practitioner may know what prognosis for ‘effective communication’ may mean. In such instances, the application of *uncertainty management* allows for *thinking* to be filled with ambivalence, to be necessarily ambiguous. In considering such *thinking*, we may engage *communication* in a strategic manner, so as to creatively develop *uncertainty*. For example, practitioners who use computerised communication aids may assist the person with motor neurone disease to communicate. A person with AIDS may benefit from swallowing therapy, to prevent choking on food/liquids in the late stage of his/her illness – such interventions may all be couched with the language of possibility, and *uncertainty*. Indeed, this type of *thinking* may result in useful collusions between academics and students to collaborate on real world solutions. Notably, this suggestion is not just useful for the professions such as those in health care or education, but is applicable to all kinds of settings where different forms of dualities are presented, ones that are both bound and separated by *uncertain thinkings*. And in working ourselves, our thinkings in this way, we may (re)construct the relationship we have. Such (re)construction will necessarily involve using our *certainties* (biological, technological and related realities) to engage the *language* of *uncertainty* in our interaction. And in doing so, we Labour our Affinities through the Relationship. Next, the notion of *labour* is explored.

LABOUR AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF LABOURING AFFINITIES

Notably, *labour* has been foregrounded as one of the core elements to emphasise that Labouring Affinities is essentially a relationship of work. Engeström and Miettinen (1999) referred to such work as an activity undertaken by a human agent (subject) who is motivated toward the solution of a problem or purpose (object), and mediated by tools (artefacts) in collaboration with others (community). The structure

of the activity is constrained by cultural factors including conventions (rules) and social strata (division of labour) within the context. As has been stated regarding *communication* and *thinking – labour*, too, is a deeply integrated element, difficult to artificially separate for a theoretical discussion. But, this is a *labour* charged with *transformation*, as represented in Figure 7.5.

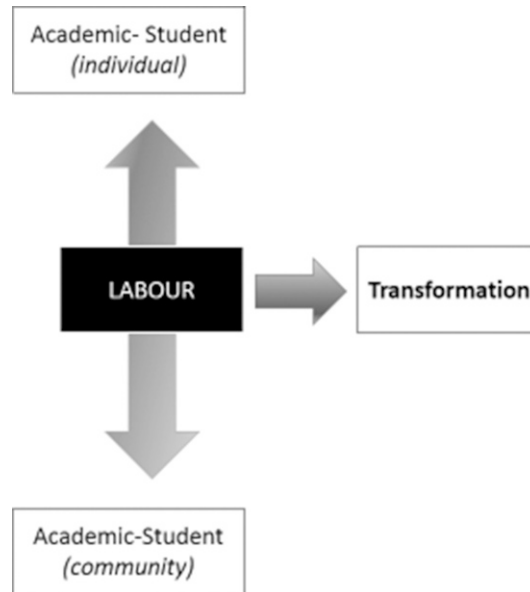


Figure 7.5. *Labour and the Relationship of Labouring Affinities*

Here, I focus on *labour* relative to Marx's (Marx & Engels, 1968) views of work (or *labour*) as a capitalistic-oriented behaviour located within the community. This location of labour is one of the key positions, taken by those ascribing to activity theory. Activity theorists have extended Marx's focus on capitalistic-oriented labour, to incorporate the view that *labour* is performed in conditions of joint, collective activity (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999). At this point it may be worth exploring activity theorists' ideas.

Activity theory began with the revolutionary Russian psychologists of the 1920s and 1930s, i.e., Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) and his colleagues A. N. Leont'ev and A. R. Luria. They were dissatisfied with the domination of psychoanalysis and behaviourism in psychology, and proposed a new theoretical concept to transcend these dominant ideologies. Their theories focussed on artefact-mediated and object-oriented action. They have claimed that human agents and objects of the environment exist in a relationship mediated by cultural means, tools and signs. In emphasising this element of labour, Leont'ev (1978, in Engeström,

1999) promoted the “division of labour” as a fundamental historical process. Later theorists, notably Engeström (1999), have emphasised the mediational role of the community and that of social structures including the division of labour and established procedures. This aspect of Labour, alludes to one of the greatest contributions made by activity theorists, i.e., an understanding of *labour* as part of a network of several activity systems. In this sense, *labour* is connected to Habermas’s (1972) theory of universal pragmatics, where interlocutors (people) collaborate during interactions, at levels that supersede the individual, dyadic sense of communication. I find this notion of *labour* a rather appealing one, and one which resonates with the location of the *relationship* within the community. In considering activity theory, I do not import all of the ideas promoted by activity theorists, such as the suggestion that locates activities within a series/framework of structured networks (as proposed by Engeström (1987) and others). Instead, I wish to emphasise that the RoLA may be positioned as focussed on *labour*, a labour that is a joint, community activity.

Labour is ideological in as much as it is a practical endeavour. My focus on ‘ideological-practical’ positions as engaged in such a relationship, has been to specifically favour and emphasise this meaning at all levels, and forms the basis for any analysis. I wish to position *labour* as the element responsible for the production of both conceptual and practical/material tools for transformation. In the RoLA, it must be possible for *new* concepts, and *new* practices to be given the object of democratic ideologies. In other words, (re)formulating the academic-student relationship must engage Labour that is in itself conceptually and practically transformative in nature. Any engagement between practitioners and patients must generate their own new, different conceptual and practical resources/tools to engender a RoLA.

Importantly, the production, development and implementation of such tools, are in themselves mediated by several processes. Firstly, *labour*, as Leont’ev (1978) argued, operates within a hierarchical organisation of power. For our purposes, this implies that the student, who traditionally does not direct curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment processes, is cast as an agent-less patient that has little power/control over the *labour* within the *academy*. While it may be argued that student organisations and their resistance to authority does indeed result in challenging and changing what happens at the academy, I contend that this is often not part of a transformation, collaboration that results in the production of conceptual/practical tools. It is argued that within the RoLA, *labour* is shared differently. With reference to how *communication* and *thinking* interact (see above) with *labour*, one may see that ideas and material tools can be implicated when these elements are operationalised. So, collaborating within the academy may produce a different set of notions regarding the academics and students’ identities when we, e.g., allow for students to interact with the very social, cultural and political forces that have produced him/her. For example, *communicative* collaboration may develop ‘advocacy’ as an educational conceptual tool. This may be practically

translated into the development of an organisation/grouping to promote advocacy of students' rights in various social institutions. An example of this may be the inclusion of African language interpreters at universities where colonially-inherited languages like English or Afrikaans is the medium of instruction.

A CONCLUDING COMMENT: FROM HERE TO THERE

Meta-theoretically, this movement toward a RoLA is in itself one that must permit a continuous process of referential change. This movement may be envisaged as an engagement with “joints and bundles” (cf. Andersen, 2001). To explain:

The joints of the phenomenal world are constituted by family resemblance, where bundles of features that span bounded areas in perceptual space underlie the joints. (Andersen, 2001: S50) (my italics)

In this way, generations of practitioners may make reference to preceding joints and bundles depending on how well the ideas/practices have been communicated to the successive generation. A continuous process of referential change may occur over time, toward the imagined *there* from *here*. While useful, Andersen's theory cannot be used to imply a neat, linearity of thought over time or geographies. Not all political territories provide fertile homes for the movement of the RoLA. For example, the inversion of political ideology in South Africa (from racism to non-racialism) continues to the political context for bigger social and cultural change to occur. South Africa's policy-political change served to radically position the transformation of academic-student relationships – including the recent “#RhodesMustFall” movement (see Pillay & Kathard, 2015). While a wonderfully fertile context for change, I nevertheless cautiously celebrate South African (and similar) geo-political contexts. I am aware that this ideological context is not bordered and requires nurturing from the inside and the ‘outside’. As we are a post-Apartheid territory on the inside, so too are we a post-colonial territory from the outside, a postness which comes with its own struggles in the majority of countries across Asia, Africa, the Americas and elsewhere challenging our efforts at redefining our higher education, our knowing in a globalising world.

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Mershen Pillay
 School of Health Sciences
 University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

BERT OLIVIER

8. EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION AND A POSTHUMAN FUTURE

*The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality
in times of moral crisis.*

(Dan Brown, 2013, p. 1)¹

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the need for, and possibility of, introducing important insights concerning the current global move away from a humanist, anthropocentric way of thinking, towards a posthumanist, post-anthropocentric approach across a wide spectrum of disciplines (including the humanities) into the practice of higher education. To this end, and with a startling characterisation of the Anthropocene by Daniel Cunha (2015) as point of departure (to frame the subsequent discussion), the argument proceeds from a consideration of the meaning of humanism, anthropocentrism, posthuman(ism) and post-anthropocentrism, to the implications of these for the humanities (including education), drawing mainly from the important work of Rosi Braidotti (2013) in this regard. Subsequently, the focus shifts to the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1983), specifically their evocative understanding of what ‘becoming-other’ and ‘becoming-animal’ means. This forms the basis for an interpretive analysis of Cameron’s (2009) eco-political film, *Avatar*, as a demonstration of the use of suitable cultural artefacts for educational purposes, specifically to get across the posthumanist, post-anthropocentric notion of placing humanity relationally in a much broader ontological spectrum than was possible in a humanist, anthropocentric context. Before concluding, the Deleuzo-Guattarian (1983) idea of a ‘minoritarian language’ is investigated with regard to its relevance for the attempt to introduce something related to it into higher education, with a view to disseminating the growing awareness that the reign of the human hegemony, or ‘anthropos’, is coming to an end, and that it represents a gain instead of a loss.

THE ANTHROPOCENE, ANTHROPOCENTRISM AND THE POSTHUMAN

About ten years ago the term, ‘Anthropocene’, was coined by Paul Crutzen, a Nobel Prize-winning atmospheric chemist (Foster, Clark, & York, 2010, p. 12), to name the new geological period, following the end of the Holocene, when humans became

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the main force driving (and ‘responsible’ for) changes in the planetary system. The Holocene (‘New Whole’), a stable geological period of about 12 000 years between ice ages, came to an end around the Industrial Revolution of the late 1700s, which is also the time when humans acquired the capabilities for affecting life on earth as we know it. One is tempted to guess that, if scientists working in the area of the geo-sciences are correct in their assessment of what are now called ‘planetary boundaries’, the Anthropocene may turn out to be a mere blip in terms of geological time. Daniel Cunha captures the paradox about the Anthropocene well where he observes (Cunha, 2015):

The ‘Anthropocene’ has become a fashionable concept in the natural and social sciences. It is defined as the ‘human-dominated geologic epoch,’ because in this period of natural history it is Man who is in control of the biogeochemical cycles of the planet. The result, though, is catastrophic: the disruption of the carbon cycle, for example, leads to a global warming that approaches tipping points that might be irreversible. The exponential growth of our freedom and power, that is, of our ability to transform nature, is now translated into a limitation to our freedom, including the destabilisation of the very framework of life. It reaches its highest degree with the problem of global warming. In this context, it becomes clear that the Anthropocene is a contradictory concept. If the ‘human-dominated geologic epoch’ is leading to a situation in which the existence of humans might be at stake, there is something very problematic with this sort of domination of Nature that reduces it to a ‘substrate of domination’ that should be investigated. Its very basic premise, that it is human-dominated, should be challenged – after all there should be something *inhuman* or objectified in a sort of domination whose outcome might be *human* extinction. (p. 65)

Given the title of the present chapter, one might wonder what this dire assessment has to do with the ‘posthuman’ and difficulties involved in communicating its meaning and implications in the process of educating students. In a nutshell, it concerns the fact that, by and large, university curricula do not reflect the seriousness of the situation as captured by Cunha (2015) in the excerpt, above. And even if curricula were to be adapted according to this insight, it is unlikely that the message could be brought across to students (or the general public, for that matter) in a persuasive manner, given the dominance of a culture arguably centred on the still predominantly anthropocentric, narcissistic and attention-usurping use of social media and ‘celebrity-watching’ (Stiegler, 2015, pp. 5481–5494), as is evident in news media on a daily basis (although social media may, and are admittedly also used effectively by some educators to communicate with students). To be able to get across this message, novel approaches, not only to theory and other teaching material, but also to teaching practice, are urgently required. It seems to me that developments across a wide spectrum of disciplines, which can collectively be subsumed under the rubric of ‘the posthuman’ offer some hope in this regard. To

be able to address this, consider that, in her book on *The Posthuman*, Rosi Braidotti (2013) summarises what the concept entails as follows:

...the posthuman condition introduces a qualitative shift in our thinking about what exactly is the basic unit of common reference for our species, our polity and our relationship to the other inhabitants of this planet. This issue raises serious questions as to the very structures of our shared identity – as humans – amidst the complexity of contemporary science, politics and international relations. Discourses and representations of the non-human, the inhuman, the antihuman, the inhumane and the posthuman proliferate and overlap in our globalized, technologically mediated societies...

In my view, the common denominator for the posthuman condition is an assumption about the vital, self-organising and yet non-naturalistic structure of living matter itself. This nature-culture continuum is the shared starting point for my take on posthuman theory. Whether this post-naturalistic assumption subsequently results in playful experimentations with the boundaries of perfectibility of the body, in moral panic about the disruption of centuries-old beliefs about human 'nature' or in exploitative and profit-minded pursuit of genetic and neural capital, remains however to be seen. (pp. 1–2)

For Braidotti (2013) the notion of the posthuman is related to, but not synonymous with that of post-anthropocentrism, which (as indicated above) is related to the geological idea of the Anthropocene, that, in turn, is arguably a manifestation of the anthropocentrism that is embodied in, and produced, modern science and technology. The posthuman must therefore be understood against the backdrop of the history of humanism and anthropocentrism, the development of which stretched from the Renaissance humanist glorification of the human through Descartes's rationalistic optimism regarding human mastery over nature, to the culmination of such humanist optimism in Hegel's dialectical account of the progress of Mind or Spirit from self-alienation to reflective self-knowledge and the 'ethical society'. In the 20th century social-scientific manifestations of it are encountered in the widespread acceptance that a social-constructivist conception of issues such as identity and otherness comprises the desirable basis for the understanding and critique of asymmetrical social power relations. While this was indeed necessary to be able to address issues such as gender and race disparities, like modern philosophy it was based on the binary opposition between nature and culture – which is precisely what posthuman thinking challenges. The implications and communicational difficulties presented by this mode of thinking, particularly in educational contexts, are in question here.

What Braidotti (2013, p. 3) is at pains to indicate is that, especially in the light of the monistic materialist philosophy of 20th Century thinkers such as Deleuze and Guattari (who, following others such as Pierre Macherey, resurrected Spinoza's nature-monism), as well as recent scientific work that stresses the self-organising capacity of living matter, one has every reason to reject dualist theoretical

approaches in favour of one that places humanity and nature in a continuum rather than opposing them. This is, among other things, what the ‘posthuman’ condition denotes, and needless to stress, it points to an awareness of the importance to think more holistically than has been the case in the context of humanism and anthropocentrism. Given its connection to the Anthropocene, it should come as no surprise that the posthuman also refers to less palatable phenomena, some of which will be concentrated on here, as intimated in the way I began this chapter. What such phenomena entail, becomes clearer in John Bellamy Foster and his co-authors’ *The Ecological Rift – Capitalism’s War on the Earth* (Foster, Clark, & York, 2010, p. 13), where they remind one that, globally, people tend to think of the ecological crisis mostly as climate change, which is prominent in the news because it poses almost insurmountable problems for capitalist growth. However, climate change is only one of nine ‘planetary boundaries’ that have been studied by natural scientists recently. What most people worldwide do not realise, is that these are all decisive for sustaining a biosphere in which humans and other living creatures can exist securely. The other eight are biodiversity loss, chemical pollution, global freshwater use, change in land use, stratospheric ozone depletion, atmospheric aerosol loading, ocean acidification and the phosphorus and nitrogen cycles. Two of these – chemical pollution and atmospheric aerosol loading – still lack reliable physical measurements, but distinct boundaries have been established for the other seven.

Needless to emphasise, these planetary boundaries are subject to continuing global processes, and according to scientists at the Stockholm Resilience Centre three of them have already crossed their respective boundaries, namely climate change, the nitrogen cycle and biodiversity loss, thus constituting the eponymous ‘rift’. Furthermore, they point out that ocean acidification, global freshwater use and the phosphorus cycle are rapidly approaching rift status. More seriously, ocean acidification, climate change and stratospheric ozone loss are seen as ‘tipping points’, which – at certain levels – are capable of destabilising the earth system by initiating far-reaching qualitative changes. Instead of being understood as ‘tipping points’, the boundaries for the other four processes are viewed as points at which irreversible environmental degradation would be triggered.

These portentous-sounding claims by reputable scientists can easily overwhelm one, or induce scepticism, depending on whether one is familiar with the way in which one arrives at such scientific claims. Sceptics should be reminded, however, that scientists across the globe are overwhelmingly in agreement about these findings today, and for good reason. Although the exact stage-sequence of irreversible ecological degradation cannot be projected because of the complexity of environmental interrelationships, several things can, and have been ascertained with reasonable precision through painstaking measurement and modelling. Johan Rockström and his colleagues in Stockholm have ascertained three values for each of the seven (measurable) ‘boundary processes’ mentioned earlier, namely a pre-industrial value, a boundary level value and a current level status value (Foster et al., 2010, pp. 13–14).

So, for example, the loss in biodiversity is measured by extinction rate, or the number of species lost per million species annually. The preindustrial, or 'natural' rate was 0.1–1 per million; the estimated boundary is 10 per million per year, and the present rate of species loss exceeds 100 per million annually (almost 1000 times the preindustrial 'natural' rate). Secondly, the pre-industrial value of climate change was 280 parts per million (ppm) carbon dioxide atmospheric concentration. The proposed boundary for this is 350 ppm, beyond which the tipping point of events such as catastrophic sea level rise is possible, if not probable. At present it already stands at 390 ppm, well beyond the tipping point. The nitrogen cycle, or third process that has crossed its boundary level, involves the number of tons (in millions) of nitrogen removed from the atmosphere for industrial use per year. Prior to the discovery of the Haber-Bosch process for such removal in the early 1900s, the amount removed from the atmosphere was zero tons. To avoid irreversible deterioration of the planetary system the estimated annual nitrogen boundary is 35 million tons, and currently the amount removed per year is 121 tons (Foster et al., 2010, p. 15).

If it is kept in mind that the above are only the figures for the three boundary processes that are already at extreme levels, it should be clear that their effects in nature are interconnected in an incalculably complex, rhizomatic manner. This means that scientists can only forecast to an indeterminate degree what might result from the extreme conditions that already exist. Such indeterminacy notwithstanding, Foster and his fellow authors (2010) remind one that:

In each of these extreme rifts, the stability of the earth system as we know it is being endangered. We are at red alert status. If business as usual continues, the world is headed within the next few decades for major tipping points along with irreversible environmental degradation, threatening much of humanity. Biodiversity loss at current and projected rates could result in the loss of upward of a third of all living species this century. (p. 15)

This further implicates the well-known interconnectedness of living species in terms of food-dependence (the 'food chain'), which has incalculable, unpredictable consequences when species are removed from this interlinked network of life. To sum up: the world as we know it may undergo not-so-pleasant mutations in the not too distant future. This is one of the reasons for the need to develop an adequate, intelligible means of communication with students at institutions of higher learning, to bring across an unpalatable, and to many unintelligible, message, which would tend to be crowded out by the glut of 'celebrity news' (about the way Kim Kardashian spends her days taking 'selfies', for instance) and time spent on social media sites, anyway. But there is more.

THE POSTHUMAN AND THE HUMANITIES

The emergence of the 'posthuman' is not unrelated to the manifestations of living in the Anthropocene, discussed above. As a distinct field it has emerged within, and

simultaneously beyond the humanities. First, it is noticeable within this disciplinary field insofar as thinkers working in humanities disciplines such as philosophy and literary departments have contributed to the creation of the field comprising the posthuman. At the same time its provenance transcends the humanities, insofar as it has appeared, as Braidotti (2013, pp. 57–58) has observed, in several technological and natural science disciplines. This means that the posthuman is also post-anthropocentric because the work being done in these disciplines demonstrates that, to be understood better than before, human beings have to be inscribed in contexts that include other beings such as animals and plants.

Part of the reason for humanities and social sciences being increasingly perceived as being out of touch with the contemporary world (Braidotti, 2013, pp. 18–19, 58, 81, 143) is precisely that few humanities scholars are willing or able to leave the familiar terrain of their inward-looking discipline to reconceptualise it in terms of insights gained in and through the sciences mentioned above. In this respect Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari were exceptions (as demonstrated in their *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1987), as was Jacques Lacan before them and others, including Alain Badiou, Jacques Rancière, Ian Buchanan, Rosi Braidotti, Manuel Castells and John Bellamy Foster, are today. The problem faced by such boldly adventurous humanities thinkers is that of communicating with the public: they have to find an understandable language for sharing their insights with the rest of humanity. This accounts for the difficulty many people have with their writings.

What does posthumanism entail and what are the conditions of its provenance? From what was said earlier it should already be apparent that poststructuralist thinkers like Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and particularly Deleuze and Guattari have contributed substantially to a posthumanist orientation by ‘relocating’ humanity from the centre of things and inserting it in broader ontological, ecological and cultural contexts in distinctive ways. In historical-philosophical terms one might therefore say that its appearance as an identifiable field of thought signals the end of humanism as well as of anthropocentrism, which is something to be welcomed, given the history of its effects in the world. Humanism’s roots, Braidotti points out (2013, p. 13), go back to the ancient Greek sophist, Protagoras’s observation, that ‘man is the measure of all things’ (literally, because the judgment of women did not count for more than two millennia, except in a few isolated instances like ancient Egypt and Sparta). Only after the theocentric (God-centred) Middle Ages, however, particularly since the Italian Renaissance, did humanism really develop on a large scale.

With reference to Leonardo da Vinci’s familiar graphic image of ‘Vitruvian man’, Braidotti elaborates on its significance for the history of humanism (2013, p. 13):

That iconic image is the emblem of Humanism as a doctrine that combines the biological, discursive and moral expansion of human capabilities into an idea of teleologically ordained, rational progress. Faith in the unique, self-regulating and intrinsically moral powers of human reason forms an integral part of this

high-humanistic creed, which was essentially predicated on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century renditions of classical Antiquity and Italian Renaissance ideals.

Hegel's 19th Century philosophy of the development of universal Mind/Spirit, Braidotti further argues, may be understood as representing the cultural culmination of this humanist conception of human beings. What it implies is that not merely people in Europe, but all human beings, can share in the universalistically conceived attributes of the (human) mind in developmental terms. Hegel's dialectical model of historical development also implicates the dialectics of self and other, for example the stage of master and slave, or in more familiar 20th century terms, of self and other, where 'other' (as woman, member of another race, gay person, etc.) is a pejorative term (more often than not), marking racial, gender and cultural inferiority – so persuasively demonstrated in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) regarding the cultural/racial other.

Humanist colonialism has always been accompanied by the violent imposition of (mostly European) power on the colonial other (Braidotti, 2013, p. 15). Far from being straightforward, however, its history was complicated by the fact that the very notion of humanism underpinning patronising colonial policies has simultaneously been the source of tremendous hope and striving for political liberation and independence on the part of colonised peoples. Its 'longevity' should therefore be understood in the light of this inherent ambivalence (Braidotti, 2013, p. 16). Such ambiguity notwithstanding, since the end of the Second World War humanism has been subjected to one anti-humanist critique after another, issuing from anti-racism, feminism, postcolonial studies, anti-nuclear, pacifist and animal-rights movements, among others. The historical convolutions of humanism in the complex relations between liberal individualism, 20th century fascism, Stalinist communism and socialist humanism do not concern me here (see Braidotti, 2013, pp. 16–18); suffice to say that Nazi fascism dealt a severe blow to the major traditions of critical theory in Europe by forcing the expatriation from Europe of Frankfurt School critical theory, (neo-)Marxism and psychoanalytic theory, until their value was re-asserted by the likes of Michel Foucault in his radical genealogical (posthumanist) thinking.

Anti-humanist thinking was given a boost in the United States by the opposition to the Vietnam War, which was also linked to an increasing awareness that the chiefly past-oriented humanities as taught at university were largely irrelevant to such society-transforming historical convulsions (Said, quoted in Braidotti, 2013, pp. 18–19). It is no accident that the civil rights movement, the American counterpart to the European student rebellion and the women's movement were fuelled by the anti-imperialist (read: anti-humanist) tenor of anti-war sentiments at the time. To this should be added the impetus given to anti-humanism, mainly in France, by the reception of the structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Lévi-Strauss, and later by the emerging generation of poststructuralist thinkers like Lacan, Foucault and Derrida (all of them familiar with the later Heidegger's ontological opposition

to humanism), despite the earlier status enjoyed by the humanist existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone De Beauvoir. Foucault's extended critique of humanist, anthropocentric thinking in his monumental *The Order of Things* of 1970 (1994) epitomises the poststructuralist contribution to the dismantling of humanism and anthropocentrism. Needless to say, in the light of what was argued earlier regarding the growing evidence of human culpability in the face of ecological degradation in the Anthropocene, such a process of dismantling does not come a moment too soon. The word 'Anthropocene' already stresses the centrality of humans – or rather, 'man' – in this scheme of things, because it was 'his' technological inventions, themselves made possible by 'his' science, which have been responsible for the anthropogenic climate change, ocean acidification, diminution of the nitrogen content of the atmosphere and excessive increase in species rates, among other things referred to earlier, that we face today.

Hence the emerging posthumanism and post-anthropocentrism that one witnesses in many disciplinary practices globally can also be understood as a response to the devastations of the Anthropocene, in addition to the reasons already listed. The challenge facing the humanities, taken up by the thinkers and critical theorists mentioned above, is – as I have already pointed out – to devise ways of revitalising their disciplines in the form of a cross-pollination between the latter and disciplines such as the bio-sciences, where the continuum between the human and the non-human other, or nature, is demonstrated. In the face of such evidence no one can cling to the belief in human exceptionalism, in the place of which the continuity between all living beings (and even beyond) has to be affirmed.

To conclude this section, it is worth noting that Braidotti (2013, p. 37) sees posthumanism as a more productive discursive option than the paralysing stand-off between humanism and anti-humanism. It takes as its point of departure the 'anti-humanist death of Wo/Man' insofar as this represents the demise of the basic assumptions of the Enlightenment, particularly the deep-seated belief in the inevitability of teleological progress towards the "perfectibility of 'Man'" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 37) through scientific and technological rationality, which has arguably been thoroughly debunked by the socially destructive events of the 20th and early 21st century, no less than by anti-humanist interventions. (Parenthetically it should be noted, however, that techno-optimists like Ray Kurzweil, who believes in the coming of the 'singularity', when humans and machines will supposedly merge, would interpret such 'debunking' as being irrelevant to technological 'progress'.) Braidotti stresses that, instead of being hamstrung by the idea of a crisis of 'Man', posthumanist discourse seeks to elaborate and conceptualise the (post)human subject along alternative discursive pathways. What do these entail? Succinctly put, she (Braidotti 2013, p. 38) distinguishes three strands in the posthumanist thinking of today. First there is a 'reactive' variety, then there is the 'analytic' type from science and technology studies and lastly, from the tradition that she belongs to, namely anti-humanist thought on the subject, comes what she terms 'a critical post-humanism'. To illustrate the first kind, she discusses the (neo-) humanist position of Martha

Nussbaum, who resists the idea of a crisis in humanism and – although she recognises the threat of global technology-driven economies – argues that it alone provides a conceptual guarantee for democracy, human rights and freedom, and, furthermore, the antidote to social and epistemological fragmentation and relativism which result from globalisation. While Braidotti (2013, p. 39) applauds Nussbaum’s focus on the subject, she rejects her reactive re-affirmation of the very position that is in question today, namely universalistically conceived liberal individualism and placeless, binding moral values. For Braidotti this is to ignore the radical work of feminists, post-colonial thinkers and poststructuralists, all of whom have demonstrated the importance of embeddedness and locality, or – to put it differently – of thinking particularity and universality *together*, instead of attempting to anchor the subject, once again, in some culture-transcending, universalistic non-place. The second type of posthumanist work, done in technology and science studies, is interdisciplinary and, divergent directions of research notwithstanding, reflects broad consensus that contemporary science and biotechnologies have determinate effects on the structure of *all* living creatures, and have therefore altered the interpretive horizon for the question concerning the place and ‘nature’ of being-human. Braidotti (2013) makes the important observation, that, confronted by this situation:

The Humanities continue to ask the question of the epistemological and political implications of the posthuman predicament for our understanding of the human subject. They also raise deep anxieties both about the moral status of the human and express the political desire to resist commercially owned and profit-minded abuses of the new genetic know-how. (p. 40)

In Braidotti’s (2013, pp. 45–50) subsequent discussion of her own variety of posthumanist thinking, namely ‘critical posthumanism’, she insists that, unlike contemporary (bio-)technologies themselves, as well as those proponents of analytical posthuman science and technology studies who claim political neutrality for their investigations (Braidotti, 2013, p. 42), she harbours no ‘normative ambivalence’ towards it. Instead, she is committed to developing ‘affirmative perspectives’ on the posthuman condition, against the backdrop of her own anti-humanist orientation and more particularly the poststructuralist dismantling of binary thinking, feminist anti-universalism and anti-colonialist work of Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon, all of which share the intention of elaborating the multi-faceted implications of posthumanism for the subject and for humanity. Drawing on a diverse number of thinkers who have promoted the posthuman project in various ways (including Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Paul Gilroy, and ecological and environmental thinkers), Braidotti (2013) states her own position tersely:

In my own work, I define the critical posthuman subject within an eco-philosophy of multiple belongings, as a relational subject constituted in and by multiplicity, that is to say a subject that works across differences and is also internally differentiated, but still grounded and accountable. Posthuman

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subjectivity expresses an embodied and embedded and hence partial form of accountability, based on a strong sense of collectivity, relationality and hence community building. (p. 49)

Needless to add, such a philosophy, with its emphasis on (ethical) accountability in the context of a posthuman, humanity-surpassing relationality, does not sit well with those agencies, economic and technological, which are bent on unscrupulously extracting as much profit as possible from the interface between informational as well as bio-technologies on the one hand, and living beings (people, animals and plants), on the other. Is it possible to articulate a language (in the broadest sense of the word) that would 'get through' to these agencies that such activities have no place in the posthuman world?

POST-ANTHROPOCENTRISM

Returning to Braidotti's work on post-anthropocentrism and its connection with the posthumanist insight into the self-organising capacity of living matter (to a large extent inspired by Deleuze and Guattari), it is worth repeating that, far from being an arbitrary idea, this has been confirmed by contemporary biological and neurological sciences (Braidotti, 2013, p. 57). In fact, this is what makes the implications of post-anthropocentrism more radical and far-reaching than the posthumanist work encountered in the humanities, precisely because (as remarked earlier) a much wider field of research is involved here, one that adds to humanities research that of

science and technology studies, new media and digital culture, environmentalism and earth-sciences, bio-genetics, neuroscience and robotics, evolutionary theory, critical legal theory, primatology, animal rights and science fiction. (Braidotti, 2013, pp. 57–58)

In other words, to thinkers such as Braidotti and her poststructuralist, feminist and postcolonialist colleagues, the post-anthropocentric realisation that a thorough investigation into human subjectivity and political agency has to situate it in relation to both the natural and technical domains that used to be regarded as irrelevant to such an investigation is inescapable. As she reminds one (Braidotti, 2013, p. 56), while this position may appear novel, it goes back to Spinoza's monistic, radically immanentist philosophy of the 17th century, which affirms the continuity between humanity and nature, and was taken up and developed further by poststructuralists Deleuze and Guattari.

Furthermore, in the contemporary world another dimension has to be added, namely the technologically mediated character of social life: without inserting intelligent machines into the equation, the quest for an adequate concept of human subjectivity and subject-constitution would remain hopelessly incomplete. This need for an inclusive, holistic way of thinking is related to Félix Guattari's short, but powerful essay, *The Three Ecologies* (2000), where he argues for an

‘ecosophical’ (ultimately relational) approach that would include an integrated focus on the eponymous three ‘ecologies’ of the (natural) ‘environment, social relations and human subjectivity’ (Guattari, 2000, p. 28). He develops a corresponding methodology that would enable one to think and act in terms of such an essentially holistic conception of the inter-relationships comprising the indissoluble, reciprocal linkages between these three domains, and provides a merciless critique of what he calls ‘Integrated World Capitalism’, which has brought the world to the brink of ecocide (Guattari, 2000, pp. 27–31) by means of a series of techno-scientific inventions that have transfigured the world. Only a connective re-articulation of the indispensable linkages between the three ecologies would offer any hope, according to Guattari, of effecting recuperative environmental change, even if new, unorthodox strategies have to be found to do so.

Ignoring for the moment the indelible, destructive role of advanced, globalised capitalism, in its opportunistic commodification of all living matter (from the vegetative to the human), amplifying the newly ‘naturalised’ conception of the subject with the techno-scientific structure of contemporary economic and social life – including communication – has far-reaching implications for the broadening of one’s understanding of the complex, *relational* character of the subject (Braidotti, 2013, pp. 58–60). Not only is it being reconceptualised in an expanded posthumanist, post-anthropocentric context where it rubs shoulders with other species under the rubric of *zoe* as marker of life in all its variegatedness (and no longer as exclusively human *bios*; Braidotti, 2013, pp. 60, 120–121; see also Agamben 1998, from whose understanding of *zoe* as ‘bare [human] life’ within the context of sovereign state terror Braidotti differentiates her own position). In addition, it faces the (to some unsettling, anxiety-provoking) challenge of confronting the existence of intelligent machines which increasingly, in the form of robots, exhibit more than mere technical auxiliary status.

These considerations point in the direction of something that is crucial for my present argument, namely what Deleuze and Guattari conceptualised in terms of variations on the notion of ‘becoming-animal’, and which Braidotti (2013, p. 66) has put to work in the context of post-anthropocentrism. Her wide-ranging discussion of ‘becoming-animal, becoming-earth and becoming-machine’ – where she places these notions in a broad spectrum of contemporary research – suggests precisely what I want to argue concerning the exigencies of posthumanist communication in an expanded, post-anthropocentric educational context, although I prefer doing it in a different manner, more in accordance with my understanding of Deleuze and Guattari’s innovative thinking in this regard. It is significant that the latter (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 238) remark that: ‘Becoming produces nothing other than itself’. When applied to humans ‘becoming-animal’, this means that the former are not ‘really’ turning into animals, nor that the animals are becoming something other than what they are. ‘What is real’, they point out (p. 238), ‘is the becoming itself...’ This is also the case with the other two becomings at stake here, namely ‘becoming-earth’ and ‘becoming-machine’, although I shall concentrate on the implications

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of ‘becoming-animal’ and ‘becoming-earth’ as the index of the urgent need to reconfigure humanity’s posthuman relations with ‘others’ in a post-anthropocentric context. Braidotti (2013) outlines the scope of a critical theory which faces up to the challenge of formulating the meaning of posthuman subjectivity in a post-anthropocentric landscape in a striking manner as follows, and further indicates what it entails for communication, and by implication, for education:

The first is to develop a dynamic and sustainable notion of vitalist, self-organizing materiality; the second is to enlarge the frame and scope of subjectivity along the transversal lines of post-anthropocentric relations...The idea of subjectivity as an assemblage that includes non-human agents has a number of consequences. Firstly, it implies that subjectivity is not the exclusive prerogative of *anthropos*; secondly, that it is not linked to transcendental reason; thirdly, that it is unhinged from the dialectics of recognition; and lastly, that it is based on the immanence of relations. The challenge for critical theory is momentous: we need to visualize the subject as a transversal entity encompassing the human, our genetic neighbours the animals and the earth as a whole, and to do so within an understandable language.

Let us pause on the latter for a minute, as it raises the issue of representation, which is crucial for the Humanities and for critical theory. Finding an adequate language for post-anthropocentrism means that the resources of the imagination, as well as the tools of critical intelligence, need to be enlisted for this task. The collapse of the nature-culture divide requires that we need to devise a new vocabulary, with new figurations to refer to the elements of our posthuman embodied and embedded subjectivity. The limitations of the social constructivist method show up here and need to be compensated by more conceptual creativity. (p. 82)

The importance of Braidotti’s words in this excerpt cannot be overstated, insofar as the intimate connection between the elaboration of a multifaceted conception of subjectivity and the creation of an iconic as well as verbal language is concerned. The former would exceed the subject-paradigm of anthropocentric humanism, while the latter must of necessity go hand in hand with engendering a variegated linguistic and audiovisual arsenal. Moreover, such a signifying and communicational battery would have to be up to the task of communicating the far-reaching implications of such a fundamental conceptual-theoretical paradigm-switch to student audiences in a higher education context.

Obviously it would not be sufficient to look for an adequate language – one capable of communicating what it means to be posthuman in the sense described by Braidotti, and moreover, enabling people to *experience* this – in *theory* alone. No matter how many intellectuals were to agree on a need for it, and even on what form it should assume, for a mode of communication to develop to the point where

it permeates society, one needs more, considering the miniscule percentage of the population comprising academics or intellectuals. Such a 'more', I would argue, of necessity includes higher education. It would be more likely to develop, perhaps through (and beyond?) being a 'minoritarian language', if it were possible to identify models of a certain kind to orient thinking, speaking, writing, image-production and education in accordance with the post-anthropocentric suggestions of the neologisms, 'becoming-animal' and 'becoming-earth'. One such model is encountered in James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009), but first the question and implications of 'becoming-other' have to be addressed.

'BECOMING-OTHER'

The notions of 'becoming-animal' and 'becoming-earth' represent specific instances of 'becoming-other' as a necessary posthumanist stage beyond anthropocentrism – necessitated by centuries of, at best, indifference to the racial, gendered or 'natural' other, and at worst, downright persecution, enslavement or destruction of these 'others' by a patriarchal, racist, anthropocentric culture. Deleuze and Guattari elaborate on various instances of 'becoming' in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987, pp. 232–309), as already indicated earlier. Here, as in *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983), their subversion of substantialist thinking is apparent where, referring to the titanic struggle between the whale-hunter, Captain Ahab, and the eponymous great white whale in Melville's *Moby Dick*, as well as to painting, they observe (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987):

Captain Ahab is engaged in an irresistible becoming-whale with Moby-Dick; but the animal, Moby-Dick, must simultaneously become an unbearable pure whiteness, a shimmering pure white wall, a silver thread that stretches out and supple up 'like' a girl, or twists like a whip, or stands like a rampart... Suppose a painter 'represents' a bird; this is in fact a becoming-bird that can occur only to the extent that the bird itself is in the process of becoming something else, a pure line and pure color [sic]. Thus imitation self-destructs, since the imitator unknowingly enters into a becoming that conjugates with the unknowing becoming of that which he or she imitates. One imitates only if one fails, when one fails. The painter and musician do not imitate the animal, they become-animal at the same time as the animal becomes what they willed, at the deepest level of their concord with Nature. Becoming is always double, that which one becomes becomes no less than the one that becomes – block is formed, essentially mobile, never in equilibrium...

Becoming is never imitating. When Hitchcock does birds, he does not reproduce bird calls, he produces an electronic sound like a field of intensities or a wave of vibrations, a continuous variation, like a terrible threat welling up inside us. (pp. 304–305)

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These insights are crucial to understanding what a true posthumanist post-anthropocentrism would be in ontological terms. Instead of restricting oneself to thinking of beings as discrete, self-identical entities that enter into relationships with one another in such a way that the ‘contact’ remains superficial even when imitation – let alone ‘objectifying observation’ – of other beings is involved, one has to immerse oneself imaginatively (if not actually), like Deleuze and Guattari, in the many embodiments of the process of becoming, as their elaboration, above, demonstrates. As they also show in *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 2; Olivier, 2014), the belief in a supposed ontological gulf between humans and nature is untenable; humans are as much in and of nature as any animal or plant. Furthermore, they insist, all of existence is process and production of desire – something that explains why Captain Ahab could ‘become’ his would-be victim, the great white whale, in the process of desiring its specific demise at the end of a harpoon, and how the whale could ‘become’ incarnated in all the other forms that Melville conjures up in the course of a literary process. Neither of the two is ever a static entity (which our substantialist upbringing teaches us, erroneously, to be the case), but rather a ‘becoming-something’; just as every human subject and every animal or plant is always caught up in a never-ending process of becoming-something else. As their example of Hitchcock’s *The Birds* shows, such ‘becoming’ need not be accomplished by means of any semblance of imitation; a completely different medium or ‘intensity’ may serve better to bring about the desired ‘becoming’ – in this case the ‘becoming-bird’ of the very environment in which spectators experience the cinematic events where these natural creatures become a nameless source of terror. These considerations are invaluable for an adequately posthumanist and post-anthropocentric understanding of Cameron’s *Avatar* of 2009, and for the manner in which this could function as a model for teaching and education at all levels (but perhaps with more emphasis on tertiary education, given the crucial role that this generation of young people could play regarding a shift away from humanism to posthumanism).

AVATAR AS A MODEL FOR ‘BECOMING-ANIMAL’ AND ‘BECOMING-EARTH’

Although Braidotti (2013, p. 69) incongruously spares Cameron’s *Avatar* only a sideways nod – referring to ‘the hybrid blue creatures of Avatar [sic]’ in the context of a discussion of the ‘fantasmatic dimension of human-animal interaction’ and ‘the entertainment value of non-anthropomorphic characters’ – I am convinced that a closer look at *Avatar* will reveal its undeniable value as modelling the kind of audiovisually oriented language required by present, post-anthropocentric exigencies (see Olivier, 2010 and 2011 for details concerning *Avatar*’s narrative in the context of two different critical perspectives). In fact, the fictional world encountered in *Avatar* exemplifies a social and natural continuum in which there is no fundamental ontological chasm separating different beings, from human(oid)s to animals and plants. A communicational approach in (higher) education settings, which avails

itself of strategies such as those found in Deleuze and Guattari's work, specifically regarding the interpretation of artefacts such as *Avatar*, therefore holds the potential of introducing students to a paradigmatically different and distinct, holistic understanding of social and natural reality considered as constituting a continuum, rather than a sphere marked by hierarchical, anthropocentric relations of domination.

Succinctly put, in the narrative of *Avatar*, set on the moon Pandora, in the star system of Alpha Centauri, in the year 2154, when the Resources Development Administration (RDA) Corporation is mining the moon for the precious metal, unobtainium, they experience fierce resistance from the local humanoid population, the Na'vi, who live a life of comparative harmony with the other living creature beings on the moon. Their reverence for life is apparent in their recognition of other intrinsic value when they have to hunt them for their own survival. Succinctly phrased, the humans have developed a bio-technological, genetic-engineering system in which Na'vi bodies are created to function as avatars for human beings, who are bio-electronically connected with these bodies, enabling the humans to traverse the hostile atmosphere and environment of Pandora with the purpose of getting the Na'vi's cooperation regarding their mining operations. One of the humans involved is a paraplegic marine, Jake Sully, who is rescued from Pandoran 'viperwolves' by a Na'vi princess, Neytiri, and subsequently accepted into the Na'vi tribe via various difficult initiation rites, including riding a six-legged Pandoran 'direhorse' and eventually a 'banshee' – a kind of flying dragon reminiscent of the prehistoric pterosaur on planet Earth. In addition to being taught how to link himself psychically with these animals by means of their respective organic appendages resembling umbilical cords, Jake also learns to 'connect' with a Na'vi holy tree, the 'tree of souls' in the same manner, to establish an intimate communicative bond with these living beings. In fact, throughout *Avatar*, one learns that all living creatures on Pandora – humanoid, animal and vegetative – are conjoined in an organic network of mutual awareness, something which the colonising humans, with their destructive mining and military technology, do not understand, except for biologist Dr Grace Augustine and her associates (and later Jake), who have gained insight into this 'Gaian' aspect of the Pandoran biosphere.

It is the relationships that Jake – following Neytiri's instructions – manages to build between himself and the animals he learns to ride, as well as his 'communications' with the Na'vi deity, Eywa, through the tree of souls, that are important for present purposes. When Jake, following Neytiri's instructions, 'connects' his personal 'body-cord' with that of the direhorse assigned to him, both he and the direhorse undergo a kind of consciousness-transformation – in Deleuze and Guattari's language, they 'become-each-other', or constitute a 'block' of mutual becoming when they 'bond'. As Deleuze and Guattari say, when one becomes something else, the other being becomes no less than you yourself become, but paradoxically *also* remains itself (which does not here imply a relapse into substantialist thinking, but denotes precisely a deviation from it in terms of the paradoxical poststructuralist logic of 'both/and'), and therefore a 'becoming self', just as you do in the process of

becoming. This is exactly what one witnesses in *Avatar* – a paradoxical ‘becoming-other’ of two beings, who enter into the flux of becoming and yet retain their own being-in-becoming. One witnesses the same process with Jake and the banshee that is attached to him, although, as with the direhorse, it is not without a tremendous struggle that the animal finally yields to the ‘becoming-one’ with Jake. These scene-sequences in *Avatar*, I would argue, are exemplary or paradigmatic of what ‘becoming-animal’ entails: there is no one-sided domination of animal by human; although there is a struggle before the animal calms down in each case and begins to respond affirmatively to the human, the struggle ends when the domination is no longer an issue. In the case of the banshee, particularly, one perceives the communicational mutuality between animal and Jake (as one does in the case of Neytiri and her banshee) once it has accepted Jake as its Na’vi ‘other’, for example when it lands before Jake when there is danger, offering help. In short, in *Avatar* one is confronted with a relationship between human(-oid) and animal that is radically posthuman and post-anthropocentric. No longer does one witness a relationship of one-sided domination and exploitation (Braidotti, 2013, pp. 76–78) between the Na’vi (as human counterparts) and Pandoran animals; in fact, the human colonisers on Pandora stand in stark contrast with the Na’vi and their ‘becoming-Pandora’ relationship with their moon-habitat.

As far as ‘becoming-earth’ is concerned – perhaps the most fundamental requirement for a truly post-anthropocentric paradigm-switch (Braidotti, 2013, p. 81) – *Avatar* demonstrates unequivocally what it means to experience oneself, as well as the community in which you live, as being ‘one’ with one’s planetary home (here, the moon Pandora, but by implication, the earth). Everywhere in their activities the Na’vi people confirm their ‘becoming-Pandora’; not only in their relationships with animals, but also with trees and other plants. In other words, they are relationally constituted, instead of atomistically, as isolated entities. In this respect *Avatar* may be regarded as the cinematic counterpart to James Lovelock’s well-known Gaia theory (although it has been relocated to a fictional moon) according to which the earth evolves ‘as if it were a living organism’ (Lovelock, 2010, p. 115; Officer & Page, 2009; Olivier, 2011). This is to say that the idea underlying *Avatar*’s projection of a ‘living moon/planet’ (Pandora) merges with what used to be Lovelock’s Gaia hypothesis, but has since been confirmed as fully fledged theory. Just as Lovelock’s theory claims that the earth is no neutral space where a variety of organisms has evolved, but that it *is itself a macro-organism*, so Pandora is depicted as a macro-organism where all life-forms are non-hierarchically and relationally interconnected. Needless to stress, this represents a quantum leap beyond the anthropocentric, eco-destructive mindset and technological practices of the intra-cinematic human colonising force, and extra-cinematically of the vast majority of human beings on planet Earth today. Here, too, *Avatar* instantiates a paradigm of ‘becoming-earth’, on which human beings can model their ‘becomings-other’ in relation to animals and the earth. It is one thing to develop a visual, iconic ‘language’ to implement this in educational contexts (a difficult and challenging

task in itself), but it requires imagination on the part of educators to do so in natural languages like English, French, IsiZulu, Afrikaans and so on, let alone designing curricula substantially reflecting these considerations. What must be done can be phrased in terms of what, following Deleuze and Guattari, might be called a ‘minoritarian language’.

In passing I should note that I do not agree with Braidotti’s (2013, pp. 84–85) criticism of Gaia theory on the ground that it valorizes the ‘natural order’ in a manner that re-instates dualistic thinking. After all, she also recognises Lovelock’s (2010) holistic approach, which is compatible with her holistic conceptualisation of the posthuman in terms of an overarching sphere that includes humanity, the rest of nature and artificial intelligence as a specific technological sphere. The difference between us is that I am as skeptical as some other thinkers, such as deep ecologists, of embracing the technological sphere in its entirety in the name of the posthuman. Much of technology today is, as thematised in *Avatar*, and as both Guattari (2008) and Stiegler (2010) – to mention only two of many thinkers – show, destructive of natural as well as social ecosystems, even if, as *pharmakon* – poison *and* cure – it simultaneously displays attributes and embodiments that enable one to amplify the meaning of the posthuman.

THE PEOPLE OF THE FUTURE AND A MINORITARIAN LANGUAGE

In the light of the preceding argument and interpretation the question of a ‘minoritarian language’ in relation to the possibility of a human race beyond humanism and anthropocentrism – a ‘new people’ – has to be fleshed out. In this regard Ronald Bogue’s remark is pertinent to the question at hand (Bogue, 2007):

In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*...Deleuze and Guattari directly take up the topic of ‘the people’ and relate it specifically to the arts. In a diary entry dated 25 December 1911, Kafka states that in the literature of a small group, such as that of the Czechs or Yiddish-speaking Jews, ‘literature is less a concern of literary history than of the people.’ Deleuze and Guattari argue that such is the case of all ‘minor literature,’ and that one of Kafka’s chief goals as a minor writer is to foster the invention of a people. (p. 98)

To be able to assess the relevance of this for the present theme of the advent of posthumanism and the concomitant need for finding, or ‘inventing’, a language, iconic (as in the case of *Avatar*), as well as verbal, that can adequately communicate the concerns of such a dispensation, one has to take note, therefore, of Deleuze and Guattari’s *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*. There (1986, p. 16) they state that the ‘first characteristic of minor literature ... is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization’. Keep in mind that ‘deterritorialisation’ for Deleuze and Guattari (1983, p. 382) entails something like dismantling the comparative fixity or stasis that characterises identifications of all kinds, in the process setting free what they call ‘desiring-production’. It stands in a tensional relationship of mutual

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implication with 'reterritorialisation', which is thought of as 'arresting' the process, but both of which presuppose a 'territory' to begin with. It is therefore consonant with what they understand by 'schizoanalysis' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 316), which 'deterritorialises'. Adrian Parr (2010) sums it up as follows:

Perhaps deterritorialisation can best be understood as a movement producing change. In so far as it operates as a line of flight, deterritorialisation indicates the creative potential of an assemblage. So, to deterritorialise is to free up the fixed relations that contain a body all the while exposing it to new organisations.
(p. 69)

Hence (ignoring for the moment the technical Deleuzian meanings of 'line of flight' and 'assemblage'; see Parr, 2010, pp. 18, 147), one can conceptualise the posthumanist, post-anthropocentric language that has to be 'invented' to be able to communicate the urgent need for a fundamental ontological, epistemological and communicational reorientation in the early 21st century, by analogy with a 'minor literature'. It must therefore be a 'minoritarian language' tasked with the thoroughgoing deterritorialisation of the current, still largely humanist, anthropocentric landscape within which the humanities and social sciences find themselves. As previously argued, the film *Avatar* serves as a model for an iconic, audio-visual 'language' in this regard.

The second attribute, for Deleuze and Guattari (1986, p. 17), of minor literatures as exemplified in the work of Kafka '...is that everything in them is political', which hangs together with the third characteristic, '...that in it everything takes on a collective value'. While in major literatures the socio-political milieu always comprises the backdrop for their true concern, namely 'individual concerns', a minor literature does not and cannot take this normalised social sphere for granted, because by virtue of being 'minor', even its focus on individual issues registers a challenge to the normalised sphere of social and political values. Moreover, precisely because a minor literary figure is outside the valorised, 'normal' social sphere, or even at the margins of

...his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 17)

Given the implication that a shift towards a posthumanist paradigm across the board in the natural as well as human sciences, entails nothing short of a 'revolution' (Kristeva would say 'revolt') of sorts, it is significant for the present theme that they add (1986):

We might as well say that minor no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature. (p. 18)

This is tantamount to claiming that, for a ‘revolt’ to occur, in literature, art or the sciences, the seed of such a revolution first emerges in a minor key, to use a musical metaphor. Further, to retain its revolutionary (communicational) potential, it cannot afford to become ‘major’ in the fullest sense of the term. In this sense, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, above, the minor element in all literature is precisely the gist of revolutionary potential harboured within it, just as, today, the posthuman is already potentially present (paradoxically in its absence) within the humanities even where they are still practised in a humanist sense. Similarly, the introduction of a minoritarian language in education represents the vanguard of a mode of teaching that could shift the awareness of students away from the relatively unimportant (if not irrelevant) things that occupy their attention towards what may, in the light of Cunha’s remarks (quoted at the outset in this chapter) be a matter of life and death.

CONCLUSION: A NEW MODE OF COMMUNICATION FOR EDUCATION

It should be abundantly evident, in the light of the preceding argument, that contemporary posthumanist and post-anthropocentric developments, not only in the humanities, but also, as Braidotti so clearly indicates, in the natural and technology-oriented disciplines, are symptomatic of a kind of sea-change that is in the process of occurring. As she also points out (referred to earlier, but worth quoting again), this raises the question of a new mode of communicating, and, by implication, of education or teaching (Braidotti, 2013):

Finding an adequate language for post-anthropocentrism means that the resources of the imagination, as well as the tools of critical intelligence, need to be enlisted for this task. The collapse of the nature-culture divide requires that we need to devise a new vocabulary.... (p. 82)

I have tried to show how this happens in Cameron’s *Avatar* in highly imaginative ways that surpass the human/animal and the human/earth separation in holistic, relational terms, but this is, needless to stress, not enough. What has to be developed specifically for the purposes of higher education is a minoritarian language that holds the promise of recuperating a world where the social, educational and intellectual ravages brought about by capitalist culture industries’ employment of what Stiegler calls ‘technics’ – more particularly ‘hyper-industrial’ mnemonic machines (smartphones, tablets, etc.) – are in the process of ‘proletarianising’ consumers by robbing them of their *savoir-faire* (know-how; knowledge) as well as their *savoir-vivre* (knowledge of how to live their lives). This is done by destroying their ‘internal memory’ and replacing it with ‘external memory’ – for one thing, witness the growing inability of students to spell, this work being done for them by spell-checking software (Stiegler, 2010, pp. 19–27). Needless to emphasise again, this testifies to the double-sidedness of technology as *pharmakon*; not only does it enable one to intensify one’s critical capabilities, on the one hand, but on the other it also undermines these very capabilities, and arguably on a much larger scale.

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The minoritarian language in question therefore faces the task of retrieving what it means to be human in terms that surpass the mere technical proficiency of operating technical devices, and could, in my view, be developed (among other ways) in relation to the rediscovery of the natural world in all its manifestations – not merely through the study of spectacular nature-films such as those directed by David Attenborough, exemplary though they are as nature documentaries – but, wherever possible, by introducing students to wilderness and mountain experiences in bodily as well as discursive-linguistic terms. This is only one possible approach among many possibilities, which include introducing students to participation in drama, novel- and poetry-writing, and to the adventure of personally discovering, and discursively engaging with, the diversity of cultural practices that comprise a society such as the South African one. An implicit community of ‘minoritarian’ artists, writers, thinkers, scholars, scientists and educators is already taking this task further in imaginative discursive and fictional ways (see for instance Donna Haraway’s and Peter Hamilton’s work, in addition to those already mentioned; Haraway, 1991; Hamilton, 2001; Bell, 2007, pp. 91–96). Every one of us should add our ‘minor’, but revolutionary, voices to theirs, to invent and develop ‘posthuman’ curricula and the means for communicating to our students, and to the public at large, what must seem very strange to most people, namely an incipient movement beyond what they have taken for granted: the ostensibly unquestionable centrality and justified ‘superiority’ of *Anthropos*, which is no longer tenable.

NOTE

- ¹ The quotation by Brown is a paraphrase which is misattributed to Dante Alighieri, 2008, pp. 35–42. The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation of South Africa, which contributed to making this research possible, is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

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Bert Olivier

University of the Free State, South Africa

PART TWO
CURRICULUM SHIFTS

WILLIAM PINAR

9. WHAT KNOWLEDGE IS OF MOST WORTH?

The Question of Undergraduate Curriculum Reform

We are currently in a curriculum craze in South Africa.

(Ramrathan, 2010, p. 107)

INTRODUCTION

Focusing on the Council on Higher Education (CHE) *A proposal for undergraduate curriculum reform in South Africa: The case for flexible curriculum structure* (henceforth the Proposal) and referencing both the *University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Response* (henceforth the Report) (a formal submission to the CHE proposal), and *Curriculum Studies in South Africa* (henceforth the Project) (a project focused on the history and present state of curriculum research and development in South Africa),¹ I consider (briefly) the question of undergraduate curriculum reform, asking about its relation to national history, culture, and globalisation. Because this multi-variate context seems crucial in comprehending what is at stake in curriculum reform, one element – such as ‘structure’ – cannot, I suggest, be cast as the key contributor to educational accomplishment.²

After critiquing the Proposal – its ahistorical,³ neoliberal, systemic inflexibility propelled by evidence-less assertions are among its self-negating features – I will question the UKZN Response as well, specifically its embrace of skills over (specifically canonical or “Western”) knowledge. Is not the emphasis on ‘skills’ itself an expression of modernity’s obsessions with instrumentality and functionality that make working through⁴ the colonial and apartheid past impossible? Why invoke what seems now an inflationary rhetoric (calling for “emancipatory” higher education) when minimal practices of academic integrity itself (faculty control over curriculum, including its duration and assessment) are at stake? Why make that concessionary note that with “proper” management the CHE Proposal could be implemented? After praising the UKZN endorsement of institutional autonomy (I would have hoped to read as well an endorsement of individual faculty autonomy), its critique of commodification, its affirmation of indigenous languages and knowledges,⁵ and its cautionary note concerning South Africa’s systemic school reform – about which I learned much from the *Curriculum Studies in South Africa* project – I conclude with concepts from curriculum research and development in

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South Africa (and elsewhere) that could contribute to a reconceptualisation of the question of undergraduate curriculum reform.

THE CHE PROPOSAL

The racialisation of power is important to study precisely because of its changing morphology. (Soudien, 2010, p. 20)

What prompted this Proposal? We are told:

The South African higher education system is currently producing too few graduates, both in absolute numbers and relative to intake, and that there are mismatches between current graduate attributes and the broader needs of society and the economy. (CHE, 2013, p. 32)

Evidence could have been helpful here: ten-year old data are referenced, but not cited, so we are unable to see for ourselves. Also helpful here would have been a definition: what exactly is ‘mismatch’? What constitutes – and who decides – the “broader needs of society and the economy”? That adjective – “broader” before “society” – implies cultural, perhaps psychological, no doubt historical “needs” that certain academic disciplines – in the arts, humanities, and interpretative social sciences – by their very nature are more likely to address than are the natural sciences and vocational training, from which the examples provided in the Proposal derive. Even the “broader needs” of the economy – innovation, creativity, so-called ‘world-class’ research – may also require sustained study in the liberal arts – a point to which I will return in the conclusion – not an immediate funnelling into disciplinary functionality and instrumentality. That is, as Waghid notes, “learning ... associated with consumerist logic” (2010, p. 202), consigns the teacher-student relationship “as one between a customer and a supplier” (2010, p. 207). With the replacement of students with customers, and educators by suppliers, education ends.

The other apparent prompt for the CHE Proposal’s series of declarations is what its authors term “a major fault-line,” a “discontinuity between school and undergraduate studies in higher education, referred to in this report as an articulation gap”. Evidently having abandoned hope for improving the schools, the authors of this Proposal want to close this ‘gap’ on the university side.

Before returning to this concept of ‘gap,’ I want to raise two questions about the references to K-12 education. “Dysfunction” is one term used to describe its present state, followed by the declaration that there is “no prospect” that schooling will “produce” the “numbers of well-prepared matriculants that higher education requires”. Is that the only point of schooling in South Africa, preparation for university study? If post-secondary school destinations are not only the university – as the Proposal complains – why would the point of K-12 schooling be the production of “well-prepared matriculants”? Why is there is no acknowledgement of the multiplicity of civic and personal purposes of elementary and secondary education?

Even focused on this one purpose and concerning the allegation – the absence of “well-prepared matriculants” – where is the evidence? Are there no superb schools in South Africa?

The authors of the UKZN Response also characterise the entire spectrum of South African schools in this sweeping and dismissive fashion. South African schools are, they claim, “increasingly weak”. There is, they say, a “moral responsibility” to communicate with their colleagues in “the basic education sector” that there is “a limit to what can be achieved with significant numbers of grossly under-prepared students”. In so doing they accept the “deficit model” they elsewhere denounce.⁶ “There is little or no evidence elsewhere in the world,” the authors of the UKZN Response conclude, “of a good higher education system resting on a very weak basic system”. May I point out that while a majority of the top 25 universities in the world are often listed as being in the U.S., the school system in the U.S. has been declared ‘weak’ since Sputnik; 26 years later, in 1983, it was pronounced by a Presidential Commission as so weak as to be placing the nation at risk.⁷ Evidently superb universities do not require a strong basic education sector.

Sidestepping such questions – of the politics of curriculum reform – the authors of the CHE Proposal emphasise this “articulation gap” (as indicated in low graduation rates). There is considerable attention given to this problem, but only passing reference to its possible but clearly multiple causes, among them “subject knowledge but also academic skills and literacies (such as quantitative, language-related and information literacies), approaches to study, background or contextual knowledge, and forms of social capital.” In another paragraph the authors list then dismiss obvious candidates for “underperformance” – among them “student deficits,” “poor teaching,” even, sweepingly, “affective or material factors” – and conclude that “underperformance ... must be systemic in origin.”

Given the plurality and complexity of causes they cite, it is not likely it could be only “systemic” i.e., internal to the universities. At one point the authors assure us that “all signs that the fundamental problem is systemic rather than a result of student deficits” but we are never shown these “signs.” Indeed, there is no data, as the authors admit:

The sector-wide information currently available is not able to accurately identify the reasons for ‘voluntary’ dropout, but data such as course success rates and institutional exclusion patterns indicate that poor academic performance affects very large numbers of students, especially in SET programmes.

Sounds like circular reasoning to me.

Despite the absence of data and the authors’ own admission of the “complexity” of the problem,⁸ the solution is obvious: “The factor that the investigation has focused on is the structure of South Africa’s undergraduate curricula, rather than issues of content and canon.” And, even more narrowly, the solution is “creating additional curriculum space for strengthening and enhancing learning in mainstream undergraduate provision”. Later they acknowledge:

Structural curriculum reform is of course not a complete response to the challenge of improving graduate output and outcomes, but it can be expected to make a positive difference in itself, as well as facilitating effective practice in other fundamental elements of the teaching and learning process.⁹

If that's hedging your bets – “of course reform is not a complete response” – you are not taking any money off the table with that promissory note.¹⁰

How can “affective and material factors” be dismissed out of hand?¹¹ The authors acknowledge their significance when they reference

a growing body of research, in particular in the form of local and international retention studies, which indicates that success and failure in higher education is the result of a complex interplay of factors. These factors are both internal, that is, intrinsic to the higher education system, and external, in relation to social, cultural and material circumstances.

The two domains – hardly of equal weight I should think – are surely interrelated. But in the CHE Proposal, they are simply set aside: “addressing material disadvantage is not a substitute for dealing effectively with the academic and other factors impacting on student progression.” No substitute of course, but can they be set aside? What occurs in this document is the substitution of curriculum change for economic intervention, displacing the obligations of government and the private sector onto what I suspect are already overburdened universities.

The CHE definition of “curriculum structure” is certainly expansive, including “parameters of starting level (and related assumptions about students’ prior knowledge), duration, the pace and flexibility of progression pathways, and exit level.”¹² Prior knowledge is acknowledged, but strangely not present knowledge, the very “formal” – the authors’ adjective – curriculum of university study, the curriculum with which some struggle. Despite this diffuse definition, curriculum structure, we are advised, is “a key framework that enables or constrains effective teaching and learning in higher education.” Again, no evidence or argument is provided, simply assertion. Undeterred, the authors proceed. They inform the reader:

In summary the available evidence suggests that structural curriculum reform that takes account of students’ educational backgrounds can positively influence student performance.

One wonders what taking “account” of students’ educational backgrounds means? If the “evidence is “available”, why not make it “available” in this Proposal? Without evidence or explanation, the authors continue with what reads more and more like a conceptual Ponzi scheme:

Because of current constraints, however, the educational advantages underlying extended curriculum provision will not be fully realised until they are fully integrated into an enabling curriculum structure and are available to the large numbers of students who are talented but not coping with traditional

curricula.¹³ This report thus argues that it is time for structural curriculum reform to be applied systemically.

We are told that “the term ‘curriculum’ as used here refers primarily to the formal curriculum, that is, the planned learning experiences that students are exposed to with a view to achieving desired outcomes in terms of knowledge, competencies and attributes.” The emphasis on outcomes and outputs confines the proposal to instrumentalism not inspiration. While in accord with many initiatives – advocated not only but especially by the World Bank which has enforced its economic conception of education¹⁴ – such an authoritarian emphasis seems striking given the history of racial exploitation in South Africa.

While constantly cast in the rhetoric of equity – in the U.S. especially such rhetoric conceals the continuing commodification of the black body as significant only in economic terms¹⁵ – such stipulation recapitulates not reconstructs the legacies that plague the lives of too many in South Africa today.

Questions of context aside, an emphasis on outcomes and outputs – over inputs, over the quality of academic knowledge and the intellectual sophistication of those who teach it – condemns higher education to presentistic assessments of what society requires. In this Proposal, as in many, it is the economy that is the tail wagging the dog. Education provides passages to futures we cannot in principle foresee, if with the considerable exception of climate change and even there – given the failures of government and business – the fate of humanity may hinge on educators’ and researchers’ capacities to craft solutions to problems that are escalating into intractability.

Declaring the South African nation as “entering the second stage¹⁶ of its historic new life,” we are told in the Proposal that the “future keeps receding” due to “a murky and unfocused present severely lacking in human capacity.” In that last phrase is the “deficit model”¹⁷ the UKZN Response discerned, not only a covert racialisation of national failure but an outright displacement of the responsibilities of government and business for job creation, job training, and wage growth. For the cultural crisis produced by the failures of government and business – organised religion or the court system cannot be exempt from any comprehensive critique of South African society – we must rely on artists, public intellectuals and cultural critics, none of whose work or academic preparation is acknowledged let alone supported in the CHE Proposal.

The undergraduate curriculum, we are reminded there, “is closer to career systems and life orientation,” a point made in the service of emphasising the “decisiveness” of the curriculum in the life of nations. Crafting a “life orientation” society – a vague¹⁸ phrase that seems to reference how decisive this experience can be for students – would seem to support study in the liberal arts, not in remedial education.¹⁹ In Canada (and in the U.S. for the elite) the significance of the liberal arts – by which I mean the arts, the humanities, and the interpretative social sciences – has historically been acknowledged as appropriate regardless of the vocational destination the student has in mind.²⁰ That idea remains (barely) alive today, as I will note at the end.

The problem the Proposal confronts is not the cultural crisis it references in passing – the disappointed dream, the future receding – but its symptoms, increased access to higher education but “high attrition and low graduation rates.” This “output,” we are told, “has not kept pace with the country’s needs.” That momentous phrase – “the country’s needs” – calls for clarification. Are labour shortage statistics in the authors’ minds? If so, those would not be sufficient, as any list of the nation’s needs must be composed by representatives of the nation as a whole, including the impoverished. But I suspect the nation’s needs are in fact incidental here, as the authors take aim at the hunted game, “The conditions on the ground dictate a fundamental systemic review of the undergraduate curriculum.”

Undergraduate curriculum review is ongoing, but any ‘systemic’ review of the ‘nation’s needs’ must also include a ‘systemic review’ of government, business, the courts, and the church. If it were truly the needs of the nation that had been the animus for this Proposal, a more ‘systemic review’ would have indeed been the outcome, not the identification of a lever²¹ by which the failures of government, business, the courts, and the church can be corrected, and the nation raised.

These august institutional sectors of South African society are evidently marginal in the task at hand. It is reform of the undergraduate system that will restore the promise of the nation, and through “more programme time, more flexibility, more system self-awareness, and more rigour and steadfastness,” adding that “true transformation will occur in the field of teaching itself.” The Proposal might seem to be placing university teachers on a pedestal here – after all they are ascribing to them powers evidently unavailable to elected officials, business executives, judges, and priests – but they are clearly not looking up at educators, but down. Educators are capable – no they are responsible – for doing what no other group of professionals has managed to accomplish, even the priesthood with, presumably, God on its side. Yes, we are told, the “onus” is on higher education institutions, and not only to correct the injustices of the apartheid past, but to address the opportunities and threats posed by “global demands.” After setting up university faculty²² for the fall, the Proposal authors sidestep the professors to name the corrective: curriculum structure. Curriculum structure is, we are told, “a key element of the teaching and learning process,” and so we must consider “the desirability and feasibility of amending it as a means of substantially improving graduate output and outcomes.” The indefinite article ‘a’ suggests there are other key elements but these are left unspecified.²³ There are two reasons provided for this focus, the first of which is “systemic obstacles to access and success,” for which “evidence” has “accumulated.” Apparently this is common knowledge, as no evidence is presented.²⁴ Second, the current curriculum structure is a century old, adopted during the colonial era, constituting “a prima facie justification for a review.”

Evidently what was appropriate for the colonial elite is inappropriate for the masses. Assertions without evidence are combined with self-contradiction, the endorsement, simultaneously, of flexibility and inflexibility.

The report ... makes a concrete proposal for a flexible curriculum structure for South Africa's core undergraduate qualifications – based on extending their formal time by a year as the norm.

In what sense does decreeing an extension of programme time by one year “as the norm” constitute a “flexible curriculum structure”? Evidently overlooking this self-refuting statement, the Proposal cautions that “moving from the current rigid curriculum structure to another rigid one would not satisfactorily address the diversity that will continue to characterise the student body.”

In this paragraph there is mention of “provision for shorter pathways within the new norms,” but these are not specified. Instead, the demand for increased duration is repeated.

There is reference to “local and global conditions”, but these too are never specified. There is a nod to the idea that education could have intrinsic value – “The Task Team recognises that completing a higher education qualification is likely to have value beyond the instrumental” – although that acknowledgement seems the end of it. That the value of higher education is now “instrumental,” e.g. indeed exclusively vocational,²⁵ is implied by this statement that consigns all such value as “beyond.” For me, that is the ‘value’ of education, a long-term, ‘big-picture’ view of what we face as an endangered species.

Never mind the big picture; let us return to graduation rates. No doubt there are steps universities can take – these are “the factors within the sector’s control that can make a significant difference to higher education output and outcomes,” as the authors of Proposal phrase it. These are steps that various universities may in fact already be taking, but these are not cited. The authors ignore the obvious ones – expanded tutoring programmes, increased financial assistance, more social support including peer support groups, academic, psychological, and career counselling – and instead focus on one: undergraduate curriculum structure. There is some definitional dancing – curriculum time, curriculum space – but the authors fasten their attention on “structural” not social or specifically racially related “impediments” to “student success.” Why?²⁶

Another assumption expressed in this Proposal that represents consensus thinking is a causal relationship between participation rates – the highest in sub-Saharan Africa but below those of Latin America and Central Asia – and “social and economic development,” a phrase denoting a “broader” set of issues and concerns that disappear in the phrase that follows it, “the shortage of high-level skills.”²⁷ Which “high-level skills” exactly are in short supply? Relying exclusively on what is supplied in the Proposal, it turns out they are not so ‘broad’ at all, restricted to Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) as well as those taught in professional programmes. When engineering shortages loomed in the U.S., immigration was increased. Is that not possible in South Africa? Why is Pretoria’s the only policy option manipulating the undergraduate curriculum that, even if it were in time successful, would surely constitute a ‘slow-motion’ response to ‘real-time’

labour shortages? What ‘social development’ did the authors have in mind? Does not that require what in North America we term the liberal arts: studies in the arts, humanities, and social sciences that contribute to the formation of the civic subject?

Embedded in that vague phrase – ‘social development’ could be “equity and social cohesion,”²⁸ two concepts the authors link with the undergraduate curriculum, insofar as its ‘reform’ will lead to economic development, another assumption, no documented fact. Surely ‘equity’ and ‘social cohesion’ are not so easily achieved – although admittedly their absence might become more tolerable amidst an equitably distributed national prosperity – but their causes and consequences are among the investigations university scholars could continue to conduct in the humanities, arts, and social sciences. Construing education – whether K-12 and/or higher education – as the engine of the economy and the medium of reparation for historical trauma and injury – inflates the promise of curriculum while distorting its achievements.²⁹

Understanding these calamities and their legacies we scholars can study but not solve, certainly not alone. Imagining that the manipulation of one variable – however vague that ‘variable’ is – segregates the responsibility and misunderstands its nature. It is the liberal arts that address questions of history, culture, and post-colonial experience; these enjoy little attention in the present Proposal.

After decreeing the new inflexible flexible curriculum structure, the authors dissimulate once again, declaring that “none of the accountability measures outlined above will infringe on institutional autonomy. Institutions will continue to be free to design their curricula within the nationally-adopted framework, as is the case at present.”

What exactly is “institutional autonomy” if the “nationally-adopted framework” structures it? Once again the authors are undeterred:

In fact, a strength of the flexible curriculum structure is the opportunities it gives to institutions to design curricula that suit their particular student profile and institutional mission, without the counter-productive constraint of the current rigid structure and subsidy system that are not sensitive to differentials in students’ educational backgrounds.

The idea of local control in institutions historically identified with Apartheid cannot be entirely reassuring, but it is the ‘double-think’ of this Proposal I am highlighting here, not its recoded racialised meanings, a project requiring more intimacy with the South African situation than I have. How, with a straight face, can officials and colleagues claim the following? “Valuing institutions’ disciplinary and local knowledge, contextual awareness and creativity should therefore be a key element of implementation strategy.” Implementation means compliance to an enforced policy; by definition implementation confines “contextual awareness” and “creativity” to the execution of that policy.

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[N]ew ways of living are not to be found in returning to values of the past nor in replacing existing models with new ones but rather in seeing current events as bearers of alternative constellations. (Le Grange, 2010, p. 194)

Like the CHE Proposal, the UKZN Response demonstrates little interest in evidence and argument, perhaps due to time, perhaps to the lack of faculty consensus. It does seem to hedge its bets, although perhaps the faculty are also affirming a confidence similar to that expressed in the epigraph, namely that they can rework present circumstances to find passages to a future that seem currently blocked, at least in part.³⁰ It is clear by now that I do not share its first point, namely that the CHE Proposal makes a compelling case for curriculum reform.³¹ Systemic curriculum reform could be called for, but the Proposal provides insufficient data or argumentation to justify the specific reform it recommends. If curriculum reform were to occur – surely it is occurring already, everywhere, to some extent, as faculty stay abreast of developments in their respective fields – it is best left to individual institutions and faculties who can assess whether extending the duration of the study – by itself or more sensibly in concert with a series of initiatives – can address the problems they identify. Especially in South Africa, it seems to me (as an outsider) systemic curriculum reform echoes too loudly the authoritarianism of the Apartheid and colonial periods.

If the UKZN faculty confirm the existence of an “articulation gap” – as they do in this Response – then the concern they express about the “deficit paradigm” seems undermined. Does not an “articulation gap” simply restate the concept of ‘deficit’? The two concepts are equally expansive, equally vague, equally coded with concerns that cannot be circulated in public, but must travel undercover. It is not obvious how there could be support for the Proposal “in principle” – as the UKZN Response announces – especially given the request for “a more explicit articulation of the extent and limits to institutional autonomy in the re-design process and the eventual curriculum framework.”³²

From my reading of the Proposal, there is no institutional autonomy concerning the key point, i.e., extending the duration of the degree programmes. Only in implementation is there acknowledgement of “institutional autonomy”.

I confess I am curious if the concern expressed over “the ‘irreducible core’ of knowledge” is shared widely across the university – the consultation process described in point #3 appeared inclusive – or was it concentrated within the faculty of education, where a scepticism toward such ideas, even ‘knowledge’ itself, can be common, at least in North America. Surely faculty everywhere would agree that there is an “irreducible core of knowledge” in the undergraduate curriculum, even when they do not share what that knowledge is. Would not knowledge of the struggle to end Apartheid qualify as an “irreducible core”? The canonical curriculum question – what knowledge is of most worth? – is an ongoing provocation for curriculum

revision, as the authors of the UKZN Response realise in the second paragraph of point #8.³³ Without an “irreducible core” – in any undergraduate curriculum surely it would include History – inequity (among other legacies of colonialism and Apartheid) becomes naturalised not problematised.³⁴

At one point the authors of the UKZN Response express scepticism not only towards a curricular core but towards ‘knowledge’ itself, endorsing “the attainment/cultivation of learning principles and the development of intellectual skills rather than the acquisition of discrete content knowledge.” In the shadow of authoritarian models, such a shift can make short-term sense – as it does now in China’s effort to shed its Soviet-era school system³⁵ – but without ‘knowledge’ students are condemned to learn ‘skills’ too easily co-opted by corporations or undemocratic governments.³⁶ At one point there is acknowledgement of “commodification” – intellectually eviscerating and now internalised by students, as Waghid (2010) acknowledges³⁷ – but in the face of its pervasiveness what can be ‘emancipatory education’? How can we embrace ‘emancipation’ when confronting the collapse of civil society into corporatisation? While worth pursuing – as it was not in the UKZN Response – the very idea of an emancipatory education seems terminologically inflationary when an all-encompassing economism threatens the most minimal standards of academic integrity. Strategies for survival within the ruins of the university seem a more suitable scale of aspiration, and these are implied in the UKZN Response. The authors of UKZN Response point out in point #10: “In a differentiated higher education system, curriculum flexibility cannot and should not be legislated on the basis of a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.” The recommendation, point #7 in the UKZN Response “to allow individual institutions the space and flexibility to decide for themselves whether to embrace remedial or radical reform” is one such strategy for survival within a turbulent sea of systemic ‘reform’.

Associated with faculty control over the curriculum (including its assessment), academic integrity is for me also associated with ongoing asking of the canonical curriculum question: what knowledge is of most worth? That ongoing academic question is at once cultural, political, and ethical. If focused academically – away from the vocationalisation of the undergraduate curriculum and towards what Waghid (2010, p. 208) sketches as “authentic learning,” a curriculum of cosmopolitanism (Waghid, 2010, p. 218) – curriculum can encourage the erudition and skills (they are inextricably interwoven) that enable students to address the past and participate in the formation of the future. Such curriculum – what gets called “liberal” or “general” education in the United States – hardly excludes vocational specialisation, but it emphasises, as Le Grange (2014, p. 473) notes “culturally inclusive curricula, in the project [of] decolonising ... in an age of performativity, [i.e.] a more human curriculum.”³⁸ What coursework and extra-curricular activities could address these challenges constitutes the challenge of undergraduate curriculum reform. Roth (2014, p. 2) points out that:

Vocationally focused undergraduate education is a critical mistake as it ignores the broad contextual [or ‘humanistic’] education that has enriched the lives of

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generations of [privileged, I would add] students by enhancing their capacities for shaping themselves and reinventing the world they will inhabit.

Surely that is among the “needs of society” the authors of the CHE Proposal have in mind.

CONCLUSION

Education ... was and still is, in the context of the evolving colonial landscape, a violent process involving the fundamental displacement of local knowledges and local identities. (Soudien, 2010, p. 22)

The CHE Proposal concludes with an endorsement of curriculum development, if in the service of its scheme. Curriculum development is an ongoing faculty project, an intellectual undertaking, not an organisational restructuring or bureaucratic manipulation. In general, it is best relegated to experts in the various academic disciplines and professional fields who work together on shared problems – degree requirements for instance – but also, let it be noted, work alone, as they individually restructure the content and format of their courses, preparing for participation in the complicated conversation that is the curriculum. That conversation can proceed, as not only the Bernsteinian view indicates, from the simple to the complex³⁹ but it can also incorporate juxtaposition,⁴⁰ wherein conceptual scales are complicated and sometimes harmonised by their dissonance. Curriculum development is a creative, contextualised endeavour informed by expertise and consultation, not dictated by definition.⁴¹

Rather than assigning faculty bureaucratic busywork re-titling courses and rescheduling their sequencing, they can in ongoing conversation with one another and students make these adjustments. I recommend that the government provide more funding in order to increase considerably their numbers.⁴² More professors means more funding for research, more funding for reduced teaching loads⁴³ and extended sabbatical leaves, as establishing world-class universities while working with students who struggle with what they study takes time, probably much time,⁴⁴ as does conducting important research that not only raises the academic profile of South African universities, but contributes to the intellectual sophistication of the curriculum that professors can offer the students with whom they work.

More professors, more research, and more students will not necessarily translate into higher graduation rates. As the UKZN Response notes, the government is also obligated to increase considerably its support of struggling students, financially and affectively, the latter with more culturally informed counselling as well as funded programmes of tutoring with peers, advanced undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty. The UKZN Response recommends the improvement of residences and learning environments that, the UKZN faculty suggest, “are equally, if not more important, in improving student performance.” Addressing as well the “large disparities across the university system” the authors of the UKZN Response

recommendation seems much more promising than the CHE Proposal's confidence in the outcomes of manipulating the "curriculum structure" of all universities.

The problem of low graduation rates is part of a much larger parcel, one sent to you from the past and containing residues of colonialism and Apartheid that cannot sidestepped by tinkering with curriculum structures. The inconvenient and expensive truth is that low graduation rates – at universities or in the public school system – cannot be solved by manipulating one variable, or two, or even several. In a country whose present continues to be structured by the legacies of its colonial and Apartheid past, manipulation is not the appropriate action of government at all. Support – financial first of all – is. Supportive would be an acknowledgement by members of the CHE that the problems of the present follow from the past, problems that require a critical and cosmopolitan curriculum that addresses that past, and the presence of the past in contemporary South Africa. Such a curriculum requires knowledge as well as skills, and sustained study of the liberal arts – emphasising indigenous knowledges in juxtaposition with inherited European traditions (including their violent intersections⁴⁵) that is perhaps an undergraduate academic version of "People's Education"⁴⁶ – promises that passage from the past to the future⁴⁷ the authors of the CHE Proposal and the citizens of South Africa seek. Roth (2014, p. 8) reminds us:

If higher education is to be an intellectual and experiential adventure, and not a bureaucratic assignment of skill capacity, if it is to prize free inquiry rather than training for specific vocations ... then we must resist the call to limit access to it or to diminish its scope.

In such a view, remedial instruction is not to be disguised as a universal fifth year from which in practice many will test out; it is not to be severed from courses in African history, art, and literature, South African history, art, and literature as well as in the cultures (literary, aesthetic as well as anthropological) of Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Such 'liberal learning' encourages what Roth (2014, p. 10) describes as a "capacious practicality," not a narrow vocationalism that prepares for specific jobs that could easily disappear, perhaps by graduation.⁴⁸ "In an age of seismic technological change and instantaneous information dissemination," Roth (2014, p. 10) emphasises, it is more crucial than ever that we not abandon the humanistic frameworks of education in favour of narrow, technical forms of teaching intended to give quick, utilitarian results. Those results are no substitute for the practice of inquiry, critique, and experience that enhances students' ability to appreciate and understand the world around them – and to innovatively respond to it.

For me, it is not only the promise of an informed, capacious some would say cosmopolitan, subjectivity that justifies an undergraduate curriculum – 'an intellectual and experiential adventure' curriculum – it is the legacy of colonialism and Apartheid that requires reparation, providing an education for all that was – is – reserved for the children of the elite. It was such education W. E. B. Du Bois enjoyed and demanded for African Americans, education that cultivated "neither

a psychologist nor a brickmason, but a man” (in Roth, 2014, p. 67).⁴⁹ Du Bois (in Roth, 2014, p. 70) wrote just over one hundred years ago:

It is industrialisation [today, technologisation] drunk with its vision of success, to imagine that its own work can be accomplished without providing for the training of broadly cultured men and women to teach its own teachers, and to teach the teachers of the public schools.⁵⁰

Addressing the complexity of the South African present is provocation for national curriculum reform led by faculty, focused on reparation, on education that discloses the persistence of the past in the present, not recrimination but (if still unrealised) reconciliation that sustained academic study and subjective and social reconstruction invite. Roth (2014, p. 92) reminds us that “Teachers don’t just impart skills for specific tasks; they also guide students to think allegorically and to puzzle out the diverse ways through which people give significance to their lives.” Roth (2014, p. 92) quotes William James (Du Bois’ teacher at Harvard): “Education, enlarging as it does our horizon and perspective is a means of multiplying our ideas, of bringing new ones into view.” James (in Roth, 2014, p. 93) emphasises that

looking for the ‘whole inward significance’ of another’s situation is a crucial dimension of any inquiry that takes us beyond the comfortable borders of our own insular groups. Teaching is neither preaching to the choir nor energizing a base of believers.

It is such a historically informed, socially focused undergraduate curriculum reform – simultaneously structured horizontally and vertically, in Bernsteinian terms, animated by reparation – that South African faculty might undertake. They might modify curriculum structures but remain, I recommend, focussed on academic knowledge and its communication in complicated conversation with students struggling with the specialised languages, expertise requires. It matters what you know, not only what you can do, as the latter follows from, is embedded within, the former. Without expertise ‘skill’ is an empty concept, a slogan now complicit with corporate commands for a compliant workforce. Soudien (2010, p. 29) wrote “There isn’t sufficient awareness, of how the curriculum provides the tools for the deconstruction of the totalising colonial project.” Rather than yet another reiteration of that colonising project – as this current Proposal threatens to be – the call for undergraduate curriculum reform could demonstrate the truth and timeliness of Soudien’s sagacity.

NOTES

- ¹ See Le Grange (2014), Soudien (2010), and Hoadley (2010). Hoadley (2010, p. 164) emphasises “the diversity of the field, the lack of articulation between different bodies of work, the question of the impact of work, and issues pertaining to continuity from the past.”
- ² I am not alone in questioning the inflation of this element. Darling-Hammond (2012, p. 138) is certain that “programme structure is not the determinative factor in predicting programme success.” She

undercuts the definitiveness of that statement by adding that “certain structures may make it easier to institute some kinds of programme features that may make a difference” (2012, p. 138). Is she hedging her bets or acknowledging complexity?

- ³ “Ahistorical” also typified K-12 curriculum reform, as Soudien (2010, p. 44) emphasises:

The ahistoric nature of the new curriculum is the issue. This new curriculum speaks into the social context of South Africa as if it is empty. It comes from the uncontextualised and unrelated world of New Zealand and the United Kingdom and imposes itself onto the post-Apartheid imagination as if it itself is not the product of history.

For Hugo (2010, p. 59), the mistake of Curriculum 2005 was that “we went for the grandiose vision when we should have focused on the foundational (numeracy, basic reading and writing).”

- ⁴ LaCapra (2009, p. 8) regards “processes of working through problems as intimately related to the historical attempt to understand and overcome – or situationally (not totally or annihilating) ‘transcend’ – aspects of the past.” Historical knowledge, not vocational skills, is the site of ‘truth’ and (perhaps) reconciliation.

- ⁵ Within curriculum studies in South Africa, Hoadley (2010, p. 161) notes, “Indigenous knowledge is also tied into arguments around constructivism, relevance, and multiculturalism.” Those associations could engender the tensions between ‘knowledge’ and ‘skill’ evident in the UKZN Response.

- ⁶ UKZN Response (UKZN, 2013, p. 7). While not reducible to race, the ‘deficit model’ has its racial subtext. Soudien (2010, p. 45) notes that curricular strategies need to be investigated that uncouple whiteness from the ideal of equality. This is the first step in a complex process of invoking a range of new ways of resituating the subject in all its hierarchical locations...the search for new ways of seeing self and other.

Seeing implies more than visibility, it implies, as Fanon for one also knew, ‘new ways’ of being. Fanon (1968, p. 316) declared, “For Europe, for ourselves, and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man.” The self-shattering of whiteness became my project (Pinar, 2001, 2006).

- ⁷ See National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983); Pinar (2012, pp. 106, 128).

- ⁸ In 2004 the George W. Bush Administration charged U.S. universities to address the problem of delayed graduation and declining graduation rates. Appointed by the Provost to the committee to study this problem at Louisiana State University (LSU), we interviewed students who had recently dropped out and who remained enrolled but in their 5th, 6th, even 7th year for programmes intended to last 4 years. From these interviews we learned that coursework was not the primary problem. While some number of students dropped out due to what could be characterised as self-discovery issues (some said they discovered higher education was not for them), most dropped out or delayed graduation due to changes in living arrangements (marriage, children, and altered financial arrangements). To our surprise we learned that some number of undergraduates delayed graduation so they could continue to purchase LSU football tickets at a student discount price. What institutional response could have made a difference in LSU graduation rates? Extending the duration of the study was part of the problem, not its solution.

- ⁹ The emphasis remains on the university, except for the students, unless they are embedded in the phrase “academic and institutional culture”.

The other key elements in improving learning in higher education – particularly raising the status of teaching, improving the level of educational expertise across the sector, and related matters of academic and institutional culture – are well known to take a long time to realise, and in fact to be resistant to change. Adopting a more effective curriculum structure may consequently be one of the most pragmatic and achievable approaches to improving higher education performance (CHE, 2013, p. 105).

Remedial education has failed to improve graduation rates in U.S. community colleges (two-year, often vocational institutions) and/or in second-tier state universities, where even after six years, fewer than 25% of their students have graduated. Regarding the former kind of institution: six years after their enrolment, only about a third of California community-college students have completed a degree, about half have dropped out, and around 15% are still enrolled. National studies report similar results (see Quiggin, 2014, B4–B5).

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- ¹⁰ At one point the authors inadvertently undermine their position of curriculum-structure-as-pivotal when they cite “a rapid rise in intellectual maturity that academic staff members often observe in students in the final year (currently the fourth year) of professional programmes” (CHE, 2013, p. 105).
- ¹¹ Why not just wait for it, then? If it were intrinsic maturation – irrespective of culture or class – why not ask everyone to take a year off between secondary and tertiary, perhaps participating in national service programmes dedicated to serving the poor? A programme of national and community service would surely be less expensive and perhaps more educational for middle-class students than prolonging university study for everyone. No, the authors are determined that curriculum structure is the ‘magic bullet,’ as when they assure us “that it enables the curriculum as a whole to be designed in ways that are responsive to the diversity of the intake and the complexity of the personal growth process” (CHE Proposal, 2013, p. 105). If the current duration isn’t responsive, extending the duration is only prolonging the torture, is it not?
- ¹² It seems much more expansive than the Bernsteinian model, evident, for instance, in Hugo’s (2010, p. 53) definition of the field: “Curriculum studies is the critical investigation of the processes involved in engaging with knowledge structures that have been designed for systematic learning.” For an overview of the field and its internal tensions, see Hoadley (2010).
- ¹³ On what basis was this distinction made? If ‘talented’ students are failing to ‘cope’ with so-called ‘traditional curricula’ – do these include science, engineering, technology? – is there research available reporting the reasons these students reported for their failure? Were students in fact consulted? Were the faculty interviewed? There must have been such consultations but they are nowhere in evidence in the CHE Proposal.
- ¹⁴ See, for instance, Steiner-Khamsi (2012, p. 7).
- ¹⁵ For that argument see Pinar (2012, p. 65).
- ¹⁶ Signalled, apparently by the National Development Plan (NDP): see CHE Proposal, (CHE, 2013, p. 8).
- ¹⁷ Ndebele writes (CHE, 2013, p. 9): “South Africa may yet have the large numbers she desires and the quality of people to make it a leading country in the modern world.” There is no acknowledgement here of scholarly critiques of modernity, its relation to colonialism and neocolonialism, e.g. globalisation. Soudien (2010, p. 20) reminds us that “Curriculum development processes in the southern Africa region and other colonial parts of the globe, involve a forceful incorporation into the dominant ideological structures of the world.”
- ¹⁸ ‘Vague’ describes much of the rhetoric of the CHE Proposal (2013, p. 9). In discussing “standards,” for instance, we are told that adding an extra year will allow for “curriculum enhancement.” “Curriculum enhancement” is not increasing “the volume of conventional content, as this would defeat the purposes of the proposal” (p. 20), a vague phrase (“conventional content”) itself. “Curriculum enhancement” might more logically and usefully include that which improves or enriches learning, including the provision of supports (tutoring, study skills workshops, peer-support groups) for “core learning,” broadening the curriculum to include learning that is professionally and socially important in the contemporary world (such as “additional languages”) and that lays “foundations for critical citizenship” (CHE, 2013, p. 19). There is no mention of knowledge of History or the other liberal arts, surely among the “foundations” for “critical citizenship.”
- ¹⁹ Evidently “developmental” is the designation of such programmes in South Africa, and the authors dismiss them as having always been constrained by the reality or threat of stigma attaching to initiatives seen as being intended for a disadvantaged minority in the institution (CHE, 2013, p. 232). Do they imagine that enrolling everyone in extended programmes will disguise the problem? Or will the entire undergraduate experience become stigmatised? I suspect everyone will smell soon enough the new ruse.
- ²⁰ Tomkins (1986, p. 2) points out that Anglophone Canada and French Quebec have been two deeply conservative societies which shared more common values than their obvious linguistic, religious and other cultural differences implied. Historically that has translated into ambivalence regarding, if not rejection of, U.S. emphases upon vocationalism (see, for instance, Tomkins, 1986, pp. 6, 61, 249, 287, 360, 440).
- ²¹ Njabulo S Ndebele laments the brake on the momentum of the desire to craft an undergraduate system that delivers on a demanding constitutional mandate to achieve a successful post-apartheid society.

- Whose fantasy is it that the university education can fulfil the promises of a ‘post-apartheid society’ when government, business, the courts, and the church have failed to do so?
- ²² The strategy seems parallel to that used against schoolteachers. Hoadley (2010, p. 164) points out: Failures in curriculum implementation are placed at the feet of teachers, and as teacher trainers they are repositioned to repair the situation. A distinct hierarchy as well as positions of power [are they not the same?] and control are thus established between the state, teacher education, and teachers. This hierarchy has been in place for a very long time. There is some continuity in the relationship between the universities in this case and the state under Apartheid.
- ²³ For instance, one thinks of the students themselves, for instance, whether they bother to study or have slept or eaten a proper breakfast. What about tutors for those in trouble? These obvious considerations are nowhere in sight in what seems from the outset a single-item agenda.
- ²⁴ Evidence-less assertions structure the Proposal. The reader is assured: On the basis of extensive analysis, the Task Team has concluded that modifying the existing undergraduate curriculum structure is an essential condition for substantial improvement of graduate output and outcomes (CHE Proposal, CHE, 2013, p. 16). No evidence is provided. Then we are told that the output of higher education is not meeting the country’s needs (CHE Proposal, p. 16), but no evidence is provided.
- ²⁵ Certainly that is the case in the U.S., where many now question the ‘rates of return’ on the increasingly costs of higher education in the U.S.
- ²⁶ Soudien (2010, p. 20) suggests that “It is not obvious social difference, as opposed to, say, pedagogical reforms are the central question that drives curriculum development in South and southern Africa.” No doubt social difference includes, perhaps even features, racial difference. It is not obvious to me how Bernsteinian commitments to curricular structures of verticality can be so strong as to resist the curricular incorporation of “marginalised voices”, but apparently that has evidently occurred (see Hoadley, 2010, p. 131).
- ²⁷ Both quoted phrases in the CHE Proposal, (CHE, 2013, p. 41).
- ²⁸ See, for instance, the CHE Proposal, (CHE, 2013, p. 52).
- ²⁹ Economist Coyle (2007, p. 17) judges, “To the extent that conquest laid the foundations for Western dominance, the process took several centuries. There was no billiard-ball sequence of cause and consequence. The interplay between ideas, technology, conquest, and economic success is subtler than that.” Coyle (2007, p. 37) continues “Rather, getting an economy expanding in the way the rich countries already have for the past 200 years depends on a complex sequence of decision and policies, involving many partners and depending on past choices, current resources, and pure luck.” What is the role of education in economic growth? While Coyle (2007, p. 50) acknowledges associating the two makes “intuitive sense,” in terms of economic history there is no demonstrable causal relation. She points out “Yet education cannot have been decisive during the Industrial Revolution, when literacy levels were low, and many innovators hadn’t been to school at all” (Coyle, 2007, p. 51). See also Pinar (2012, p. 24).
- ³⁰ In that essay from which the epigraph is drawn, Le Grange (2010, p. 196) even accepts aspects of “outcomes-based education,” as long as the outcomes stipulated are welcomed: I have suggested that a more rhizomatic view of outcomes, knowledge, and outcomes-based education could begin to include that which is excluded (the null curriculum) and bring it into the conversation, and make it part of the activities of the activities in South African classrooms (issues such as race, gender, sexual orientation, cultural inclusivity, Africanisation of knowledge, etc.).
- ³¹ In point #12 the authors begin “in welcoming the CHE Proposal,” then plead for time. (As obvious as it is by now, I recommend rejecting the CHE Proposal.) In their point #14 they welcome its “remedial objectives” as “worthwhile” – thereby implicitly accepting the Proposal’s unsupported claim that low graduation rates are due to academic reasons – they themselves characterise these carefully as “currently perceived shortcomings attributed to under-preparedness” – then offer to become more enthusiastic if the “reform” is an opportunity to contest “the inherited British/Western canon with its embedded knowledge biases.” There is no need to bargain; that canon is a casualty of neoliberal ‘reform’ focused on employability. So is any affirmation of indigenous African traditions, but the “British/Western canon” is being swept away in the tsunami of economism: see Williamson (2013).

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³² UKZN Response, (UKZN, 2013, p. 1), point #2.

³³ The UKZN faculty point out:

Hence, it should be possible, for example, for a University to transform its undergraduate curriculum to include a common first semester curriculum in say each of the BCom or BSc, or indeed across a cluster of Bachelor degrees in a College; or to structure an extended curriculum that is more appropriate to a research-led university; or one that integrates indigenous languages and knowledge systems or community engagement.

As they point out, two sentences later, such revision requires institutional autonomy, not systemic decrees.

³⁴ See Koopman (2013) for how historical knowledge can function to problematize.

³⁵ For an account of China's K-12 curriculum reform, see Pinar (2014). For its vulnerability to corporate appropriation, see Pinar (in press).

³⁶ Corporations are undemocratic governments, as the great Canadian philosopher George Grant pointed out. That becomes chillingly clear in Ben Williamson's depiction of the forecast future of curriculum. As South African school reform reminds, embracing neoliberal principles of flexibility can itself precipitate a crisis as it installs authoritarianism, if by another name, an Orwellian move the UKZN Response seems to recognise in its point #8.

³⁷ Waghid (2010, p. 202) writes "Students seem to have become consumed with a market-oriented 'logic' of learning. Most of the students I have worked with started off by claiming that they needed to be 'reskilled,' to 'improve their qualifications', to 'become more marketable'." Facing 'customers' not 'students' is not limited to South Africa, of course. Teaching in an elite university in the United States, Roth (2014, p. 1) admits that "many undergraduates behave like consumers".

³⁸ It is a curriculum with outcomes of course, but ones that cannot be specified in advance. Waghid (2010, p. 209) confides: "I feel myself loving my students, when I care for them in a way that evokes their potentialities in order that they come up with possibilities I might not even have thought of."

³⁹ Wayne Hugo (2010, p. 57) emphasises that "systematic learning within an organised knowledge structure is about ... increasing levels of complexity with an underlying increase in automaticity."

⁴⁰ Eiland and Jennings (2014, pp. 211–212) chronicling the intellectual life history of Walter Benjamin, discuss his 1920s essay "Naples" wherein, they note, "there is no discursive through-argumentation," but instead "paragraph-length clusters of thought revolving around a central idea." The curricular design point here is to enact textually – and pedagogically – a creative tensionality that invites contemplation and experimentation. Hugo (2010, p. 64) acknowledges "Organised knowledge structures can be combinations of explicit, implicit, vertical, and horizontal."

⁴¹ Hugo (2010, p. 63) argues "The importance of clear textbooks, time on task, repetition of key elements, and knowledgeable teachers who are aware of the various paths upwards and how to get there cannot be overemphasised." Surely he would agree that creativity, originality, independence of thought, and capacity for improvisation are also among the indispensable elements of the complicated conversation that is the curriculum. In practice, Ramrathan (2010, 111) recounts: "Curriculum design was, therefore, a response to a range of drivers and initiatives, some from national agendas, some from individuals, and some from institutions."

⁴² This is a point for which data was provided: "According to HEMIS data, in the period 2000–2010 student enrolment grew by 52% but the increase in FTE academic staffing for the same period was 21%" (CHE, 2013, p. 145).

⁴³ The authors endorse renewed attention to teaching, but what they mean is less teaching – face-to-face encounters in classrooms – and more online learning. "There is no doubt that innovative pedagogy which makes appropriate use of new technologies will make a further positive contribution to the potential success of the four-year curriculum, both academically and in terms of developing the desired attributes in our students" (CHE, 2013, p. 232). As Ramrathan (2010, p. 109) notes "There seems to be an excessive enthusiasm about the potential computers can offer."

⁴⁴ It is psychological as well as intellectual labour, requiring close and ongoing dialogical encounter with students, as Jansen (2009, p. 259) suggests: "The goal of a post-conflict pedagogy under these circumstances is first, to understand the emotional, psychological, and spiritual burden of indirect

- knowledge carried by all sides in the aftermath of conflict.” Conflict continues I suspect, and working it through academic studies in the liberal arts discloses unexpected passages from the present to a truly post-conflict era.
- ⁴⁵ One such intersection was within the academic field of education. Le Grange (2010, p. 183) acknowledges that “Didactic theory in [apartheid] South Africa was closely intertwined with Fundamental Pedagogics.” Hugo (2010, p. 54) notes that “A history of curriculum studies in South Africa that seriously engages with the powerful work done by Afrikaaner racists in a way that does not dismiss their contribution because of their ‘fascism’ still has to be written during the post-Apartheid era.” Dismissal does not enable ‘working through’ the past, which must be reactivated and engaged. Moreover, despite unforgivable disparities between European ideals and actions, there are ancient Greek traditions that construe, as Roth (2014, p. 3) reminds us, education as ‘liberating, requiring freedom to study and aiming at freedom through understanding.’ That is ‘liberal’ not vocational education, education that emphasises critique and inquiry but also a willingness to engage the past, however unjust, as a prerequisite to understanding the present.
- ⁴⁶ Le Grange (2010, p. 84) remembers, referencing a key concept of Paulo Freire: “People’s Education involved a process of conscientisation, that would help children to better understand their past, their present, and provide hope for the future.”
- ⁴⁷ Discussing Ralph Waldo Emerson (and the American tradition of liberal learning), Roth (2014, p. 50) acknowledges “education as finding ways to allow the past to push us forward”.
- ⁴⁸ Joel Spring (2008, p. 339) reports, “In contrast to the focus on increasing educational opportunities to prepare needed workers for the knowledge economy, there is some research evidence that suggests that there is an oversupply of higher education graduates.”
- ⁴⁹ Roth (2014, p. 67) comments, “Education is for human development, human freedom, not the moulding of an individual into a being who can perform a particular task. That would be slavery.... To focus all black education on trades and commerce in the early years of the twentieth century made little sense to Du Bois”.
- ⁵⁰ Roth (2014, pp. 77–78) elaborates, noting that Du Bois acknowledged the “powerful links between a broad education and self-assertion, between self-reliance and freedom. But Du Bois added a deep social connection to their emphasis on individual freedom. Technical competence was not to be disparaged, but neither should it be allowed to overshadow the form of education through which citizens discovered their humanity and their power to act on it.” Cosmopolitanism is cultivated subjectively, through sustained academic study.

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William Pinar
Faculty of Education
University of British Columbia, Canada

JULIA PREECE

10. MEDIATING POWER THROUGH A PEDAGOGY OF DIALOGUE AND LISTENING IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how a pedagogy of dialogue and listening through community engagement (CE) can be used as a community-led teaching and learning strategy. It is argued that this pedagogy can facilitate mutually beneficial student-community relationships which contribute to new knowledge building. This chapter starts from the premise that higher education is a public good, in that it should be a resource for contributing to societal development. Its third mission of CE is the most well-known exposition of that public good. Higher education in South Africa commonly employs service learning as a curriculum and pedagogical strategy for CE. The curriculum focus in service learning is on the student's application of learned theory to address community needs and the pedagogy draws on experiential learning theory. But this form of service learning tends to be individualistic and university-led, whereby students are assessed by their academic class teacher on how they express their self-identified learning as a result of their community placement. The experiential learning cycle does not necessarily create opportunities for a more dialogic process of sharing or co-creating knowledge. It also fails to explore the differential power dynamics between the university and the community members with whom the university is engaging.

This chapter reflects on a recently completed action research project that explored the relationship between a more community-led approach to service learning and the role of dialogue as a core pedagogical tool for capturing the mutual learning potential in the service learning curriculum.

This chapter first positions higher education as a public good, often articulated through CE. This is followed by an exploration of service learning as a higher education curriculum for CE and service learning as a pedagogy. A number of concepts and perspectives are then introduced as the basis for a service learning pedagogy that takes us beyond the normative experiential learning cycle. These concepts are: pedagogy as dialogue, adaptive leadership, and power. These concepts and perspectives emphasise that listening is a central activity which mediates power and knowledge sharing. The chapter then outlines the action research project which endeavoured to apply these ideas across a number of small-scale case

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studies. The analysis of community and student voices explores power dynamics and ways in which the participants contributed to knowledge sharing and new insights. It is argued that a pedagogy of listening to multiple voices contributes to building socially-useful knowledge in and outside the university curriculum. But listening and dialogue are skills that also have to be learned by all participants.

HIGHER EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD

The debate as to whether higher education is a public or private good (Morgan, 2014) speaks directly to South Africa's post-apartheid commitments to be seen as part of the globalised market alongside its concerns to build a new, more egalitarian society that erases the inequities of the past: "Graduates must not only fill vital functions in the economy but must also carry other social and civic roles and responsibilities" (Sehoole & de Wit, 2014, p. 229). In other words, the benefits of university education accrue to more than just the individual who is able to access that education. A university graduate is expected to be more committed to engaging in citizenship responsibilities and national development than someone who has not been to university (Howard, 2014).

Nation building and social cohesion are core aspirations for universities in South Africa's National Development Plan (Republic of South Africa, 2012). Its post-apartheid White Paper for Higher Education (Department of Education, 1997) commits higher education to serving the public good through civic responsibility and this is reiterated in a number of subsequent documents (for example Department of Education, 2001; Council on Higher Education, 2006, 2009; Department for Higher Education & Training, 2013). All have explicitly referred to the need for South African universities to nurture cultural tolerance and civic responsibility through community service learning (SL) opportunities. SL is framed within a broader notion of CE. Space does not permit an academic exposition of 'community' but suffice to say that for the purpose of this chapter, the 'community' consists of the populace outside the university, represented through non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and their client groups. At the same time, it has been strongly argued that higher education's contribution to CE should be seen as a scholarly activity (Council on Higher Education, 2009; DHET, 2013).

SERVICE LEARNING AS A HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Precisely what constitutes 'the curriculum' has been subject to much debate (Hoadley & Jansen, 2009; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). It is now widely recognised that the intended curriculum (a plan of prescribed learning and teaching) can differ widely from the enacted curriculum (what happens in practice). And within the enacted curriculum we can experience both covert (deliberately intended value-laden messages) and hidden content (unintended or unconsciously conveyed values

from the implementer that interface with the values of the learner). The curriculum, therefore, is embedded in ideologies about the world. How it is delivered depends on the intended theories and philosophies of the planners and also on the internalised values of the implementers.

Service learning is usually embedded within the university's teaching and research portfolios. The SL curriculum within higher education is distinctive in that it is arguably premised within a progressivism philosophy which supports an interdisciplinary, problem solving approach whereby the teacher is a facilitator of activities which are planned with the learner (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). It adopts what Hoadley and Jansen (2009, p. 56) have explained as a "process approach" which focuses on how learners learn through interaction with their teachers, rather than a more linear focus on imparting content that can be assessed objectively. As Roodin, Brown and Shedlock (2013, p. 34) emphasise, SL is

a pedagogy first and foremost, one that incorporates community service opportunities into the curriculum.

It is hailed as a "counter-normative pedagogy" which stimulates new forms of experience-based learning, nurtures social responsibility and a commitment to the broader social good, rather than focusing on the more individualistic nature of traditional learning (Howard, 1998).

As an aspect of CE SL is also expected to function as a mutually beneficial relationship between community and university (Hatcher & Erasmus, 2008). O'Brien (2009) for instance, argues that SL needs to be part of a more meaningful, lasting partnership relationship with relevant community stakeholders. Nevertheless, the impact of the engagement on the community itself, even though the students may be designated as community change agents (Cress, 2006), is often not assessed.

The actual experiences of working in SL contexts, where learning spaces are wide and varied, mean that the curriculum-as-enacted operates at multiple levels with multiple role players. The student is both a recipient of learning from the class tutor and the community experience, but the student may also be a facilitator of learning within that community context. The curriculum in SL, therefore, is multi-layered.

SL PEDAGOGY

The SL curriculum as a plan, embraces the process approach. The most frequently used philosophy for SL pedagogy cites John Dewey's concept of experiential and reflective learning, and Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism, which inform Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Hlengwa, 2010; Preece & Manicom, 2015; Eubank, Geffken, & Orzano, 2012; Mason O'Connor, McEwen, Owen, Lynch, & Hill, 2011; Carolina Center for Public Service, 2012; Hatcher & Erasmus, 2008; Bender & Jordaan, 2007; Bringle & Hatcher, 2005). Kolb's learning cycle involves a cyclical process of action (concrete experience), reflection, analysis (conceptualisation), and informed re-action (active experimentation). This is based

on the premise that our learning evolves schematically through building on previous experiences (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). It has become a popular framework for managing problem-based learning and practical application of theory. In the SL context it is seen as a radical alternative to the conventional lecture-based uni-directional teaching method that characterises much of higher education. It also moves us beyond seminar discussions which are lecturer controlled. In the experiential learning cycle students are encouraged to be in charge of their own learning by applying what they know, reflecting on what they have learned and forming new understandings as a result of this reflective process. The student's own documentation of their experience is then assessed for credit purposes. The role of the course lecturer is one of facilitator to encourage reflection and expression of new learning.

But this experiential learning cycle pedagogy for SL has its limitations. It is entirely focused on the student and the student's relationship with the university curriculum. Although the SL pedagogy emphasises mutuality and reciprocity it hardly recognises the pedagogical role of the community. Nor does the literature discuss the pedagogic role of the student in the SL relationship – other than to express their involvement as applying theory to practice. So the student-community pedagogic relationship – though crucial – is not discussed.

The often quoted definition of Bringle and Hatcher (1995, p. 112), for example, summarises this expectation. SL is:

... a credit bearing, educational, experience in which students participate in an organised service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

There are variations on this definition, such as Stellenbosch University's definition (Stellenbosch University, 2009, p. 2):

An educational approach involving curriculum-based, credit-bearing learning experiences in which students (a) participate in contextualised, well-structured and organised service activities aimed at addressing identified service needs in a community, and (b) reflect on these service experiences in order to gain a deeper understanding of the linkage between curriculum content and community dynamics, as well as achieve personal growth and a sense of social responsibility. It requires a collaborative partnership context that enhances mutual, reciprocal teaching and learning among all members of the partnership (lecturers and students, members of the communities and representatives of the service sector).

In spite of Stellenbosch University's emphasis on reciprocity and collaboration, assessment still focuses on the student's identification of their own learning outcomes through the engagement experience. Neither of the above definitions implies that

the CE relationship, through SL, should be a community-led or community-defined activity.

The focus on student learning outcomes usually centres on their application of academic knowledge in real life settings and their personal growth in terms of work experience or civic responsibility. Less attention has been paid to the *way* in which learning has taken place, that is the pedagogic experience, or the *learning relationships* that contribute to a shared understanding of new knowledge.

Bender (2008) endeavours to address this issue by referring to curricular community engagement (CCE) (p. 1160) and the idea of engaged learning pedagogies in order to reflect a more collaborative knowledge construction process that is shared by educators, community members and university students. But she highlights the paucity of teaching methodologies in CCE which can capture this more holistic relationship.

Other efforts to broaden the SL pedagogical framework include Hlengwa's (2010) discussion of Bernstein's theory of classification and framing and horizontal and vertical discourse, with a focus on exploring how some disciplines lend themselves to SL more than others. Berle (2006, p. 43) talks about "incremental integration" as a process of integrating the educational goals of a university course with the educational opportunities of a service project. Berle identifies a staged process of planning and designing a project as a classroom activity to one that is developed through community consultation. Harris, Jones and Coutts (2010) argue that all participants need to show mutual respect for each other's inherent capabilities in order to address community-university power relations. They argue for a community of practice model (Wenger, 1998) whereby students work in teams that can foster an atmosphere of learning support and opportunity to learn from one another. However, the community of practice model here refers to students working together rather than working with community members themselves.

In order to capture the triad relationship of CE through SL, the pedagogy of SL needs to move beyond the classroom and the experiential learning cycle. Issues of power and multiple layers of dialogue have to be taken into account. A pedagogical concept, therefore needs to be inculcated into the students whereby they become learners and facilitators of knowledge construction within community settings. They are not merely learners who reflect on what they have learned in situ. They are also facilitators of new knowledge through a dialogic relationship with their community participants. As such they are both recipients and carriers of a complex power relationship that interfaces a number of dimensions. These include the students' symbolic authority as university knowers and their persuasive power to catalyse change by merging academic and community knowledge with their own and the community's experiences. They become, in the words of Heifetz (1994, p. 99), "adaptive leaders", dealing with problems that require dialogue and respect for a diversity of views to facilitate community responsibility for decision making.

The extent to which power and dialogue at community level are documented in relation to knowledge sharing or construction is relatively limited (for example,

Alperstein, 2007). The community voice in such an exercise is seldom heard. Similarly, as has already been mentioned, the extent to which communities ‘own’ or define the community problem to which a SL activity can contribute, is rarely documented, with implications for how far the SL relationship is a collaborative one (Preece, 2013).

PEDAGOGY AS DIALOGUE

Within the progressivist notion of curriculum theory, the radical adult educator Paulo Freire is often a source of pedagogical inspiration (Gravett, 2001), particularly in non-formal learning contexts – which is where much of the SL activities take place. For Freire, the teacher is a mediator of, and participant in, the learning process. The curriculum content becomes an ongoing learning process that is sensitive to context and based on the needs and interests of learners. Although, for Freire, the curriculum value base was overtly political, with the aim to emancipate the oppressed from their hegemonic sense of reality, the basic principles behind his pedagogic process have wider applicability – particularly through the notion of pedagogy as dialogue.

Freire’s most famous work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1972), provides an explanation of the role of dialogue in stimulating a critical awareness which can lead to action for change. Here he emphasises the focus on a “horizontal relationship”, the need for “mutual trust” (p. 64) between all participants and a sensitised understanding of context in the learning environment as the foundation for dialogue. The teacher’s role is as a co-learner but also facilitator of new learning through encouraging questions and “seeking out reality together” (p. 80). Before the dialogic relationship can flourish, the educators must first familiarise themselves with the learners’ environment “acting as sympathetic observers with an attitude of understanding what they see” (p. 82), with a view to re-presenting that environment back to the learners in order to encourage them to re-visit their own context. The dialogic exchange will then facilitate enhanced understanding so that participants learn to “perceive reality differently” (p. 86). So while the facilitator listens to individuals, those same individuals will be encouraged to re-think their situation by posing questions rather than giving answers to identified problems.

Dialogue as a form of teacher-student interaction has been promoted in school classrooms as a way of engaging learners and involving them in helping to shape the curriculum (Skidmore, 2006). In this respect there is a conscious effort to transform classroom teaching from that of “banking education” (Freire, 1972), whereby learners are seen as empty vessels into which knowledge is poured. For SL students the classroom is in part, at least, the community context. Their interactions are with community members as well as their lecturer on a weekly basis. Their dialogues are multi-layered across these different dimensions.

Gravett (2001) refers to Freire’s concept of dialogue within broader adult learning theory, particularly drawing on Vygotsky’s notion of social constructivism,

Mezirow's transformative learning theory and Habermas' communicative theory. These theories all share common ideas that learning is situational, and meaning making is linked to previous experience. Mezirow (2000, p. 10), for instance, refers to the use of dialogue as a means of "searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation". Dialogue and listening are the tools for engaging with that learning as a shared endeavour. Gravett refers to dialogue as a "process of negotiation" (p. 20). Meanings are constructed and mediated through dialogue. Through the teacher-learner relationship dialogue is a process of "cooperative and reciprocal inquiry" (p. 22). The relationship is one of mutual respect and reasoning together. Trust and credibility, and a non-judgemental attitude, are the essential features of the facilitator who must be willing to learn as well as provide his or her own insights. The facilitator, through listening, sharing, and asking questions, enables the learner to see how their different experiences, and sets of knowledge or meanings interrelate. Learning is thus an interdisciplinary, rather than discipline-specific experience which focuses on a problem to be solved or addressed. Knowledge is co-constructed through reflection and making links with existing schema or understandings. New knowledge is created in context and is relevant to a particular set of purposes or understandings. For Gravett, the focus is on "how much can be learned and not on how much information can be covered" (p. 52). Applefield (2001) links this interactive process, whereby "learners both refine their own meanings and help others find meaning" (p. 38), to Vygotsky's socio cultural theory of learning. Applefield, too, emphasises that dialogue is the "catalyst for knowledge acquisition" (p. 38) but positions that knowledge as situated in the particular context in which it is learned.

Such knowledge has been referred to by Gibbons (2006) and Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons (2003) as Mode 2 knowledge. Gibbons distinguishes this from Mode 1 knowledge which is understood as "reliable knowledge". This represents discipline specific knowledge which has not necessarily been applied in context. Mode 2 knowledge, or "socially robust knowledge" on the other hand, has emerged more organically from practice and is more trustworthy because it has been tested and constructed in context and has been formed through dialogue and collaboration *in situ* (Erasmus, 2007), or as Nowotny et al. (2003, p. 192) explain, in the agora.

Although Barnett (2004, p. 251) suggests that universities should be striving for a "Mode 3 knowledge" that takes us beyond the local into a world of super-complexity, where there are no finite solutions to problems, he acknowledges that a pedagogy for Mode 2 knowledge may be an interim step into learning for an unknown future.

In the university CE context, SL is a potential resource for facilitating change and new ideas among communities. But it is also a medium for enabling students to learn and gain understanding of how to apply knowledge in reality situations. In the SL context the student is often given the role of change agent, albeit on a small scale. S/he may be both facilitator of such learning and learner of how to apply theoretical knowledge in reality contexts.

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

This additional, change agent role that students play prompts the need for an expansion of the SL pedagogy to include concepts which embrace this wider learning environment. Recent interest has been generated in the application of adaptive leadership as a strategy and analytical tool in exploring the extent to which university CE activities facilitate, rather than impose new knowledge in community settings (Stephenson, 2011; Preece, 2013). Heifetz (1994, p. 99), in similar fashion to Barnett's concerns with a world of super-complexity, defines the context in which such knowledge construction takes place as either Type II ("defined problem, no clear cut solution") or Type III ("ill-defined problem") where there is no easy technical solution. In such situations dialogue, which builds on past ideas in order to examine what is no longer useful, becomes a pedagogical resource to shape shared awareness and interest in responding to new ideas. Although Heifetz is an organisational management theorist, his ideas have relevance for the community-based pedagogic process which is concerned with change implementation. In this approach, the core focus for the university-student-community relationship is to clarify competing goals and values between the various layers of participants. At the same time, it is important to maintain community ownership over interpreting and defining solutions to their own problems. Heifetz shifts the power-based notion of leadership from that of having authority to know to one that sees leadership as a facilitative practice that can be used where there is need to focus collaboratively on change.

Addressing such problems entails ongoing dialogue, compromises, and clarification of competing goals and values among the participating actors. Thus Heifetz places a premium on listening to diverse views.

Listening is an essential feature of dialogue if new learning is to take place. A pedagogy of listening has been referred to by Renaldi (2001) as a process of searching for meaning whereby the teacher illustrates respect for others by giving legitimacy to their voices. Dorsey (2009) includes the same principles in her study of classroom teaching as dialogue. Asking questions and valuing different perspectives is core to these principles, with a view to shifting the focus of power in learning contexts. The focus of these authors is on classroom teaching of children, but the principles, of course, apply more widely than that. Increasingly, the traditional teacher-to-student mode of education is being critiqued at all levels, including higher education (Wharton, Goodwin, & Cameron, 2014). The need for a more problem based, holistic approach to learning in universities was articulated by the Association of African Universities (AAU) in 2004 in its regional survey of public higher education institutions in Africa (AAU, 2004).

Dialogue has been critiqued for its less than emancipatory potential as a form of critical pedagogy (Burbules, 2000), or its mistaken association with an ethics of care (Bartlett, 2005). This is because it may become the victim of its own rhetoric, whereby not all learners feel equally empowered to interact, particularly if the interaction is too challenging or requires a particular kind of interactive language or

style. However, in small-scale SL projects, the dialogue is more akin to a pedagogy of listening, rather than adversarial, with a view to including multiple voices. An important consideration in this process is the management of power relations, especially since participants in CE relationships may carry with them vastly differing notions of their legitimacy or authority to know.

POWER

A useful summary of power is provided by Jarvis (2008, pp. 31–32) who reviews various perspectives on power as an ethical concern in relation to the learning society. He recognises it as an individual and societal issue which is fundamentally a relationship in which we all engage. Citing authors such as Stephen Lukes and Michel Foucault, leading theorists on conceptions of power, he concludes that there are five forms of power. The first is economic power in the form of material and financial resources. The second is authoritative power expressed as political (but also reflecting the university's claim over authoritative knowledge). Coercive power manifests as physical force and the fourth, symbolic power, is expressed through information and communication systems (including, it can be argued the educational curriculum). Finally, with persuasive power people “learn and conform to what they are informed” (p. 32). The latter is pertinent to Foucault's notion of disciplinary power and the Habermasian notion of hegemony whereby power is often manifested as an unconscious act of compliance. Authoritative power is also expressed by Foucault (1980) as power/knowledge whereby he distinguishes between dominant forms of knowledge and “subjugated knowledge” – a feature that is pertinent to the CE agenda to co-create and share knowledge. Power can also be positive – a perspective that is reflected in some of the community comments in the ensuing action research case studies. Nevertheless, the political, symbolic and persuasive forms of power are often expressed unconsciously and reflect the communication spaces between university staff, their students and community members. As such, it requires a conscious effort to be sensitive to how these power relationships play out in daily interactions between the different university and community actors.

With these considerations in mind, the author of this chapter analyses the findings of a recently completed action research project at UKZN funded by the National Research Foundation of South Africa and the University between 2012 and 2014. The project explored the challenges and potential of developing community-led, small-scale SL projects. Three case studies have been selected here as exemplars of different pedagogical processes for creating an agora for dialogue and knowledge sharing.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Action research focuses on research intervention for implementation, rather than simply a data collection process. The inquiry process is cyclical. It includes action

planning, data collection, analysis and communication of outcomes to stakeholders followed by further action in response to stakeholder discussions in order to improve or resolve the issue under investigation (Stringer, 2004).

To reflect that process each phase of the action research applied four stages: initial consultative meetings with community-based NGOs, a planning process involving negotiations between community and university stakeholders, and an implementation phase that was evaluated, followed by a fourth stage of stakeholder consultation and policy recommendations. Each SL project became a “case” (Rule & John, 2010, p. 4). The case studies in this instance represented units of study, products of investigation and also a methodological process (Rule & John, 2010, p. 5). Their purpose was primarily explanatory (Yin, 2003) in that the research project was attempting to explain what was happening in each context. But there was also a comparative element to the case studies, to strengthen understanding of the findings in relation to the research questions and counter criticisms regarding lack of generalisability for case study investigations. Over the two-year period a total of 11 cases were investigated.

The case studies reported here are from the second and final phase which developed its theoretical focus on dialogue and adaptive leadership in response to the analysis of phase one. The research question pertinent to this chapter was: To what extent did a pedagogy of dialogue and listening in the SL projects facilitate sharing and co-creation of knowledge?

The criteria for inclusion in the research project were that the project tasks were to be defined by the NGO, required two or more students to work together, and could be completed within the SL timeframe of approximately six weeks. In the case studies presented here students were expected to facilitate change as one of their goals. The cases therefore provided an opportunity to explore the dynamics of pedagogy and power relations between students and community members.

THE CASE STUDIES

The table below summarises the projects and participants.

Case study one (CS1), an early child development project, managed by a community college, trains unemployed grass roots community members of a peri-urban township to facilitate a morning crèche for children whose parents are either too poor to afford or situated too far from the township’s pre-school. The crèche takes place on residents’ premises. An initial meeting between two students, the college trainer, the crèche coordinator and community facilitators established which facilitator would work with the students, the aims of the crèche and the days on which the students would participate as co-facilitators. Parents were not involved in these discussions though two attended the activities and were subsequently interviewed.

Case study two (CS2) entailed a request from a city-based activist NGO for assistance in archiving and cataloguing a large resource of videos that addressed a number of community issues. The NGO invited the two students to create an

MEDIATING POWER THROUGH A PEDAGOGY OF DIALOGUE

Table 10.1. Summary of SL projects

<i>Project</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Community members interviewed</i>	<i>Task</i>
CS1: Early child development project	Year 3 Education and Development students (S1 & S2)	Community coordinator (CC) Community facilitator (CF) Parents (P1 & P2)	Assist in facilitating and improving non-formal crèche activities in garden of a township house
CS2: Umbrella NGO for social justice	Post graduate Library and Information Studies students (S1 & S2)	NGO staff (NGO1 & 2)	Create an archive system of NGO films for access and use in a variety of community contexts
CS3: Gender and sexuality activist NGO	Year 3 Education and Development students (S1, S2 & S3); Policy Studies students (S4 & S5)	NGO director and assistant (NGO1 & 2)	Receive training in gender and sexuality issues in order to run community-based awareness workshops

accessible filing system in consultation with NGO staff so that staff could use the videos as a resource for themselves and their client groups.

Case study three (CS3) was initiated by a recently established gender and sexuality NGO who wanted to broaden their human resource pool for running awareness raising workshops in communities with a view to changing attitudes about sexuality issues. They offered to include students in a facilitator training workshop with the expectation that the students would in turn facilitate workshops for them.

Research assistants were assigned to record initial meetings between students and their community contacts, make follow up visits during the SL activities and interview relevant community members and students on completion of the project. For case study one, the interviews were conducted in the local language of isiZulu and then translated by the research assistant. For case studies two and three, interviews were conducted in English. These interviews were recorded and transcribed, then read in depth by the research team in order generate themes for analysis. The themes were analysed further through the conceptual lenses of dialogue and adaptive leadership.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Dialogue and Listening

Selected quotes presented here were analysed in relation to the role of dialogue. Dialogue was used as an initial point of clarification and for ongoing clarification throughout the project duration. The extent to which students learned to listen as

facilitators and learners varied across the projects. A typical clarification stage was reflected in the following exchange between students and the NGO for CS2:

- NGO1: Do you also understand the project to be something similar to that?
S1: The cataloguing part, ja. But we didn't know about having to watch the actual video footage and having to identify...
NGO1: Ja,ja. You didn't realise that that was actually part of it. Ja, you actually have to watch it, identify it, then catalogue it. Mmm, how do you feel about that now, now that you know? Are you still interested?
S1: Ja, we're interested.
S2: Ja, because we are willing to learn.
NGO1: What days of the week would you think you are free on?
S1: Mmm, Wednesdays we are free the whole day.... (CS2)

It was evident in subsequent interviews that the students took their listening role seriously in this case study, thus reflecting Gravett's (2001) and Freire's (1972) emphasis on asking questions rather than imposing solutions:

The students do not limit themselves, they ask questions on whatever it is that they don't understand or are interested in and organisation related matters. What I like the most is that they ask a lot of questions about work, job opportunities and the particular tasks that they have been given (CS2, NGO2).

It was also evident that the dialogue in a community setting required ongoing clarification, as reflected in Heifetz's (1994) notion of adaptive leadership:

Some of the staff members weren't well informed on what we were doing as the students. So you would find that a person comes to you, they don't know what you're doing then they'll tell you something different then you get that sort of confusion (CS2, S1).

The students understood the pedagogic premium of listening to community members as a resource to maximise the use of their own knowledge:

What I learnt is that ... at work there will be people who will be coming from different disciplines, and they must be able to listen to each other, and what I learnt is that, mmm. It helps to listen to people who have more experience than you, and it helps to ask instead of relying on your theoretical knowledge (CS2 S1).

In CS3 the initial clarification process did not take place between the students and the NGO. It was merely relayed back to the students:

The set-up of the project it was planned by the university and the organisation; as the students we were just told on what to do and we were given like a schedule of where and how, we were not involved in the planning and organisation of everything (CS3, S1).

Nevertheless, the training workshops for the students were received as participatory:

It was well organised in terms of how they separated the lessons into workshops ... the whole process as it unfolded we were very much involved because it was very participatory in discussions (CS3, S2).

Although that lack of initial clarification did not at first appear to influence their own experience of being trained, it became apparent as time went on that the initial failure to clarify competing goals and values would impact on the extent to which the students could become change agents and run their own workshops according to the NGO's original plan:

The only challenge in communication was when we had to find out when we were going for [community training] workshops it kind of clashed with everything because ... the exams were coming so it was a hassle with communication because we couldn't reach T__ who was the project manager, so I think that was our communication challenge (CS3, S3).

In CS1, the students met with the NGO leader and the child development facilitators in the township prior to starting their placement. They were given a full briefing about what kind of activities would be expected and were allocated a facilitator with whom to work. It was emphasised that they should be learning from one another and the students were encouraged to try and involve the township parents in the crèche activities. The students were therefore expected to dialogue at a range of different levels, with the crèche facilitator, the children, the parents and the NGO manager. They reported mixed experiences. Between themselves they shared ideas:

We met on Monday ... we would write all our ideas down and then discuss that, and maybe say "this one we won't be able to feature it because of this" and then we decided "OK let's choose this one" (CS1, S1).

With the community facilitator, they had to learn a different set of communication skills. At first, they struggled to engage:

We didn't know how to do certain things with her [the community-based child development facilitator], how do we engage with her in doing something because ... we took the plastics to her and said, "Here are the plastics what should we do?" ... and she was like "Eish, I don't know as well" (CS1, S2).

But gradually they learned to introduce their ideas in a more collaborative relationship and the role of listening became a shared endeavour as articulated by the community facilitator and coordinator:

We had different ideas and worked in a good partnership ... we used to discuss things; agree that they can take over now. They would tell the story they prepared and I would also tell some of their stories that they've told (CS1, CF);

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They [students] just joined in. Sometimes we gave them a day from the beginning to start everything since they have seen [what to do], then let it be their day to do everything. They did it well, I must say ... I learned that if you are teaching each other, we have to listen to each other and accept each other ... the main thing is to work together equally and in harmony ... we worked well together. It was nice (CS1, CC).

There was evidence, therefore, that the students and community members were performing a multi-layered role whereby they became co-learners but also facilitators of knowledge (Freire, 1972). Listening and giving legitimacy to a range of voices (Renaldi, 2001) was an essential feature of this process. These dialogue dynamics, however, sometimes manifested as challenges in terms of who had authority to know, as well as how power differentials were managed between university and community participants.

Power Dynamics

In CS2, among the NGO members, students were regarded as junior colleagues in spite of their discipline-specific expertise. The nature of power, in this case required a balance between the authoritative power of the organisation, *vis a vis* the symbolic power (Jarvis, 2008) of the students' curriculum knowledge that was needed to complete their assigned task. Again, their role of listening as a core responsibility was highlighted:

Students have been able to adapt to this working environment, in my own view. Especially here in the NGO sector where everything happens fast, they were able to quickly familiarise themselves with the organisation. They were invited to the staff teas we have, here they listened to other people speaking about their work, and personal lives because the staff tea is not just about having tea. From the staff tea the students learn what it is exactly that we do in the community (CS2, NGO2).

Decision making was delegated according to status within the organisation:

N__, being the coordinator of the project, took the major decisions and the smaller decisions on how the work was done were taken amongst me and S__ (CS2, S1).

With CS3 the students were expected to initially learn from the NGO, with the intention that they would then become facilitators for the wider community on behalf of the NGO. In this case the NGO demonstrated authoritative and symbolic power:

Their role was to give us training on facilitation and also like to make us understand what they face in the community as they are LGBTI community so we have to get the understanding of gender and sexuality and how the community reacts (CS3, S1).

Interestingly, the students themselves quickly realised that this NGO-initiated project had changed the power dynamics of who had authority to know compared with their expectations of SL projects:

My experience is that the universities have always imposed this idea of 'we are the expert' approach. This time around I think it was different, they [the university] enabled the communities, in this case the G___ Network to basically share their information with the university realms as opposed to what the universities conventionally do, which [is that] they [universities] go to the community, diagnose some certain problems and find expert ways of fixing it (CS3, S2).

Thus the students themselves realised that this was a type II or even type III problem (Heifetz, 1994) and their role as students was to contribute to the NGO's identified solution of how to address homophobia.

In CS1 the different levels of status between student and grass roots community members stimulated a range of observations about how the power dimensions impacted on their working relationship. For instance, the students first had to recognise that such power dynamics existed:

As a student, when I'm here [in the university] I see myself as a nobody, but then when you get to places with people [in community settings] being a student is a big thing (CS1, S1).

Then they realised that this power dimension needed their sensitivity, humility and respect:

What I learned was the facilitators they take this job very seriously, it is kinda like it's their baby, and if someone else from the outside tries to intrude somewhere ... you are attacking them personally so ... if you want to intervene ... do it in a way that ... does not seem as if you are attacking them, in a way that we are here to learn (CS1, S2).

As a result, the students' representative status of political power could be used to good advantage amongst grass roots community members, so that they were enabled to at least partially fulfil their role as change agents. There was a sense in this case that the university represented persuasive and symbolic power (Jarvis, 2008). The community's perception of the university's involvement thus legitimised their activities:

We were very happy to be with you [students] and the children also saw – and I also saw that I am also important ... the children and parents saw that this is a legitimate thing ... we wish that you people could come back again because your presence has been noted by the parents ... Your presence helped because some parents thought this was just a game. Some even refused to allow their children to come ... now they saw that this thing of teaching from home is

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serious ... because of the students that came and brought some of their things as well, and they saw. The children kept their stars as well ... they made a star for a child that did well (CS1, CF).

The students on the other hand also learned to recognise the Foucauldian (1980) notion of subjugated knowledge as a result of their willingness to adopt a pedagogy of listening and mutual searching for meaning. Their final observation was one of recognition of how communities use their own resources to find solutions to their own problems:

The role they [community facilitators] play is ... a very empowering role ... even though they know that they have nothing at all in life but they see that they can do something with their lives ... the parents of the children they are teaching trust them ... even though they know that they are not qualified teachers (CS1, S1).

The mutual respect that was generated through dialogue and listening stimulated changed attitudes among all the participants. The SL time frames limited the extent to which observable change could be recorded, but there were some positive indicators.

Change

The adaptive leadership concept emphasises that change should be facilitated rather than imposed (Stephenson, 2011) through a process of shaping shared awareness. In these case studies this was often a two-way process. For CS1 some parents indicated that they would now consider playing a role in the crèche activities:

No I haven't played any role [in the crèche] ... but now that you have asked me this you have motivated me to start taking part (CS1, P1).

In CS2 the students' newly acquired knowledge and enhanced understanding meant that they themselves had changed:

It was hard for me at first, cos I had the problem of being homophobic ... now I don't have that problem anymore, I can work with them, sit with them, communicate and do everything with them...yaa I have benefited very well (CS2, S1).

It also meant that, although the planned community workshops did not materialise within the SL timeframe, the students would voluntarily act as change agents within their own communities:

The community benefited from this project because now I am going to go out there to tell people about all aspects... I am going to go to church and tell them what they think homosexuality is, or maybe being gay and lesbian and intersex is not what they really think it is, and also in the community.... the broader community (CS2, S2).

For CS3, there was little evidence of change in attitudes, but the NGO could now maximise their community resource:

The things on the file are clearly labelled and are easy to find now (CS3, NGO1).

It was also evident that SL in the community agora was a pedagogical space for co-creating and sharing knowledge through the dialogic exchanges. The indications were that an emphasis on mutual listening contributed to this dynamic.

Knowledge Constructions

In some cases, students were facilitators of new knowledge, such as in CS3:

The project gains a lot in terms of the knowledge from the students. As students archive they provide education to staff members at PACSA. They explain what they are doing and how they are doing it as they go along. This makes it easier for the person who is looking for the information to find it as they know how it has been stored/archived and also allows us to be able to do this ourselves even after the students have left (CS3, NGO1).

But the students also developed an understanding of Gibbons' (2006) articulation of socially-robust knowledge which required refining curriculum-based knowledge so that it would be contextually relevant:

In a way I benefitted from what I was taught at varsity, but it is not exactly as it is put in theory because sometimes you find that you have to make exceptions, and you have to add on from your own knowledge into what you were taught, and put it into practice (CS3, S2).

Such knowledge, as Nowotny et al. (2003) argue, is not always discipline focused. In CS2 the students learned both skills and knowledge from the NGO – first in terms of employability skills such as teamwork and facilitation:

I have benefited a lot in terms of team work and I learnt a lot of things and that team work is basically a proper way of say maybe... of making things easier ... I mean also I attained a lot of skills and a lot of facilitating skills (CS2, S3).

Secondly, the students learned new concepts about gender and sexuality:

... one lesson that I actually got to appreciate is the content... I learnt more about sexuality and gender more than I ever knew and I was really ... I think it really changed... shifted the way my mind-set in terms of gender and sexuality and it taught me a lot about the words we use so much for granted without knowing what they mean (CS2, S4).

In CS1, once more it became apparent that knowledge does not always emanate from the university. Local – or, in Foucault's (1980) terms, subjugated knowledge – is a resource that needs recognition:

The experts are the people themselves ... as compared to as much as I might sit here at UKZN and learn about early childhood development and community work ... whatever I have learned at [location] for example, it is not the same. The real experts of that area, of that programme are the people that are going through that experience so ... whatever I have learned that is on paper ... we could say we are the real experts whereas we get there and introduce something that we think they need, [but] they might probably think that “no this is not for us” (CS1, S1).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In these case studies, the dialogue that is discussed here took place outside the classroom. Compromises were necessary – especially in CS3, the only project which did not follow the initial clarification exchange as advocated by Heifetz’s (1994) adaptive leadership process. But the primary goal, to build on community ideas through a facilitative leadership process of listening to diverse views, set the agenda for generating Gibbons’ (2006) concept of socially-robust, Mode 2 knowledge. The pedagogic tool, as a shared resource, was utilised by a range of participants who had to negotiate power differentials, competing agendas and expectations. All participants were teachers and learners in the spirit of a Freirian agenda for teaching and learning, whereby the students tried as much as possible to familiarise themselves with their environment “acting as sympathetic observers with an attitude of understanding what they see” (Friere, 1972, p. 82).

In two of the case studies this resulted in community members shifting their perceptions so they could see things differently. For instance, for the crèche facilitator and parents the very existence of the crèche was given a new sense of legitimacy as a result of the university’s involvement. At the same time, the educational activities themselves took on new meaning. For the archiving project, the NGO and their client community placed added value on an organised filing system and new archiving skills were learned. In the third case study the students did not manage to fulfil their original task of knowledge dissemination to the client communities, but the indications were that the students themselves had shifted their own perceptions quite radically and were now acting as voluntary change agents in their home communities.

The SL curriculum, as enacted, therefore stretched beyond the experiential learning cycle curriculum as planned. The central role of dialogue, mediated through listening, illustrated Gravett’s (2001) emphasis on dialogue as “cooperative and reciprocal inquiry” (p. 22). The students and community members’ mutual acceptance of one another was realised through a non-judgemental attitude and willingness to make meaning from a range of knowledge sources. This approach motivated participants to reason together and manage the power differentials so that subjugated knowledge (knowledge not produced by the university) mingled with academic knowledge. The co-creation of solutions to, albeit small scale problems or tasks, contributed to enhanced and shared understandings. The nature of the case

studies and their particular task focus meant that the degree to which such knowledge was co-created would vary. Nevertheless, the SL experience demonstrated that if the pedagogical focus shifts beyond the conventional experiential learning cycle to a dialogic community-led project, the curriculum focus shifts to one of shared knowledge for the public good.

It must be noted, however, that the pedagogy of dialogue and listening had to be learned by the students and sometimes community members. There were indications that, without the initial dialogue between university staff and the NGO leaders, the learning process would have been jeopardised by misunderstandings. A community-based curriculum exposes students to unpredictable learning spaces that need careful monitoring and follow-up. The action research process for these case studies facilitated a feedback loop with community members that is rarely built into SL programmes. The benefits of shared learning, therefore are often lost. If the cognitive damage of standardised teaching (as articulated in this book) is to be mitigated, even in SL programmes, then there is a need for changes in practical planning processes as well as mindsets.

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Julia Preece
University Teaching and Learning Office
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

MICHAEL ANTHONY SAMUEL

11. READING SPATIALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

This chapter extends the boundaries of higher education curriculum beyond the officially declared, formally designed programmes and the delivery strategies that are enacted within lecture halls and tutorial sessions. The chapter argues that curriculum messages are being communicated in multiple ways. This includes the ways in which the institution chooses to reflect on its own organisational self, its historical legacies, its chartering of past achievements and its mapping of the challenges and prospects for the future of the institution (*its historicity*). An institution via its archived history communicates patterns of reading its social and spatial world. These ‘messaging’ (crafted interpretations and representations) provide a reading of the spatiality of an organisation, its preferred conceptions and its values. These readings institute an embedded value-laden curriculum, exercising choices of what is celebrated and/or marginalised by particular actors. For example, an institution may choose to celebrate localised knowledges, or may opt to import from far afield divergent ways of knowing (Lefebvre, 1991). These choices are not simply confined within the official mission and vision statements of an organisation, but infuse into the syntax of the organisation how its many actors read and interpret their environment, voice their roles and functions to lead academic pursuits, and co-exist or dominate over alternative readings. The social actors are perpetual messengers of who the organisation was, is and wants to become.

This multiplicity of voices and readers constitutes an elaborated spatiality of the higher education curriculum. Our research requires more attentive examination of the variety of messages that recur within an organisation, providing insights into the ever widening “circuits of global, national and local scales” linked to everyday “ordinary” spaces and textual forms that inhabit our worlds (Fataar, 2015, p. 24). Such inhabitation is not bereft of power dynamics of competing forces. Reading the spatiality of the curriculum entails evolving evaluations of how its social actors service and silence particular agendas. At any point in the history of the organisation, it is to be expected that multiple actors and their voices infuse the curriculum space. Curriculum spatiality embeds the past, present and future (*a temporal reading*), the ideological, political and cultural conceptions of its social actors and their preferences (*an epistemological reading*), and their multiple representations of their context at specific historical moments (*a contextualised personal reading*) (Massey,

1994). It is this conception of the spatiality of educational environments, the fullness of the curriculum endeavour, its silences and emphases, and its negotiations within its operational world that is the focus of this chapter.

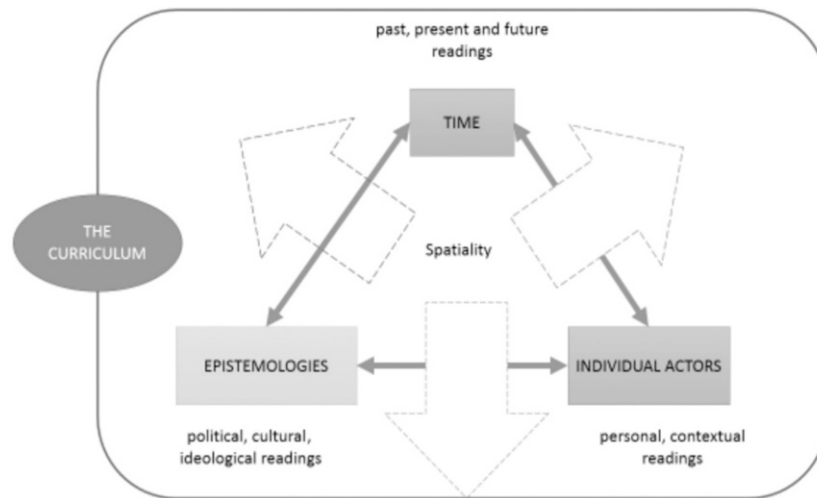


Figure 11.1. Reading the spatiality of the higher education curriculum

This chapter spotlights the case of a higher education institution where the material and symbolic worldviews were prominently contested during the process of the joining together of two heritage institutions, each of which drew on diverse trajectories (see Section One). This case study accentuates the multiple readings of spatiality at play. Section Two focuses on how individuals within the merging institutions, over different periods of its history (from its early inception to present day) chose to represent their spatiality preferences. These varied self-representations and selections constitute their historical and ideological demarcations of the embedded curriculum. The following questions arise from this form of curriculum analysis: why did certain discourses proliferate at particular historical moments? How and by whom are these powerful readings of spatiality constructed, communicated, researched and reported? What is the impact of these readings within and outside the organisation? Are new re-readings of the history of the organisation needed?

Methodologically, the chapter chooses only one set of possible data sources, namely *written published documents* which reflect how the organisation interpreted conceptions of self over different periods of its history. This assemblage of sources is by no mean exhaustive, neither of the range of written texts, nor of the divergent symbolic resources for attempting to read the organisation. Other data sources could well have included the changing architecture of the built environment

of the institution; the physical layout of (in)formal teaching and learning spaces for students and lecturers; the assemblage of sculptural texts marking its unique interpretation of history and space; the changing textual objects of diet, dress and desire within the evolving diverse university campuses; and the variety of social and sporting activities embraced by the membership of the university. The list is endless to establish insight into how we are shaped and are shaping the world we live in as members of a higher education curriculum environment. Managers, academics, administrative/ support staff and students within higher education are continually inheriting and constructing conceptions of ourselves, our responsibilities to the wider society via the textual objects and spaces we develop and promote through our actions. This might be happening even if we are not conscious of these processes of construction and reconstruction. This broadened definition of spatiality is the fullness of the higher education curriculum that this chapter professes.

This reading of the higher education *textual literature* (which includes its wider non-written discourses) was foregrounded in the 2015 challenges to the dominances and silences of particular cultural representations within South African university campuses. Whose and what worldviews (readings and texts) are being celebrated or subjugated? The famous *#RhodesMustFall* campaign¹ is one such enunciation of how texts have the power to speak as the university students of post-1994 South Africa contest the proliferation of a restricted set of material images/texts in the spaces of the universities they attend. Adam Habib, Vice Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa argues that the *#RhodesMustFall* campaign is fundamentally about matters of affirmations and alienations, inclusions and marginalisations of representations, and matters of a caring or uncaring university curriculum in relation to the university student in the new South Africa (See Jenvey, 2015). Texts (even though inanimate) have the power to speak, to silence or empower their readers (Pahl, 2016).

The negotiations surrounding the curriculum spatiality constitute a '*quiet curriculum*' which can speak voluminously when analysed more systemically. To undo the message of organisational textual histories, we need to generate strategies for alternative readings and representations. The vocabulary to make explicit the relationship between the texts and their contexts, across time and space, across varied vantages, is the agenda of this chapter.

This chapter concludes (Section Three) with generic methodological/epistemological questions about institutional histories. Could re-reading of spatiality and temporality (described above) of the inherited habitations be mooted as a form of "historical presentism": i.e. reading the past through one's present situatedness (Hunt, 2002; Bartow, 2015)? How does one deal with expectation that history will always be re-written? Who has the power to define one's institutional histories? Who defines one's textual curricula of higher education? This examination process allows for new possibilities for researching the silenced, the quiet and the noisy curriculum of higher education.

SECTION ONE: IN SEARCH OF NEW INSTITUTIONAL HISTORIES

UKZN was one of the newly merged higher education institutions (HEIs) of post-apartheid South Africa. As part of the country's quest to narrow the gaps between the advantaged and the under-served institutions of the former apartheid era, the new South African government legislated the consolidation of resources, campuses, staffing and students from the former University of Natal (UN) and the former University of Durban-Westville (UDW). The South African trend of merging HEIs has been the subject of much critique (Jansen, 2002) about ideological, political and financial rationalities trumping epistemological considerations of curriculum, governance and operational complexities. It eventually resulted in a downscaling of HEIs from 36 to 23 newly forged units, even though the geographic spread of the merged campuses of most institutions remained intact. Despite the attempts to re-architecture spaces to reflect a newly constituted organisation, the merged space continues to operate within many residues of the past. The coerced amalgamations were not always willingly accepted and resulted in further contestations about whose curriculum values would dominate the *new institution*. Creating a new cultural identity is not an overnight project.

The former UN, established in 1909, was originally conceptualised to serve White students only and UDW, established in the 1960s was for Indian students only. Over time, the staff and students of both institutions chose to challenge the racial exclusivity of its staff and student compositions. This produced its own internal sites of resistance and contestation. Politically, the UN pursued its agenda in dialogue within a largely White liberalist tradition, whilst UDW interpreted its confrontational role to oppose apartheid structures and operations in radical action. Both sites, nevertheless, comprised elements which propped up the separatist cultural agendas immanent to apartheid.

The challenge for the newly constituted 2004 merged institution was to generate a 'new direction', of a new South Africa where non-racialism, non-sexism and a democratic agenda were the foremost ingredients for reconstruction and transformation of educational spaces. The new, deracialised UKZN presently (2016) comprises five campuses, spread across three cities, with approximately 1400 academics and 44000 students. The designers of the 'new' formal curriculum were expected to reconcile the differences across the merging institutions which had previously divergent content and modes of delivery. This sparked serious debates about conceptions of quality and standards to be adhered to in an emerging democracy. Specific campuses were selected to house targeted disciplinary interests and this warranted a redistribution of academic staff and programmes across the legacy institutions.² Many White academics of the time interpreted this period as a challenge to their previously unquestioned hallmarks of superior higher education curriculum. The new largely Black management also represented a change of racial sub-ordination. New formal curricula were being poured into old wineskins of apartheid constructed spaces. This was an institution in search of a new *viticulture*,

which admirably, a decade later, could boast as being amongst the largest and the most research productive HEIs of post-apartheid South Africa. But did staff and students read these changes in similar ways?

The Research Project

The interest of the project to author a new institutional history of UKZN arose when the senior management of the university responded to a request by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to consider how the legacies of individuals within the region and its institutions could be remembered through university-based centres of research. It was noted that many *alumni* of UKZN and its legacy institutions had made contributions, and were continuing to contribute to major national, provincial public and private spaces in a transforming South Africa. Such research centres were, arguably, potential places for remembering the unremembered and their institutional connections. Was this another dimension of re-textualising the history of the South African struggle for democracy, and/or a struggle for birthing heroes?

A symposium of the researchers within the institution, which included present and retired academics who were already engaged in some form of institutional or biographical research, was then set up in April 2014. This small group constituted a multi-disciplinary team of researchers in historical studies, cultural studies, education and social studies. Over several months, the group of researchers identified textual products they had constructed, supervised and/or read which were to be used to reconstruct the history of the institution. The categories of the documents/texts were then refined and, arguably, regarded as *an institutional history* of UKZN, and it is this assembled compilation (Appendix 1) that constitutes the data for this chapter.

The symposium proceeded to examine the following kinds of questions about the need to construct a new institutional biography of UKZN, especially in the light of 2014 being the 10th anniversary of the merged institution. The following questions were then tabled for discussion: Do we need another ‘institutional biography’? Why? Why not? Has the tradition of critical institutional review already been infused in multiple levels, multiple forms producing a rich diversity of voices? What new/different can a ‘new’ institutional biography accomplish? What has not been said? What is to be said? What do we now want to say about ourselves? Whose voice/s should a new institutional biography represent? Who will say ‘what constitutes the new institution’?

It should be noted that the varied perspectives of the different disciplines came to infuse the assembled compilation. It represented too, the variety of textual forms that different members of the group interpreted as being biographical aspects of an institution. The exploration below reflects the multiple forms and emphases of these different *biographer artists* and researchers. Much debate has been generated about how the form of an institution’s history is conceptualised, researched and reported. Some critics even rejected some forms of reflections as simple branding

and propagandist strategies. Others reviewed the same texts as insightful into the shape and form of remembering and reporting of higher education priorities and values, and the institution's curriculum ethos.

It is likely that many of these documents reviewed below may not necessarily have had wide circulation or currency amongst its student body and/or its staffing complement at the time of its authorship. However, the project researchers considered them as symptomatic sites of resistance and/or perpetuation of the institution's definitions of itself (via the depictions of the biographers and their relationship to their spatiality).

SECTION TWO: SHIFTING PORTRAITS

This section will focus on the chronological trajectory of UKZN as seen through an interpretation of the selected texts depicting the history of the institution. The 65 texts (Appendix 1) are assembled to reflect different periods in the institution's spatiality:

- the early history of the legacy institutions (from the 1930s to the 1990s);
- the phase of leading up to the merger (2000–2003) to create the new UKZN institution;³ and
- the merger and post-merger phase (2004–2014).

These categorisations impose an *ex-post facto* grouping of the texts, and are an interpretation of the different historical periods, their agendas and their authors.

The Early History of the Legacy Institutions (1930s–1990s)

This period is characterised by a repetition of the celebratory terminology marking the setting up of legacy institution of the University of Natal (UN). The first assembled documented text is a 25th anniversary record of the development of the institution since its birth in 1909. Records exist of similar in-house commemorative magazine-type marketing documents which were circulated during the period of the 1930s and 1940s. The later 1950s continued the notion that defining the institution's spatiality (of itself and its relations) entailed the celebration of the 'great individual' as a history-maker: Mabel Palmer and Robert Denison are presented as exemplary individuals of the institution. The 1957 publication signalled an attempt to re-interpret the roots of the institution via a re-examination of the origins of the UN, by locating its historical roots in the Pietermaritzburg campus of 1907. It too, is a *jubilee history*.

The pattern of a great man-theory of history is also reflected in the 1960s era, symptomatic of historical studies of the time. The 1960 Gordon report reflects one of the first attempts to document a single unit within the higher education system (the Durban Medical School) in a research medical journal. Even though the 1960s was a period when UDW was set up as an Indians-only campus, no official records

of a similar type during this period were available.⁴ However, 18 years later, Bhana's (1978) publication documented a reflective account of UDW's genesis. However, it was published abroad (in Washington) which raises questions about whether it would have been readily accessible within the university even in the 1970s. What accounted for the choice to publish the text overseas? Bhana's authoring of UDW's heritage could be understood as an attack on the apartheid regimes which ghettoised education for minority groups. The document constituted a political writing back to power, to garner support at an international level for an anti-apartheid cause.

Another interpretation of UDW is provided by Oosthuizen (1981), published by Oxford University Press in Cape Town. This local release of a challenging account of the purposes of an Indians-only university perhaps was more palatable to the growing 1980s critique of the apartheid state within the wider society. The rise of institution biographical work is reflected in the publication of an article by the early 1984 edition of a historical studies journal, again linking the history of Mabel Palmer and her contribution to Black higher education. This constitutes (within the data set assembled) the first formal dialogue about students' experiences. These 1980s texts should also be understood in relation to its historical period after the major student Soweto Uprisings which generated a forceful student resistance to apartheid education. The space was set for dialogue about a racially-divided university higher education.

Morrell's (1991) article overtly challenges the political identities being developed within the 'ethnic' UDW. He suggests that despite the official separatist agenda, new non-racialised identities were being forged. Whilst Mackie (1995) and Thrower (1994) were examining the accomplishment of different units of the UN, their agenda is marked by political intentions: the former, by an attempt to engage the role of the UN in relation to adult and community-based education; and the latter, to celebrate the scientific achievements of the Wadley SA Receiver. It is noted that Mackie's publication is an unpublished University of Cape Town MSc publication. This period of textual products suggests a tension of opposing views about the agenda and direction of the legacy institutions; shifting their discourse from within and without, aiming to reconstruct new interpretations of the institutions' agenda. More critical studies of the institution tended to be published outside the institution. The race and gender (White males) of the authors of these publications is worth remembering. It is reflective that academics of a different racial groups coalesced around providing critical readings of apartheid higher education, publishing academic theses and books, using the formal recurrent curriculum knowledge-making enterprises to disrupt habituated spatialities. It would be incorrect to essentialise Black and White perspectives through apartheid caricaturing of victims and perpetrators.

Preparing for Merger (2000–2003)

This period is marked by a divergent set of views as different role players pushed and pulled to influence the new identity of the institution that was destined to be

merged by government decree. It was an era of uncertainty and contestation. The texts in this set resemble a kind of cubist painting of multi-faceted views.

Another anniversary issue is noted in the 50-year history of the medical school (Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine, 2000) which assembled a range of chapters, chronologically documenting its development in different eras. This is suggestive of an attempt to justify the contribution made by Black SA medical training institutions which produced national political heroes like Steve Biko (who heralded the Black Consciousness Movement), notable medical scientists, and government leaders in early post-apartheid South Africa. Stories of struggle against apartheid were not all doom and gloom, but also about achievement and philosophical conscientisation: these authors contended. Rewriting the history of the medical school at that point in history was a way of finding positive stories amongst dominant negativity (Kark, 2003).

A more sceptical view was presented by others who contemplated what would be lost and gained as the inevitability of the new merged institution drew nearer. It was expected the new institution would generate new ascendancies and the marginalisation of others (Maughan-Brown, 2000). The anxiety of the merger was reflected in the arguments even when the need for the creation of an “African University” (Dell, 2002) was documented. The texts explored whether the notion of *African* could extend beyond its racialised connotations, and encompass a service to the African continent.

The documentary actors of this pre-merger period were also providing competing interpretations to frame the HEI as an academic institution of disciplinary knowledge production, instead of embracing strong social welfarist agendas to redress the iniquitous past. Both within and across this period’s data set, the authors were seemingly nervous brides and grooms being assembled for a forced/arranged marriage where the future was uncertain. What would the new co-habitation of previously separated forces entail? Whose worldviews would dominate or recede? Could compromises be tolerated?

The Merger and Post-Merger Phase (2004–2014)

The 2004 publication documenting Steve Biko’s ideological and political philosophy (Mzamane, Maaba, & Biko, 2004) could be seen as a further re-interpretation of the role of the Black student activists. This reinforced the notions of alternative histories being constructed through the merged institution. Another re-definition was provided through a recording of the history of the naming of buildings, roads and suburbs inside and outside the university. Merrit (2005) challenges how colonial histories are reflected in these public spaces. This text suggests that selected nomenclature subtly communicates preferred readings of our spatial worlds, alienating alternatives to the colonial spatiality. Koopman (2004) reveals how these patterns recur across the city of Durban, which may not be reflective of its multi-cultural diversity.

The selection for new, possible directions in the community health curriculum was examined by Jeeves (2005). Its reading categorically emphasises that the

curriculum of an HEI cannot confine itself to only that which operates within its spaces of lecture halls and tutorial rooms. The *laboratories*, especially in the social sciences, but also in the natural and medical sciences, entailed connectivity into the spaces of the wider social political community, in public, private, urban and rural settings. Readings of the wider sociological complexities of the community (in its diverse manifestations) was argued to be the relevant quest of a transformed HEI. It was argued that community health services entailed intersecting medical matters with political and social agendas.

This era broadened focus of who were institutional history-makers. For example, the new management commissioned a report on the many women within the institution who contributed to reshaping the new UKZN institution. A Corporate Relations (2006) document marks the first of many attempts by its then director (Dasarath Chetty) to re-image the organisation as dissimilar to a divided, conflicted, racialised or gendered institution. These publications (see UKZN, 2007 publications list: Appendix 1) are characteristically in-house accounts, and were largely *management-led* forgings of a reconstructed institutional identity. The marketing function of this agenda is also noted.

It may be debated whether these many corporate relations readings are scholarly contributions to the curriculum debate, since they constitute official governance and administrative documents. What specific roles do managers project as artistic composers of an institutional history? These documents could constitute spin-doctoring of the changing historical times. Their inclusion in this corpus of institutional texts is justified precisely because these texts represent a conscious official management effort to re-image the institution. They were circulated as sanctioned readings of the new organisation across all campus sites and constituted advertorial celebrations of the new UKZN. The above-mentioned documents spanned the strategic plan of the new UKZN, the new vice chancellor's official report one hundred days after assuming office and another three years after the merger. It also included the celebration of the value of community outreach as a targeted goal of the organisation.

Koopmans' (2007) article, a non-official record, examines the symbols, shields and mottos of the merging partners, which offers a reminder about how heritage has been passed from one generation to the other. The publication also explains the symbolism of the new UKZN logo, the new official ceremonial graduation garments, which point to the need for inclusivity of all the institution's five campuses, its three-city character and the four-college UKZN model. These symbols were argued to allay fears and promote confidence about new directions.

These post-merger textual representations were usually glossy representations, modelled on business corporate annual reports. Their publications and printings reaped national accolades in prizes and rewards. They hint at the need to overtly re-write and (re)market the history of the organisation, especially to counter sceptics who resisted change. Amongst the many publications are the deliberations about creating a professorial chair for Peace Studies invoking local political stalwarts of the Indian and African communities. A photographic exploration of the contribution

of nationally acclaimed sociologist, Fatima Meer, also constitutes the re-writing of institutional history. Four years later, the vice chancellor presented another accountability report showing the gains that had been made in the post-merger era. Was this countering a perception that the merger resulted in a *decline of standards*? Were new standards being proffered? These documents take on a celebratory tone where it is evident that the new management were consciously aiming to boost morale, to counter negative conceptions of the merger, and to affirm the contributions made by silenced heroes and heroines of the legacy institutions. It could be seen as a conscious attempt to re-author curriculum spatiality.

An anomaly in this set of post-merger texts is the work of Guest (2008) who chose to re-interpret an early period (1934–1949) in the history of the organisation, looking at re-writing the role of the Faculty of Agriculture in Pietermaritzburg around the time of World War II. This signalled a view that the re-writing of the history of an organisation could include even a distanced past. Similar attempts to re-record history of the past are seen in the 2009 Graduate School of Business report which documents its 35-year existence; the history of libraries in the UN (Buchanan, 2009); or a 40-year historical reflection of the genesis of the UN (Guest, 2009). Again another wave of celebratory biographies and *great man theory* conceptions of history were featured in these new publications.

Further confidence to re-write the history of the institution of early times (1934–2009) is seen again in Guest's (2010) publication. By contrast, Vahed and Bhana's (2011) historical writing which also shifts back in time to examine the era of racially segregated classes within the UN provides a corrective reading of that period. The Bhana and Vahed (*ibid.*) publication was an attempt to fill in a gap of past literature which excluded the experiences of Black students in the early writings of institutional histories.

A book anthology, edited by Wasserman and Bryan (2010), was compiled for the 100-year anniversary of the institution. This book foregrounded the lived memories of different members of the former Edgewood College of Education (another legacy institution of UKZN for former Whites-only students which had been affiliated to UN, and which became the campus site for the Faculty of Education under the new UKZN). The anthology assembled a divergence of views from students past and present, managers and administrators to show how multiple interpretations of the institution's history were possible as the teacher training institution moved from a college of education to a university faculty of education.

A similar anniversary centennial publication documented the struggle for success from a range of actors who assisted with constructing UKZN as an institution (Lindscott, 2010). Not all the voices were coherent, or uni-directional. The vice chancellor in his foreword remarked:

Despite the 'struggles' the history captured in the book demonstrates a great story of success, a story in which the many forces that shaped higher education in the province can be found. (Lindscott, 2010, foreword)

The attempt to present an official record of the leadership's agenda in the development of the new policy and governance direction, dominated the representation of the Makgoba and Mubangizi (2010) anthology. This anthology was specifically vantage to offer an executive perspective, and is oftentimes critiqued for not being sufficiently cognisant of various interpretations and lived experiences of the new governance model by the rank and file of academic and administrative staff (and perhaps the students too). Interpretations, one can deduce, cannot be legislated as viewers can perceive the portrayed text in new and fresh ways based on their lived experiences of the institution.

A deliberate counterpoint to the celebratory efforts which characterised the above-mentioned textual forms is Nithaya Chetty and Christopher Merrett's (2014) robust critique of the *struggle for the soul of UKZN*. In their re-reading of the spatiality of the newly merged institution, the authors (UKZN academics not in executive leadership positions) presented a critical view that the spaces for democratic participation in the institution were regressive. They suggested that the new institution regime via its implementation of numerous regulative policies, in practice was essentialising racial categorisations and silencing oppositional voices. This for them, constituted a new managerialism akin to the past authoritarianist oppressions. Compared with the robust critical spaces of the pre-merger legacy institutions (oftentimes outside the halls of management), the new institutional regime was interpreted by the authors as imposing preferred identities onto its diverse student and staff populations.

More research-oriented institutional depictions documenting the lived experiences of students (especially Black students) were mooted to engage the merits or not of the new curriculum of the merged institution. Dhunpath and Vithal (2012) assembled in their anthology a range of empirical studies conducted at UKZN to address matters of student access, throughput and success in the new institution. Deliberate efforts (with varied impact) were being made to address curriculum reform, to address the needs of the changing student demographics of the merged institution. The book becomes a critical evaluation of the programmatic interventions, and their impact conducted by designers and custodians of the interventions to address poor performance of especially African students. The anthology questions whether the institution or the students are failing. It proposed that multiple accountabilities were necessary from curriculum designers of their formal interventions, as well as from governance structures to create enabling environments to produce success.

Another academic study, part of a PhD exploration (Noble, 2013), documents the struggles of Black graduates and staff within the changing history of the medical school over the period of their involvement with the institution. The book is a photographic and written textual examination of the shifting of the governance, curriculum, the experiences and the outcomes of the highly charged political and pedagogical space. It is a story of struggle within a largely hegemonic White institution. The present-day high profile of the former students of the medical school and their remembering of their experiences, constitutes this institutional sociological anthology.

Similar studies of racialised groupings of former students of the legacy institutions constitute the new trend engaging the perceived silences noted in the corpus of existing readings of UKZN. A special issue of a historical studies journal (Wasserman & Singh, 2013), documents the experiences of Indian students studying on the Salisbury Island campus, which was a separatist site under the custodianship of the UN, but which eventually gave birth to the UDW institution. Moodley's (2013) study documents the culture, politics and identity of Indians within a single department of Visual Arts and Education within the UDW campus.

Newer studies conducted by Guest (2014) and Vahed (2014) re-engage the existing records of earlier biographies and depict the construction of lives under the apartheid HE system. The latter depicts the cultural, political and educational institutional history through the lens of the personal biography of one of the remembered academics of the institution: Cassim Dangor. The study of alumni personal perspectives of the medical school by Noble (2015) constitutes a juxtaposition of celebratory and critical memory studies as a scholarly endeavour. Wassermann (2015) uses a self-study reflective account of his role as editor-in-chief of a journal of the discipline of the History of Education. He shows how academic publishing (rewriting history) has become implicated in the commodification of the knowledge-making enterprise, raising questions about why academics are choosing publications of historical accounts in the journal industry.

The documented institutional histories over different periods of time have revealed that the reading and re-readings of the institutional spaces are an ongoing endeavour of the academic community. The listed surveyed studies above cannot be exhaustive; instead they are illustrative of trends of these attempts at reconstituting the spatiality of our institution. At different periods in its history, new emphases emerge which are reflective not only of the immediate institutional contexts, its students, its staff, its formal and informal curriculum, but also reflective of the wider social, political and ideological terrain. Reading this kind of spatial mobility, contestations and subjugations which are dialogues across time and space ought to be the kind of curriculum literacy which we consciously infuse and record in our higher education environments. We must engage our higher education students and communities to read and re-read their immediate and ambient worlds, to allow them the vocabulary to exercise future choices rather than simply adhere to existing habituations.

SECTION THREE: WHAT IS AN INSTITUTIONAL BIOGRAPHY?

This above analysis shows that the conception of an institutional biography could potentially take on various forms, could involve a range of participants both as the researchers or the researched; it could be directed to review historical periods both of the immediate, recent or long-term past. An institutional biography is varied in terms of what it chooses to foreground as the object of analysis: the attempt to generate (fresh) insight into the evolving nature of the institution, to be corrective in terms of other institutional historical accounts. Institutional biographies are not neutral

representations of the lived world; they constitute interpreted worldviews depicting the agendas of the biographer artists, conveying particular selections of what, whom, how and why to accentuate in their portraits. Institutional biographies can also be said to be written at different periods in the life journey of an institution, and can be appropriated by managers, researchers and/or other advocates to service different agendas. This concluding section of the chapter presents the varieties of forms, purposes, timings, scope and audiences that an institutional biography potentially could portray in a variety of permutations. The future directions to address the gaps of institutional histories that have not yet been written for the targeted institution, and what possible new directions this methodological approach has on a broader level for higher education studies, constitutes the end point of this discussion. Re-writing and continuing the tradition of institutional biographical work is clearly understood to be part of the process of re-negotiating hegemonic power in newly claimed spaces in the higher education system.

Perhaps the choice of the term ‘institutional biography’ bothers those who understand a biography as constituting a documented scientific record of legalistic or forensic truths organised in logical and chronological sequencing. However, Clanindin and Connelly (2000) argue that biographies are more than uncontested truths, but include textual interpretations of our everyday worlds, our experienced multiple (and sometimes incoherent) readings of the world we live in. Biographies will always embed attempts to re-tell the spatial environment in new fresh understandings, aiming to celebrate or jettison habituated readings of our storied lives. Within this narrative tradition, a biography of individuals, and/or of institutions, will be punctuated with multiple textual signals, each messaging depictions of our interpreted sense of our history and context, our backgrounds and our aspirations (Knowles & Cole, 2008; Skovmose, 2008). Therefore, our institutional biographies, our interpreted and reported histories of the organisation will be a fragmentation of different readings. It could never be knowable or complete. It is a continuing journey of presentations and representations, including official and unofficial governance and hierarchical knowings (Foucault, 1979; Lather & Smithies, 1997). Institutional biographers are creative artists reading and reading their spatial environments, commenting and offering their interpretation of their contexts. It is this complexity of spatiality that I refer to as the fullness of the higher education curriculum which oftentimes goes unscrutinised or passively imbibed. If we do not engage in the biographed constructions that surround ourselves within the higher education institutional environment, we run the risk of being seduced by officialised or dominating spatial readings. This resonates with Spivak’s (1988, 2014) contention that the oppressed are implicated in their own marginalisation, by not being able to speak back to power. She suggests there is a learned habituation to silence, even when injustices are known to stare one in the face. The purpose of a social justice transformation, she argues, is to engage the peripheral debates and debaters to conjoin forces and develop confidence of their abilities to read and act in the world differently (*ibid.*). This could be seen as another form of a “pedagogy of listening” (as advocated by Pinar in this

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edition), or of “slow cooking” (Spivak in this edition) where it is acknowledged that the authoring and reading of our spatiality is a lengthy, infused process of dialoguing, spanning many decades of positioning and re-positionings.

The Form of an Institutional Biography

The data set shows that an institutional biography can range in overt manifestations from the official marketing material (as a publicity or management tool) to those that aim to provide a critical reflection on the cultural, political and social landscapes of the institution, and its wider context. The publications of officialdom tend to be largely celebratory, and are usually generated to commemorate anniversaries or milestone historical events, such as the change in governance structures of the university, or to coincide with major political (nationalistic) agendas (e.g. a forthcoming election). Such official (ideological) documentation of institutional histories, usually sets up heroes and villains, aiming to serve a re-directive or corrective function to reverse other interpretations of the worldview of the institution.

Institutional biographies are represented in a variety of textual forms: in journal articles, books, chapters in books, and in academic research study reports. More recently, its association as a marketing tool has led to institutional biographies being represented in coffee-table type publications, with glossy photographs, images and vignettes about the organisations. Whole industries are developing around institutional biographies, as institutions become more conscious of their competitive corporatised selves. Whilst the data set of this chapter has not addressed the form of higher education websites and promotional audio-visual material (including Face Book, Twitter accounts, Instagrams, etc.), these could also be said to be another form of institutional biographies. They constitute textual messagings entered into social spaces offering (re-)readings of our spatiality. As the corporate identity of business/industry enter more firmly into the higher education system, institutional annual textual messaging are increasingly publications of glory and triumph, presenting polished caricatures of the organisations including, detailing the financial management, administrative, and academic capacities of the organisation, as (perhaps) stable and confident to attract, and utilise past, and potential financial resources.

The institutional biographies are not confined to a narrow interpretation of ‘academic identity’, but also a manifestation of its corporatised and politicised self. Future biographers need to grapple with whether institutional biographies are part of the entertainment, marketing information and/or academic educational knowledge enterprise.

The Timing of Institutional Biographies

The examined data set reveals that biographies span a range of time periods: marking celebratory events (e.g. the birth/death of new/old institutional governance arrangements), the periodising of the institution into units of time across many

years or decades (e.g. reflecting major conceptual new redirections of the institution in different times, such as during major wars or ideological struggles), or a long-term historical nostalgia about a ‘time-gone-by’. Moreover, the timing of when such institutional biographies are written, is important. Sometimes institutional biographies are written to capture a momentous occasion (in almost near real time: close to the date of the event); or to rekindle a memory of a turning point in the institutional history. Sometimes, the importance of an event or institutional memory is only re-interpreted and recognised many years later.

The biographer of an institutional history

Increasingly, the biographers of an institutional history are becoming more diverse. Not only are persons within an organisation/institution engaging with such ‘textual construction and analysis’. It may be argued that the quality assurance regimes initiated in many HEIs internationally, have resulted in external peer evaluators also engaging in a form of institutional biography. Most often, this is done against the presence already, of an internal self-evaluation report constructed by participants within the institution itself. How participants within the institution are depicted by external biographers, highlights the eternal research conundrum of insider and outsider researcher stances, and their potential and limitations. These internal biographies could be conducted by an officially elected or designated task group (e.g. a senate-appointed committee), or a department tasked with imaging the institutional profile (e.g. as in a Corporate Relations exercise).

Institutional biographies are increasingly also being written by a variety of stakeholders within institutions, but not located in the upper echelons of power, or management. Each individual biography of the institution reflects its ‘stake’ in the institution, and its agenda for interpreting or re-interpreting the institution in varied ways. The list is endless, concerning who could potentially construct such an image of the organisation: the executive, the middle manager, the academic and administrative staff, the support staff; the staff who have been fired by an institution; the staff who have been recently hired by an institution; the governmental departmental official; the quality assurance agency. These institutional biographies could be conducted by single individuals, presenting their own (artistic) representations of the reading of the institution; or they might be in multi-disciplinary teams, co-constructing and validating their interpretations of the institutional history.

The agenda of an institutional biography

A frequent question recurs within narrative inquiry and life history research: what is the purpose of the varieties of stories about individuals or groups, and as this chapter has extended: of institutions? Shifting trends seem to recur across the chronological data set: the waxing and waning of the celebratory great man/women stories are noted; the shift to tell the story of those who stories have not previously been told; the

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need to re-tell other interpretations of the storied past. All of these seem to compete for attention. Another reason for institutional biographies, is noted in the aim to separate oneself (the artist biographer) from the dominant hegemonic worldviews being generated about one's own work context. Such might also be an attempt to mark one's own counter interpretation of the values of the organisations, and the shifts in priorities. Writing an institutional biography might therefore also embrace an empowerment and/or critical reconstructive agenda: to right some perceived wrong; or to set the record straight (in relation to the artist biographers' worldviews).

The Target Audience of an Institutional Biography

This notion suggests, as does most narrative inquiry, that the "audience writes the text" (Samuel, 2014). In constructing the institutional historical biography, the composer is quite intent on raising particular discursive arguments, about the value, direction and priority of the organisation at different points in its transformation. This suggests also that the writing of institutional biographies is oftentimes written against the grain of the dominant worldviews that circulate about an institution at any given point in time. The role of the institutional biography is to educate a targeted audience about a particular positionality. The choices of spaces where the institutional biography is to be disseminated, are a useful clue to indicate to whom the biographer is directing their analysis. The audience can be reflected in the publication circles of specific journals, in chosen conferences, in networked newspapers. This also suggests that institutional biographies will always need to be rewritten to establish new audiences. New interpretations of the past, the present and the future directions of the institution will need to be recirculated in different spaces to achieve targeted goals. There will always be shifting notions of the shape, form and direction of such writing as new audiences are constantly being established.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The symposium, referred to in Section One of this chapter, reflected on the gaps that emerged from its analysis of the data set. It suggested that there was a relative dearth of literature of institutional biographical work from the historically Black institutions. Smaller merging partners of the institution, for example, the former colleges of education that were amalgamated/incorporated into earlier structures do not have a documented historical archived record. Moreover, the voice of students and their lived experiences, is relatively under-explored in any formal (written) institutional biographical work. This is further accentuated as new patterns of marginalisation across different demographic groups of race, gender and class engage with the newly formed institution of UKZN. A much more concerted effort is needed to assemble and document the many biographical accounts that may exist within the institution, including the informal and non-formal accounts that are known to exist, but have not been curated formally.

READING SPATIALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

This chapter has argued for institutional biographical work as an important historical responsibility to capture in creative, critical and imaginative ways the multiple voices of an institution reading and re-readings its spatial context over time. It has argued that we always need our institutional histories in higher education to be rewritten since new players, new directions, new emphases will fashion the social, political and cultural worlds. This is not just a matter of supporting narrative recordings, but also a way of making explicit the signalling of textual literature that infuse our higher educational curriculum spaces.

History will always be re-written, not as a matter of ideological manipulation, but as an agenda of critical re-examinations of those patterns, persons and positions who orchestrate our lives. Curriculum contestation of the higher education environment, its inherited curriculum habitations, its textual literature are ever present and need to be made more visible. Re-reading and re-writing our spatial selves in all its complexities, forms and agendas offer deeper, fuller, and multiple interpretations of our past, present and future. These re-imaginings of our spaces constitute a quality higher education curriculum.

Our voice matters and our responsibility as curriculum artists to see, read, re-read and re-present the world in new and fresh ways must endure. If we don't paint our world, who will?

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NOTES

- ¹ Students successfully campaigned to remove the statue of a colonial governor from its dominant presence on the campus of a local South African university. The dearth of alternative sculptural representations of heroes of an activist struggle against colonial and apartheid regimes within the university space, was mooted as motivation for the statue's removal.
- ² UKZN was officially launched in 2004.
- ³ These documents appear as freely downloadable documents on the official UKZN website: <http://www.ukzn.ac.za>
- ⁴ Further archival work to source alternative historical records of the early UDW history is currently underway.

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Michael Anthony Samuel
School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

APPENDIX ONE

Potential Institutional Biographical Works of the University of KwaZulu-Natal

(In order of chronology)

(Where available, full names of authors are provided to aid archival retrieval)

(Incomplete references are from previous archival records that are undated or lack page numbers)

THE EARLY HISTORY OF LEGACY INSTITUTIONS

1940s

1. Natal University College. (1949). University of Natal commemoration number. Pietermaritzburg: Natal University Press.
2. Natal University College. (1946). Development: campaign for a University of Natal (1946). Pietermaritzburg: Natal University Press.
3. Natal University College. (1934). Magazine commemoration number (1909–1934). Pietermaritzburg: Natal University Press.

1950s

4. Rees, Wyn. (1957). *The Natal Technical College (1907–1957). A jubilee history*. Pietermaritzburg: Natal University Press.
5. Petrie, A. (1952). Memoir of Dr Robert Beckett Denison. Principal of Natal University College. 1938–1945. *Theoria*, (no page number) University of Natal.
6. Palmer, Mabel. (1951). Higher education in Natal. *African Affairs*, (50–199), 134–135.
7. University of Natal. (1950). University of Natal Development Foundation: Its history and achievements (1928–1950). UKZN archives.

1960s

8. Brookes, Edgar H. (1966). *A history of the University of Natal*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.
9. Brookes, E. H., & De Berri Webb, C. (1966). *A history of Natal*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.
10. Gordon, I. (1960). A history of the Durban Medical School. *SA Medical Journal* (May 1960).

1970s

11. Bhana, S. (1978). University education for Indians. In Pachai Bridglal (Ed.), *South Africa's Indians: The evolution of a minority*. Washington: University Press of America. 384–440.

1980s

12. Marks, S. (1987). *Not either an experimental doll: The separate worlds of three South African women*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.

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13. Lamond, S.E. (1984). Early varsity days. Reprinted from N.U.C. Magazine. 1934. *Natalia*. 14.
14. Vietzen, Sylvia. (1983). Mabel Palmer and Black higher education (1936–1942). *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, (6), 98–114.
15. Oosthuizen, G. (Ed.) (1981). *The challenge to a South African university. The University of Durban-Westville*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

1990s

16. Dubbeld, G. (1998). The university buildings on the Durban campus. An overview of the names of buildings and facilities of the University of Natal. Compiled by Vika Mpisane (updated).
17. Mackie, Robin. (1995). An analysis of policy development within the Centre for Adult Education at the University of Natal 1971–1991. Cape Town: Unpublished UCT MSc thesis.
18. Thrower, K.R. (1994). The Wadley South African Receiver. *Electron* (February 1994). <http://www.barlowwadley.it/literature.htm#The%20Wadley>
19. Morrell, R. (1991). Power and politics at a non-racial, ethnic university. A study of the University of Durban-Westville. *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies*, 5 (4), 49–77.

LEADING UP TO MERGER

2000–2003

20. Kark, J. (2003). Sidney Kark's contributions to epidemiology and community medicine. *International Journal of Epidemiology*.
<http://ije.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/32/5/882>.
21. Dell, S. (2002). Creating an African university. *Natalia*. 34.
22. Edgewood College of Education. (2000). *Insight*. 2000.
23. Nelson R. Mandela School of Medicine. (2000). 50 years of achievement in teaching, service and research. (publisher not stated).
 - 23.1 Govind, U. (2000). Memorable achievements.
 - 23.2 Mokoena, T. (2000). The middle years.
 - 23.3 Naidoo, B.T. (2000). The early years. 1976
24. Maughan Brown, D. (2000). Swings and roundabouts. *Higher Education Journal*, 40, 163–181.
25. University of Natal. (2000). *Focus*, 11(1).

THE MERGER AND POST-MERGER PHASE

2004

26. Makgoba, Malegapuru William, Soni, Dhiru & Chetty, Dasarath. (2004). A critical engagement with society. Durban: UKZN Public Affairs & Corporate Relations.

27. Makgoba, Malegapuru William. (2004). The University of KwaZulu-Natal: One hundred days: 01 January-09 April 2014. Durban: UKZN Public Affairs & Corporate Relations.
28. Koopman, A. (2004). The names and the naming of Durban. *Natalia*. 34.
29. Mzamane, M. V, Maaba, B., & Biko, N. (2004). *The Black Consciousness Movement: The road to democracy in South Africa. Volume 2. 1970–1980*. South African Democracy Education Trust.

2005

30. Chetty, Dasarath. (Ed.) (2005). Towards African scholarship. Inauguration of the vice-chancellor of UKZN. Makgoba, MW. Durban: UKZN Public Affairs & Corporate Relations. 30 September 2005.
31. Chetty, Dasarath. (Ed.) (2005). Organisational democracy: An ongoing challenge. Reflections from UKZN. Durban: UKZN Public Affairs & Corporate Relations. September 2005.
32. Chetty, Dasarath & Collins, Deanne. (Eds.) (2005). The Albert Luthuli memorial lecture. The deepest international principles of brotherhood and humanity. Durban: UKZN Public Affairs & Corporate Relations. 21 October 2005.
33. Jeeves, A. (2005). Community health in the 1940s. In S. Dubow, & A. Jeeves. *South Africa's 1940's: Worlds of possibilities*. Cape Town: Juta & Co.
34. Merrett, C. (2005). A biographical guide to the named buildings and facilities of the Pietermaritzburg campus of UKZN.

2006

35. Chetty, Dasarath, Njagi, Nyambwa. Collins, Deanne, Reena Budree. (Eds.) (2006). UKZN women making a difference. Durban: UKZN Public Affairs & Corporate Relations. August 2006.

2007

36. UKZN (2007). University of KwaZulu-Natal strategic plan 2007. Durban: UKZN.
37. UKZN (2007). UKZN Institutional audit report 2007. Durban: UKZN.
38. Makgoba, Malegapuru William (Vice-Chancellor & Principal). (2007). UKZN Merger report 2007. Durban: UKZN.
39. Chetty, Dasarath & Collins, Deanne. (Eds.) (2007). UKZN outreach. A critical engagement with society. Durban. UKZN Public Affairs & Communication.
40. Koopman, A. (2007). Shield, symbolism and identity: Postcolonial heraldry in KwaZulu-Natal. *Natalia*. 37.

2008

41. Chetty, Dasarath & Nagadu, Ravi. (Eds.) (2008). Fatima Meer: A pictorial tribute. Durban: UKZN Corporate Relations.
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43. Guest, W. (2008). The establishment of a Faculty of Agriculture in Pietermaritzburg. 1934–1949. *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 26 (2008).
44. Makgoba, M. W. (2008). Reflections on the University of KwaZulu-Natal merger. *Leadership Foundation in Higher Education in Pretoria*, 16.

2009

45. University of KwaZulu-Natal Graduate School of Business (GSB). (2009). A 35-year journey. Celebrating 35 years of the MBA Programme. 1974–2009.
46. Buchanan, N. (2009). A history of the University of Natal Libraries. 1910–2003. UKZN PhD thesis.
47. Guest, William. (2009). Stella Aurorae: A history of the Natal University College 1909–1949. The genesis of university education in KwaZulu-Natal. *Natalia*, 39.

2010

48. Guest, William. (2010). *A fine band of farmers are we! A history of Agricultural Studies in Pietermaritzburg 1934–2009*. Pietermaritzburg: Occasional Publications of the Natal Society Foundation. 2010.
49. Wassermann, J., & Bryan, A. (Eds.) (2010). *Edgewood memories. From college to faculty of education*. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Corporate Relations.
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2011

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2012

54. Dhunpath, Rubby & Vithal, Renuka. (Eds.) (2012). *Alternative access to higher education. Under-prepared students or under-prepared institutions*. Pearson: Cape Town.

2013

55. Noble, Vanessa. (2013). *A school of struggle. Durban's Medical School and the education of Black doctors*. Pietermaritzburg: UKZN Press.
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2014

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2015

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HYLEEN MARIAYE

12. IS A PHD DANGEROUS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

INTRODUCTION

Professional development is today constructed as a natural corollary of any workplace setting, necessary because of the rapid changes characterising contemporary societies. This is perhaps more applicable to education professionals who practise in a setting located at the nexus of economic, political, cultural, social and technological forces. While experience gathered constitutes an important learning avenue, the conscious development of workforce capacities through carefully thought-out programmes of professional development has come to represent an important dimension of strategic planning in any institution, particularly those in which the core engagement is to train and educate (Aleese, 2013).

In this chapter, I case study an institution of higher education, the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), whose mission is to provide for the professional development of the teaching corps in a small island state. But, rather than examine its curricular provisions for teacher education, I bring under the lens its own professional development policy for staff, which are recruited primarily as teacher educators. My objective is to analyse the forces which have impacted on an institutional choice of a research-led professional development programme (doctoral degrees) exploring the tensions inherent in reconciling this choice with the institutional mandate.

The intention is not to contest the value of a PhD as an avenue for the professional development for those who teach in higher education but rather to examine the associated range of consequences implicit in foregrounding a doctoral degree as the preferred mode of professional development of teacher educators in a context where their role is constructed primarily as expert teachers and policy technicians. We engage further with the broader debate of what or who determines the kinds of knowledge that are of most worth to teacher educators and what pedagogies would be deployed to assist in the development of desired competences. To this end, I use our current experience of running, in collaboration with two foreign universities, namely, the University of Brighton (UoB) and the UKZN, doctoral programmes on which a large number of staff of the MIE is registered.

THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Currently the field of teacher education is undergoing a major shift on account of both the global forces shaping higher education in general and internal changes within the field itself (Badat, 2010). The reconfiguration of higher education along more managerial lines has occasioned deep conflicts when concerns related to operational efficiency, and labour market relevance challenge the very nature of how academic work used to be constructed and what competences are necessary and desirable to operate as a teacher in higher education (Casares, Dickson, Hannigan, Hinton, & Phelps, 2012). Higher education practices are currently under scrutiny as a new hierarchy of accountability and needs is established. Excellence in teaching is now increasingly flagged by many institutions to demarcate themselves from competitors. Irrespective of the disciplines, the skills required to teach at higher education have been recast as have the institutional conditions which support quality teaching (Aleese, 2013). These changes have deep implications as to what skills are sought in faculty and what universities prioritise as faculty professional development.

Perhaps more than the traditional academic domains, the curriculum of professional programmes at university level are increasingly oriented towards applying the content in real life or professional contexts (Harrison & Frankie, 2008). This is even truer for teacher preparation and professional development which has experienced a turn away from a predominant focus on specifying the necessary knowledge for teaching toward specifying teaching practice that entails knowledge and doing. The fundamental aim undergirding this turn is to better support teachers in learning how to use knowledge in action (Harrison & Frankie, 2008). This stance explodes the polarity between research and practice focusing alternatively on developing personal practical knowledge of teaching teachers and the disposition to adopt a stance of inquiry (Cochran-Smith, 2003). Both are symbiotic, reciprocal and recursive highlighting the interlocking aspects of “action and analysis, inquiry and experience, theorizing and doing” (Cochran-Smith, 2005, p. 219).

CONCEPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATORS

Emergent literature on the professional development of teacher educators gestures towards a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and personal characteristics (competence). For example, Koster, Brekelmans, Korthagen and Wubbels (2005) identified in their research carried out in Netherlands, four competence areas, namely content competences, communicative and reflective competences, organisational competences and pedagogical competences

A comparison across the Dutch, American, Australian and Israeli contexts (Smith, 2005), reveals four sets of expectations for professional development of teacher educators:

- being a model teacher with the ability to articulate tacit knowledge of teaching and relating the practical with the theoretical

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- creating new knowledge of both practical and theoretical nature
- making an impact on education within and outside the institution
- being involved in one's professional development and facilitating that of others.

Practices in teacher education institutions, in terms of provision of professional development experiences to support the above-mentioned attributes, vary depending on context. While formal induction programmes exist in certain universities and teacher education colleges, the consistency, quality and nature of these provisions has raised concerns (Murray, 2008). When such formal induction programmes do not exist, teacher educators learn the skills of their trade in the micro communities of the departments to which they are attached. Barriers to professional learning include poor mentoring and support structures, a reliance on trial and error and limited opportunities for collaboration (Harrison & Frankie, 2008). Faculty across contexts have identified a strong need for professional support aimed at easing integration of new staff in the expectations of what the work implies by offering information or by means of opportunities for enhancing practice (Gallagher, Griffin, Parker, Kitchen, & Figg, 2011). Robinson and McMillan (2006) propose participative action research in the South African context to help construct a community of practice. Another promising practice is the emergence of self-study communities of practice to assist teacher educators in developing a negotiated understanding of their practices and contexts (Zeichner, 2005; Gallagher et al., 2011).

Literature on the process of becoming a teacher educator highlights the importance of supporting transitions through more flexible formal induction programmes, learning conversations and personal experiences at post graduate level (Harrison & Frankie, 2008). Learning by participation has been found to be insufficient to enable novice teacher educators to ideally respond to the complexity of their work. Professional development has thus been constructed on the following pillars:

- Supporting the transition from teacher to teacher educator to assist in the development of professional identity (Swennen, Volnam, & Van Essen, 2008)
- Providing opportunities for research, reflection and inquiry (Robinson & McMillan, 2006)
- Developing an institutional culture that links teaching practice to scholarship and provides space for group interactions (Gallagher et al., 2011)
- Articulating a knowledge of practice constructed on awareness of oneself, pedagogy and students (Loughran & Berry, 2005; John, 2002).

Of what relevance can doctoral education be in assisting the development of teacher educators? Why is it often constructed as the first natural choice? It is to an examination of these questions that we now turn.

CONCEPTIONS OF DOCTORAL EDUCATION AND ITS RELEVANCE TO TEACHER EDUCATION

The traditional conception of a doctorate was closely associated with the cognitive development and academic socialisation of scholars to ensure faculties of a new

generation of competent researchers capable of pushing back the frontiers of knowledge, methodologically, theoretically and practically (Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel Conklin, & Hutchings, 2008). Teaching was also naturally integrated in the doctoral programme as part of the various experiences offered to graduates. Yet the escalating expectations of the labour market in relation to higher degrees have led to strategising doctoral education as preparation for success in more diverse workplaces including industry. This meant that over time the language of professional development was effectively integrated in doctoral programmes and the skills targeted were demonstrably transferable to the worksite (Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel Conklin, & Hutchings, 2008).

However, Brook et al. (2010) offer an alternative to the skills-based understandings promoted by globalised discourses of productivity and refer to doctoral education as the “educative process leading to a doctoral degree” (p. 658). They view doctoral learning as “path-making – a richly textured, relational and passionate process through which creative possibilities emerge” (p. 657). Mowbray and Halse (2010) highlight the epistemological ambiguities around the various interpretations of what constitute doctoral skills and instead use Aristotle’s conceptions of intellectual virtues. The shift they propose is critical as it represents a movement from the skills and product driven perspective of skills to a more fluid, experiential understanding of the process of skills acquisition. Their findings approximate Aristotelian knowledge architecture of *nous* (intuitive knowledge), *sophia* (wisdom), *phronesis* (practical knowledge), *episteme* (scientific knowledge) as well as *techne* (productive knowledge). Successful learning goes beyond the production of the thesis, but includes all the attendant self-discipline and emotional resilience necessary to retain engagement with the PhD (Mowbray & Halse, 2010)

What doctoral education then brings to the professional development of teacher educators hinges not only on the different forms of knowledge and dispositions it nurtures but, equally on its embedded pedagogy of collaboration and inquiry, in its cultivation of scientific disposition, in its systematic and disciplined use and creation of new ways of thinking about theory and practice (Gale & Golde, 2004). As an intellectual enterprise, it will encourage teacher educators to project themselves in the various roles they play or will play and become aware of learning as a site of inquiry (Gale & Golde, 2004; Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel Conklin, & Hutchings, 2008). It could be argued that doctoral degrees would be the first natural choice as a professional development pathway because it provides opportunities for all the forms of knowledge to be constructed in mutually reinforcing ways. However, two qualifications need to be made here: first, doctoral programmes have grown globally in types and structures with nuanced interpretations of the relative importance to be attributed to the various intellectual virtues and dispositions as well as to the skills which need to be developed (Brook, et al., 2010). Second, the realities and demands of the workplace have an increasingly determining role to play in deciding what counts as worthwhile knowledge. While support for increasing the number of PhD graduates is often unconditionally

accorded by government, what counts as desirable characteristics is very much context-determined.

THE CONTEXT OF MIE

MIE was set up in 1973 primarily to service the school system particularly in terms of provision of initial and continuing professional development of teachers and educational cadres. Though its mandate includes research and curriculum development, these have claimed fluctuating attention over the 43 years of existence. Being the sole public provider of teacher education, its mission has been to ensure that teachers at all levels of the schooling system are provided with the relevant knowledge and skills to implement government policy in education. The dominant conception of teacher education thus remained subservient to the agenda of the State focused on teachers as ‘executives’ of state policies. This produced, by reverberation, an understanding of teaching in schools as primarily a ‘doing’ job and efficiency was evaluated in terms of whether or not teachers had the practical knowledge to achieve desired outcomes. Scholarship, the qualities of reflexivity and critical self-awareness became, in this context, not only superfluous, but also potentially dangerous because they could also produce in time a critique of the very policies teacher education was expected to endorse.

Because the Ministry of Education is the largest employer of teachers, it defines the desirable outcomes of professional development. That it would be interested in the practical abilities of teachers to bring immediate solutions to classroom and schools issues, is understandably high on its agenda. But, in a small island context where the official pressure for immediate outcomes for ‘teacher training’ converge to the main public service provider, it can lead to the construction of the teacher educator’s job as a technician of practice.

This stance to teacher education has perhaps been inscribed in the very constitutive fabric of the institution whose statutes and structures were originally modelled after African Institutes of Education which were meant to act as the technical and academic arm of ministries developing school curriculum and acting as a clearing house for teacher preparation and continuing professional development. As such, the practice of drawing its faculty from the rank and file of the secondary school sector further reflects the importance attached to proven school pedagogical expertise as a necessary condition of eligibility to become teacher educators. Thus, the professional development needs of school seasoned staff were primarily framed in terms of curriculum materials development because they were assumed to be already expert teachers. But at the turn of the century, changes in the salary structure in the education system meant that seasoned teachers were no longer incentivised to make the shift to teacher education. The consequence was a radical shift in the profile of teacher educators who joined the institution with postgraduate qualifications, but with little or no experience of teaching.

The institutional response to this perceived deficit of experience was to frame a formal policy of staff development which included “Induction courses in Pedagogy for all new recruited Academic Staff members” (MIE, 1999, p. 4). Although the

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impetus for the policy was provided by the changing recruitment patterns, it did not focus exclusively on novice teacher educators, but articulated a comprehensive strategy for an entire career lifespan. The various routes offered to new entrants without teaching experience were either enrolment on a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme designed around a focus on education and pedagogy or an induction course including mentoring by a senior staff, or *in situ* teaching at all levels of the schooling system. The document also reinstated the work expected at the departments acting as micro communities; new entrants shadow other staff in the department across the entire array of professional assignments such as school visits, committees and working groups. Participation in seminars, conferences, short attachment, workshops and staff exchange was understood to be a key aspect of staff development activities which would be formally sponsored. Although research and higher degrees were outlined as part of the strategy, it was not foregrounded until a decade later. In the next section, we examine the set of factors which led to the research turn in the staff development strategies of MIE.

THE RESEARCH TURN IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AT MIE

The Quality Audit Report

Public tertiary education institutions in Mauritius are mandated by the regulatory body for tertiary education, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), to carry out an external assessment as a guarantee of its fitness of and for purpose over a five-year period. The first external audit of the MIE was carried out in 2007. Staff development was signalled as an area requiring attention in the first external audit report of the Institution in 2008. Although there was no suggestion to link research to staff development, the external audit exercise reinstated indirectly the centrality of research as it was one of the critical indexes of successful performance for all public tertiary institutions in Mauritius. This became a source of some institutional anxiety because preoccupation with policy implementation of the Ministry of Education and teacher education meant in practice that less resources had been devoted to research whose outcomes were confined to a few colleagues who had published internationally. The external audit thus had an arm-twisting effect on the institution; although funding, rating, or ranking are not at stake in relation to the quality audit reports, institutions view this exercise as critical to the maintenance of credibility and standing in higher education. A negative report could compromise its status in academia and, paradoxically, weaken its position with its parent ministry. The subsequent institutional interest in building research capacities to improve short and medium term research outcomes can thus be constructed as a direct outcome of the external audit exercise.

International Partnerships

While the outcomes of the external audit created a demand for the development of research capacities, concurrent developments internal to the institution provided

an ideal response. Two international links have served to fuel interest in research via doctoral studies, namely, the professional doctorate run in collaboration with the University of Brighton (UoB) and the PhD offered by UKZN in a cohort model. The older of the two links was the one set up in 1999 with UoB for provision of a Masters Programme to be offered to MIE's PGCE graduates. In the 2000s, the pool of graduates had increased to more than 200 and offered sufficient prospects for a sustainable doctoral programme on MIE campus. The idea of a Professional Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) was first mooted in 2010 and the UoB carried out as part of its partnership audit exercise an assessment of the MIE resources to run the programme on campus. The first cohort was registered in 2012.

The UKZN link was directly constructed on the provision of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Education. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed in 2010 between the MIE and UKZN for a period of five years for the establishment of a cohort model (Samuel & Mariaye, 2014). Because of the cost implications of a UK degree, the institution also strategically sought to open-up by seeking affordable, yet reputable alternatives. But this was not the only reason for the concurrent setting-up of both programmes. The attraction was equally to offer two alternative routes, the PhD and the Ed.D. with the latter maintaining a stronger ground with educational practice. Both were intended for the same goal of building research capacity within the institution in the short term and, in the longer term, help the institution consolidate its research portfolio and expertise in educational research in the region. In fact, this combination of partnerships reflected MIE's dual identities: one of serving as a technical expert on educational practice and policy, producing knowledge directly applicable to the terrain of schools; the other as the academic faculty of education producing knowledge which may not be directly connected to practical concerns in education.

The combined effects of the above on efforts to build staff capacities is that to date, out of a staff list of 100, 19 are registered on the PhD and seven on the Ed.D. programme representing some 60% of the budget of professional development over a four-year period. From a budget of approximately MUR 250,000 (USD 7,000) in 2000 devoted to doctoral studies, the figure has risen to MUR 1.3 million (USD 36,000), in 2015 out of a total staff development budget of MUR 2.1 million (USD 58,000), a five-fold increase in doctoral budgets as compared to a three-fold increase in the institutional budget over the same period of time. It was with enthusiasm that the institution embraced doctoral studies as the path of staff development, an enthusiasm which has mitigated considerably three years into the programmes for management on account of some unanticipated costs which have surfaced in terms of human resource management on a day-to-day basis. Changes in the contextual realities in terms of fresh pressures for MIE to focus on issues of practice are equally casting a shadow on the initial support for doctoral studies. But for the management the danger resides not only in the practical matters. More importantly, doctoral studies trouble conceptions of what it means to be a teacher educator, affords

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candidates critical distance from policy makers and can even occasion a counter voice to compliance to the Ministry. For some, this is where the danger lies.

TENSIONS EXPERIENCED

Human Resources Crisis

With around 20% of staff working on their doctoral projects, the corresponding investment in human resource weighs significantly in institutional balance especially in view of the maximum number of five years for the completion for the PhD with UKZN. Although the Ed.D. programme is more flexible in terms of time allocated (up to seven years for completion), the implications for registration and tuition fees are significant compounding the pressure on doctoral candidates to complete in the minimum number of years. What this signifies for the day-to-day management of MIE is high opportunity cost in terms of the portfolio of activities staff could be productively engaged in such as curriculum design and implementation as well as the array of activities the institution is directly responsible for. Two alternatives are being implemented both experiencing limited success. The first one is in the form of a revised understanding of what constitutes academic work and how this can be consensually quantified. The staff development policy documents of 1999, 2011, and 2014 successively make no mention of how the diversity of academic work is to be conceptualised, and more importantly how staff can be supported in making choices in terms of which basket of combinations they would wish to select for their own professional development. The operationalisation of a policy to promote research through doctoral programmes would mean that staff be formally released from other professional obligations for an accounted number of hours per week. What kind of investment a PhD candidate needs in terms of time is a matter of contention. This process is now increasingly difficult as staff accumulate activities in an ever-growing portfolio for which a workload corollary is hard to agree upon.

The question of fairness to both those who are pursuing doctoral studies and those who are not, in terms of shifting what is considered to be the more menial academic tasks like teaching and school placement supervision, can potentially lead to conflicts and tensions within departments. The pertinence of this issue can only be fully gauged when the prestige of a research portfolio outweighs teaching quality at the time of promotion. Adoption of doctoral programmes as a major institutional avenue for professional growth has foregrounded the necessity to devise and implement a concurrent policy for management of workload within departments and schools. The absence of such a policy is currently creating tensions as staff on doctoral studies wish to benefit from workload release or apply for study leave.

Additionally, a number of changes in the political scene in Mauritius has meant that MIE has had to embrace a number of fresh assignments from the Ministry of Education to facilitate the implementation of education reform. For a number of staff registered on a doctoral programme, this has meant slowing down their studies.

More importantly, much of the teeth grinding equally emanates from sharp criticism of the reforms themselves. As doctoral candidates assume researcher identities, their role as policy implementers becomes increasingly challenged. Smith (2005) highlighted that two complementary competences needed by teacher educators are the twin abilities to create new knowledge of both practical and theoretical nature and being able to presumably use this knowledge to make an impact on education within and outside the institution. How will the institution manage the frustration which can emanate over time when staff are compelled because of their institutional designation to embrace government policy when their academic independence afforded by 'doctoralness' dictates a different view? If staff are to be encouraged to see their own practice as a terrain for building and extending their own theoretical knowledge, how is this practice to be reconfigured within the strait jackets of policies which are often dictated by considerations which are remotely academic? What should be the connection afforded by a doctoral degree between theory and practice?

Should professional development of teacher educators be constructed primarily to respond to the needs of the 'lowlands' of practice or the 'highlands' of theory?

The identity of the institute is firmly linked to teacher preparation and education as revealed in its strategic goal of transforming practices at school level. In 2008, a policy decision was taken to infuse across programmes a more significant element of school-based experience in all full-time programmes to a minimum of a third of the total credit allocated. This decision followed the outcomes of evaluation of the impact of MIE teacher education programmes by practitioners across both primary and secondary schools which revealed the predominance of theories in its programmes (MIE, 2003). Such pressure and criticism of teacher education is a universal phenomenon (Gilroy, 2014) but with the specific difference that in a small island state like Mauritius, they are exclusively channelled to a single institution which is government-sponsored and considered as the national provider for teacher education. This public assessment of the relevance and currency of what constitutes the core of MIE activities is an important barometer of its effectiveness and eclipses all other aspects of institutional contribution, inclusive of research, especially at this time when the agenda of education reform requires of MIE to mobilise immediately practical knowledge to assist the government in effecting pedagogical change. It is perhaps unreasonable to expect an immediate return as the gestation period of an investment in doctoral studies is likely to be longer than expected. The PhD is perhaps dangerous in the kind of expectation that it creates, the skills of reflexivity and scholarship highlighted by Robinson and Macmillan (2006) require a slow cooking of expertise.

The realisation that doctoral studies are not developing and not meant to develop teaching skills, both first order and second order, has led to the question of why should teacher education institutions continue to invest a large proportion of resources in

their pursuit? Are there alternative pathways of professional growth other than a PhD which reconcile the scientific and philosophical dispositions expected of a teacher educator with enhanced teaching ability? Should doctoral studies then be discounted because they do not offer pedagogical skills enhancement? Are there other options for professional development of teacher educators which exist outside the 'over treaded' doctoral tracks but which do not form part of the dominant North/large nations-driven discourse? In the second section of this chapter, we outlined the four competences identified by Koster et al. (2005) expected of a teacher educator based on the outcomes of research in international contexts. The only one which is optional for a PhD is the pedagogical competence. Should the element of practice be reinstated prominently and a more pedagogical skills development programme be adopted for novice teacher educators in lieu of a doctoral degree? Should teacher educators be encouraged to pursue only professional doctorates instead of PhDs? While the Ed.D. is constructed around the practice of a candidate, is it tied to pedagogy as well?

These are the questions which our experience with doctoral programmes have generated. It is unlikely that we will have a definitive answer to each of these. Yet, we can, based on our experience of these tensions offer three principles which can assist in framing professional development policies for teacher educators:

The Principle of Diversity

We that posit doctoral programmes have to be supplemented by other forms of staff development such as short-term placement in a variety of school contexts, participation in school action research, and involvement in local school communities and NGOs. While it is likely that teacher education faculties will continue to feel the pressure of producing research outcomes, its long-term engagement with the terrain of the school is a guarantee of its sustainability and credibility with practitioners who are the real 'consumers' of teacher education programmes or advances in curricular developments and innovations. Many governments are in a process of withdrawing support to universities requiring them to generate their own funding from the sector which best benefits from their education and training (Gilroy, 2014). If the thinking extends to how faculties of education best serve the interest of its 'industry', it would mean that academics would have to 'get their hands dirty' in the lowlands of practice by engaging in more policy- and practice-based research. If the main consumers of academic publications are the academics themselves what is the real impact of all the investment going into teacher education? If teachers and other education professionals are to become the primary audience for research outcomes, then research must be carried out with them rather than on them. If staff development is construed as enriching staff engagement with the world of practice in a reflective and reflexive manner, more institutional realism implies creating multiple avenues offering professional learning gains rather than solely relying on higher degrees.

The Principle of Equity

If the pressures of workload would mean, realistically, a relatively low proportion of staff can be released from some of their professional responsibilities to complete higher degrees, the institution must consider how, on balance, comparable opportunities for growth are offered to each member as per their needs at a particular moment in time. The institutional mechanism to negotiate with staff what pathways they will adopt and which areas they wish to develop expertise in, must be set up and activated to avoid duplication and promote better human resource management and deployment. The possibility to register for higher degrees would be offered to all staff but when it will be sponsored and supported by the institution is to be determined keeping in mind the career stage, inclination and the interest of the institute. Rather than giving *carte blanche* to individuals to drive their own PhD and be sponsored by the institute, it may be more judicious to devise a system of commissioned PhDs for those who so wish to apply. This would ensure dovetailing of institutional and individual pursuits.

The Principle of Balance

Financial stringency would also constrain many faculties of education to use their seed money more strategically for enhancement of professional knowledge and skills. As accountability channels multiply, so does the need to be research active on the three fronts of academia, policy and practice. Balancing the forms of staff development would open up possibilities for work within all three contexts to produce innovative practices and research outcomes which stakeholders will find useful and relevant. Since staff development is constructed in many universities as a means of attaining institutional objectives and targets, calibrating the concrete outcomes of professional development with the expectations of the broad range of stakeholders in the medium and long terms becomes key.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Examining the case of the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) has revealed how competing pressures from all these quarters certainly influence what is considered as worthwhile knowledge and skills for teacher educators. The picture which emerges in the case study is one of struggle and internal contradictions inherent to the historical context of the MIE. These contradictions are not the monopoly of non-university based teacher education establishments, but are also ubiquitous to teacher education faculties nested in universities which are faced with competing demands and priorities of the State, employers of the graduates, regulatory bodies, teachers and schools.

At the risk of appearing contradictory, although we argue that programmes focused on teaching are critical to prepare faculty for second order teaching, we

would as strongly argue in favour of doctoral studies retaining their importance as a core element of teacher educator professional development. Perhaps, they should be located at a slightly later stage than novitiate years, but should be pursued for the independence of thought and freedom of choice they afford, whatever their forms and structures. Abandoning the scholarly pathway traced by doctoral studies may condemn teacher education to remain at the margins of knowledge production and cause the field to narrow its gaze to exclusively context-dependent concerns. I contend here, that what is viewed as dangerous by policy makers can be necessary and productive in the long term. The chapter has outlined how critical the pursuit of doctoral studies is to the MIE, to maintain its independence and to seek emancipation from what could perhaps become in the long term an overly coercive relationship with policy makers. It will assist countries like Mauritius where the proximity between academics and policy makers which is characteristic of small island states (Samuel & Mariaye, 2016) forestalls healthy critique of government actions.

Perhaps the current institutional discomfort experienced at MIE is reflective of a period of adjustment to a new institutional culture which is being ushered in. As more staff earn their doctoral degrees, they would claim voice, not only contesting policy but more disruptively each other. In a context where subdued acquiescence is the expected behaviour, doctoralness can indeed be regarded as dangerous.

Indeed, doctoral degrees, both the Ed.D. and the PhD involve the extension of theoretical boundaries but we have moved beyond the theory-practice dichotomy. Sustainable improvement of practice can rarely occur outside the bounds of reflexive practice (Harrison & Frankie, 2008; Cochran-Smith, 2003). If teacher educators are not theoretically tooled to read the situatedness of practice, actions however seductively productive in the short term, always run out of steam. However, we have made a case for both an Ed.D. and a PhD as being relevant. MIE offers both tracks to its staff, a luxury which has considerably enriched perspectives and experience.

However, in strategising capacity development in teacher education, institutions must pay careful attention to human resource planning. Because the pressure for higher degrees will continue to increase on account of the need for individuals to showcase research outcomes, there is a risk of institutions overestimating their ability to sustain doctoral studies either in terms of staff release or in terms of supervisory abilities. Considerable foresight must be exercised and support structures developed to ensure that what started as a mutually enriching collaborative project for supervisors and doctoral candidates is not experienced as a lonely, competitive journey.

More importantly, research at doctoral level is about self-transformation; it is about developing in researchers the values of respect for communities especially for those whose voices have been silenced, of commitment to informed action. These can never be superfluous especially in a context where there is increased pressure to produce ready fixes.

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Hyleen Mariaye
Mauritius Institute of Education, Mauritius

THABO MSIBI

13. QUEERING CURRICULUM STUDIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

A Call for Reconceptualisation?

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reflects on the shortcomings of curriculum theorising in South Africa by drawing on my experiences as an academic who has deliberately sought to reconceptualise and re-imagine the field of Curriculum Studies through transgressive (hooks, 1994), queerly teaching. In particular, I reflect on my experiences of teaching a Master of Education Module *Theorising Curriculum*, a module that deliberately and transgressively introduces issues of gender, race, sexuality and queerness into the curriculum theory class. I focus on the lessons learnt about the nature of curriculum thinking by presenting the responses of both staff and students. Arguing that Curriculum Studies as a field continues to superficially draw on a *Tylerian* approach to curriculum theorising in South Africa, the chapter explores the static nature of the field in South Africa, thereby troubling the conceptions and understandings of curriculum theorising. The chapter is cautious not to make sweeping statements about curriculum theorising in South Africa only on the basis of reflections from one institution. Understanding the limitations presented by a ‘critical incident’ methodology, the chapter suggests an interrogation of the field through more research, calling for a movement away from textual analyses of curriculum, to a theory informed by questions of the present moment, i.e. the question of decolonisation, transformation and equality.

The chapter is not simply driven by the experiences of one individual. It is based also on scholarly work on curriculum. For example, in a written paper on a conversation between William Pinar and other South African scholars on the state of the field of Curriculum Studies in South Africa, Soudien notes that “the field is relatively weak, ... characterised by poor theory. The theory that is evident is uncritically borrowed and poorly worked with” (Pinar, 2009, p. 14). Soudien’s scathing critique is in the main informed by the proliferating practice in South Africa of the poor use of borrowed theory. In particular, scholarship employing Basil Bernstein’s theories (see 1971, 1977, 1981, 1986, 1990, 1999, 2000) has largely informed theorising in the field, with questions around identification, decolonisation

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and empire often escaping the gaze of theorists in favour of the more palatable class critiques. Soudien's address was captured by Pinar in these words:

The state of the field is wholly unequal to the challenge it confronts. The field is, without sounding self-righteous, an accomplice in the process of leading our society towards identities that are not equal to the challenge of our times. In South Africa, it is, by and large, an almost irrelevant field. It has a mountain to climb.... To build a stronger community is going to take several decades. Needed are strong sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, philosophers and historians who will make the field of education their own. (2009, p. 11)

In essence, Soudien makes a significant point on the need for more interdisciplinary (and perhaps transdisciplinary) work in the process of curriculum theorising. His proposals require education theorists to go beyond the state-mandated, textual analysis of curriculum into waters not previously entered; it is asking scholars to be vulnerable in the process of knowledge building – a tough ask for academics who enjoy the comfort and tag of 'experts'. The remark is also making an inviting call. It calls for the breaking of boundaries, suggesting that the study of education ought not to be only the terrain of educationists.

What then might this mean for education? How can curriculum be read sociologically, anthropologically, historically, philosophically and psychologically? The essence of this chapter is to respond to this. It suggests, from a sociological point of view, that an engagement with curriculum purely from a formal, textual point of view takes the life out of curriculum. It makes curriculum devoid of actors, removing all human agency and actions from the process of education. Yet, as the theoretical work of William Pinar (see 1995) and others has shown, the very essence of curriculum is human experience. Curriculum is therefore phenomenological. It speaks to human interaction just as it speaks to the interaction of the written text with a human actor, who is both a receiver and an actor in the process of experiencing curriculum.

The chapter begins with a discussion on the nature of curriculum theorising internationally (with the US being the central focus); this is to highlight the debates in the field with the intention to demonstrate the evolution of curriculum thinking. This section will be followed by a discussion of current theorising in South Africa. Here, I will present briefly how curriculum has tended to be theorised in the country. I will argue that theorising has mainly been in response to state policy provisions, with little effort to take into consideration work on identity and power in South African schools. An outline of the methodology employed in the chapter as well as the design of the module under discussion will thereafter be presented. This will be followed by a discussion on the reflections which inform the arguments in the chapter. Here, I will show how curriculum theorising continues to be steeped exclusively in curriculum development discourses, despite efforts to queer curriculum offerings. A conclusion of the chapter will thereafter be presented.

UNDERSTANDING CURRICULUM THEORY: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The field of curriculum studies internationally, particularly in the United States, has been characterised mainly by tensions between scholars who belong to a Tylerian school of thought (mainly focussed on curriculum development) and those known as reconceptualists, i.e. focussed on a progressive movement which sees curriculum as speaking to “education for democratisation. Which mean[s] schooling [should be] for psychological and social as well as intellectual development” (Pinar, 1999, p. xiv). Essentially, and largely as a result of the emergence of the post-Sputnik curriculum reforms, the work of Ralph Tyler (1949) found particular resonance in US education through its pronouncement on rationality and science in the process of curriculum development and thinking. For Tyler, four fundamental principles were essential in curriculum development: school purpose, educational experiences related to the purposes, the organisation of those experiences and the evaluation of these experiences. This meant that education became intently focussed on the production of a citizenry that would ultimately feed into the economic and market project. Through Tyler’s principles, curriculum theorising became associated with large scale curriculum studies, focussed on education as a system, whose concern was with “technical rationality” (Grimmett & Halvorson, 2010). Defining the nature of curriculum work during this period, Sears and Marshall (2000), note that:

[This work was] notable for [its] global orientation, teacher-proofing, and discipline-specificity...Curriculum-making became an empirical science which ushered in an entire new field of study (i.e. curriculum evaluation) while placing teachers in a vulnerable new state of accountability (for student learning) without adaptability (in terms of what and how to teach). (p. 201)

Essentially, curriculum theorising became concerned primarily with answering questions like: “does the curriculum work? How can it fit the institution? Will the school function more smoothly and efficiently? How do we measure success?” (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2006, p. 661). Curriculum became “a plan for action or a written document that includes strategies for achieving desired goals or ends” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004, p. 10). Behavioural objectives took central focus and the agency of teachers and the experience of learning became relegated to the sidelines of the inconsequential.

In the late 1960s, as a result of the moribund state of the field at the time, and the resistance challenging the assumptions of Tyler’s rationale, the reconceptualist movement was born. Announcing their entry through the seminal text *Curriculum Theorizing: The Reconceptualists* (1975), William Pinar put together a collection of readings developed by a grouping of progressive scholars who theorised curriculum beyond the technicist construction of behavioural objectives. Here, reconceptualists sought to shift away from systems thinking and to pay more attention to experience, creativity, inclusivity and democratisation. Scholars such as

Michael Apple, Maxine Greene and Madeleine Grumet, amongst many others, saw education as not simply about the “action/reaction swings of educational policy” (Grumet, 1989), but rather as a contested terrain, which needed to be troubled beyond the simplistic response to curriculum state programmes and interventions. Simply, curriculum looked beyond the study of state official instruments and their impact on system maturity. Rather, focus was shifted to the political and humanistic nature of education. For these educators, curriculum became understood to be the totality of the learning experiences in relation to all educational arrangements and practices, issues of inclusion and exclusion, identification and power, both inside and outside the classroom (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). In essence, reconceptualists redefined understandings of curriculum, suggesting that feminism, phenomenology, autobiography, neo-Marxism, post structuralism, and existentialism can inform both the method and content of curriculum thinking. Works focussed on race, gender, sexuality and politics started dominating the field of curriculum given the insistence from the reconceptualists that curriculum thinking ought to focus on the full educational experience of both the teacher and student. The focus of the reconceptualists was to “deconstruct curriculum as institutional text and re-construct it as contemporary discourses” (Grimmett & Halvorson, 2010).

While the reconceptualists now dominate the field of curriculum, the failure of theorists in this theoretical persuasion to respond to state programmes has resulted in several criticisms, with some attacking the theoretical focus of this work. Foremost critics have included Wraga and Hlebowitsh (2003), who argue that the field of curriculum has always been in a state of “crisis” in the US, largely as a result of the reconceptualist work. The same point has been argued by Michael Young, in the context of the United Kingdom. Young (2013) notes that the purpose of curriculum theory should be to understand how education prepares young people for employment, and it should thus be exploring “what is taught and learned in school” (p. 101). For him, curriculum studies is in crisis as it has abandoned the question of epistemologies, i.e. it has failed “to address epistemological issues concerning questions of the truth, and reliability of different forms of knowledge and how such issues have both philosophical and sociological dimensions” (p. 103). For Young (2013), curriculum theory has lost its distinctiveness leading to two consequences: firstly, scholars from a range of disciplines have come to the field to theorise about culture and identity without saying much about curriculum as it functions in the school. Secondly, he notes that policy and curriculum designers have ignored, at least in the United Kingdom, curriculum theorists as specialists in the field. This has led to the proliferation of curriculum studies focussed on identity at the expense of scholarly work focussed on questions of knowledge. Nevertheless, while these critiques exist, reconceptualisation has been fully embedded in the field of curriculum studies, at least in the global north. Ivor Goodson (2004) has for instance engaged in serious scholarly work in the United Kingdom focussed on questions of curriculum knowledge, schooling and identity, with a focus on narrative work. There also exist multiple works in the field focussed on sexuality, gender identity, race and empire.

QUEERING CURRICULUM STUDIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In recent times, reconceptualist curriculum work, as Pinar himself notes, has entered new terrains of internationalisation, the dangers of globalisation and *satellitisation* of education (Pinar, 2011).

UNDERSTANDINGS OF CURRICULUM THEORY IN SOUTH AFRICA

As established above, it is fair to say that the field of curriculum studies and theorising in South Africa remains weak, and heavily influenced by a technicist view of curriculum theorising. As Le Gange notes in his analysis of the state of the field in South Africa "...all of the national curriculum frameworks [in South Africa] comfortably fit the key principles of Tyler's (1949) rationale" (2014, p. 472). Curriculum remains an area of the study of institutional texts, with work that seeks to radically shift from this positioning being placed in the margins of the field. For example, the institutional works of Jonathan Jansen have taken central feature in the study of curriculum in post-apartheid South Africa, largely as a result of his famed critique of outcomes based education (OBE). Through his widely acknowledged essay presented at the then University of Durban-Westville on the *Ten reasons why OBE would fail* (1997/1998), Jansen's work came to define the field of curriculum studies in South Africa. While Jansen's other work generally transgresses the technicist mould, it is his work on the official curriculum that has received the attention of curriculum scholars. His other more exciting work on race and schooling continues to be used mainly by scholars outside the field. Most of the works on curriculum in South Africa became intently focussed on unpacking the relevance of the newly introduced, post-apartheid curricula on teachers and learners. A visit to the libraries of universities in South Africa can show the dominance of this work in informing the field. It is fair to write that critiques of OBE and other curricula interventions following OBE have been the focus of curriculum scholars.

Recently, work on curriculum studies has focused on the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), the recently introduced, state designed curriculum. As with OBE, curriculum scholars have sought to explore whether teachers are using this new "teacher-proof" curriculum (see Msibi & Mchunu, 2013). Students of curriculum are pushed towards understanding CAPS and to make sure that "curriculum" appears in their titles if their work is to be taken seriously as curriculum work. In higher education institutions, the focus is on demarcating boundaries of the field: this is what curriculum studies is and you cannot study anything else apart from this! Very few scholars in the field have been able to transcend this rigidity (see Chisholm's (2004) edited collection for a rare good example), with generally most of the work focussed on Young's (2013) call for disciplinarily and knowledge focus. The work of Basil Bernstein therefore has found particular resonance, with class often always being the only one dimension in which scholars are able to write with a degree of confidence. Queerness, gender, disability, embodiment and studies of race have not been seen as curriculum

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work: “They are about schooling generally, not curriculum”, so said one of my interviewers when I applied for a position of associate professor at a South African university.

This insularity of curriculum, which has been the work of technicist curriculum specialists in the global north, is what has found direct privileging in the South African context. I suggest here that to neglect questions of identity and experience in education is to neglect education itself. As Slattery (2012, p. 146) aptly notes “the heart of [curriculum] in the postmodern era is a commitment to a robust investigation of cultural, ethnic, gender, and identity issues”. Yet, in the context of South Africa, these robust debates are not happening in curriculum studies.

METHODOLOGY

This work is phenomenological in its nature. It has a focus on human consciousness, life-world, and biography (Pinar et al., 2006). This aligns very well with the work of reconceptualists. I draw from critical incidents within a Master of Education module I teach, entitled *Theorising Curriculum*. I write about experiences in this module particularly as it deliberately introduces controversial subjects focused on queerness and marginality in the post-apartheid moment. I select particular experiences which impacted directly on me at the time of the experience to showcase the difficulties, issues and challenges of introducing queerness and diversity issues in a field that has defined itself largely in relation to institutional arrangements and formal curriculum statements. Critical incidents and autobiographic work are important in a study of education as it “invites those who would teach to recover the world within which they came to be knowing subjects. It invites them to recover their own intentionality, and requires them to articulate and make explicit the relations which we all take for granted ...” (Grumet, 1989, p. 15).

While I take seriously the value of critical incidents in the process of research writing, I am also conscious that these are drawn from memory, a fallible source. Memory work is useful for facilitating “a heightened consciousness of how social forces and practices, such as gender, race and class, affect human experiences and understandings” (Pithouse-Morgan, Mitchell, & Pillay, 2012, pp. 1–2). However, memories are always told subjectively and based on one’s recollection of events. Such recollection of events is never perfect, i.e. memory does not represent objective facts. It rather captures incidents according to a reading of the story teller, a reading which may not necessarily be fully complete. Nevertheless, while memories and narratives are not perfect, they do offer an avenue for crucial data.

A critical point concerning the use of critical incidents in this chapter regards the usefulness of exploratory research in the process of curriculum theorising. Pinar (2010) notes that the very essence of curriculum is *currere*, i.e. a “complicated conversation” drawn from one’s educational experience. Without experience therefore, curriculum theorising is transformed into a lifeless engagement, thus reducing its effect.

THEORISING CURRICULUM, THE MODULE

Theorising Curriculum is a Master of Education module taught to all Curriculum Studies students pursuing a Master's degree via course work at UKZN. The module attracts generally mature students whose ages range between 35 and 60. Many of the registered students are either in management positions in their respective schools or are interested in being promoted to management. The module also occasionally enrolls officials from the Department of Education, who are interested in curriculum. Generally, in the last five years, the module has been dominated by African students with a few Indian and Coloured students.

The design of the module is steeped in an understanding of curriculum theorising as “an interdisciplinary study of educational experience” (Pinar, 2010), and an understanding of curriculum as a “complicated conversation” (ibid). Therefore, the design of the module is heavily reliant on dialogical engagements and an understanding of teachers as themselves being curriculum. We interrogate the meanings and understanding of curriculum theorising from a view point that seeks to interrogate students' taken-for granted understandings of curriculum and selfhood. The sessions are intensive, offered daily for eight hours over five days in one holiday break (mostly Easter in the first semester, or July in the second semester). Recently, due to the increased module credits from 16 to 32 credits, and the fact that the time was never adequate for serious engagements, the module offering time was extended from five to ten days.

I begin engagements with students in the module with two simple questions: why did you choose curriculum and what do you wish to get at the end of the sessions? Here, a whole range of responses come through from students. Without fail, all the participants want to understand the workings of the school curriculum, i.e. the formal curriculum, or they want to know how to design and develop the formal curriculum. Their understanding of curriculum, like many of my colleagues, is one exclusively based on the formal, textual forms of curriculum. In a country where educational attainment levels are quite low, one can hardly blame their responses. I often indicate at the end of their responses that the module may not necessarily respond to their expectations in the ways they envisage. I tell them that they will be highly triggered in the module as the module questions what they think they know about curriculum as well as what they think they know about themselves and others. I explain that the module will deal with topics that they possibly would not have engaged with, as well as theories often considered outside the terrain of curriculum. We then often develop guidelines to assist with ensuring that the space is conducive for serious learning. I often explain that the module will make both them and myself vulnerable as it is not simply about theorising curriculum in the abstract, but it is about theorising what is lived and experienced subjectively (see Pinar et al., 2006). Guidelines such as listening to others, respecting one another's views, playing the ball not the player, etc. often emerge from the discussions as a result.

In the days that follow we engage in the contested nature of curriculum definitions, including the various curriculum orientations, i.e. exploring the structuralist, generic and substantive views of curriculum theorising. We explore the history of theorising, engaging seriously with Tyler's rationale, right up to the post-reconceptualisation period. We then enter the South African space of curriculum theorising, tracing the history of curriculum theorising through Crain Soudien's brilliant chapter on 'what to teach the natives' (2011); we explore the ways in which race produces particular curricula experiences and begin here a conversation around woundedness. Jonathan Jansen's (2009) post conflict theory is useful here. We link to ways in which current theorising is occurring in South Africa, looking at the types of work dominating the field.

The discussion on race paves a useful way to the more difficult discussions on sexuality and gender identity. Students (due to their positioning as victims of racism) find it easier to engage with race. They often share powerful and painful stories of ill-treatment during apartheid, which initiates a conversation around the systematic nature of discrimination. Once this is done, it becomes easier to enter into a discussion on gender, sexuality and gender identity. We discuss articles both locally and internationally which explore how queer identities experience schooling, including how the teachers' own identities are troubled by queerness. This becomes a very difficult discussion for students. For the first time in their lives, they are confronted with difficult knowledge, knowledge that they have not encountered in the formal spaces of learning. My often-undeclared queer sexuality frequently offers moments of dissonance: they often are afraid of responding in ways that may offend me as a teacher as they take it as a given that I identify as gay, hence the queer content. I often hear sentences like "shame man, they shouldn't be killed", in reference to queer individuals. Noting the loaded, patronising statements, I often put the students at ease by reminding them of our guidelines. I deliberately also disrupt the construction that they may have of me by reminding them that I do not claim a sexual identity, and even if I did they would need to be honest as part of their learning. I also then ask them questions that speak to their inherent values, which often results in their true feelings being aired.

I then enter into the field of theory, and I introduce them to how theory ties up with experience. We engage on queer, feminist, critical, post-colonial, deconstruction and other socio cultural theories in order to demonstrate how educational experience can be understood and theorised. We explore how questions of history impact on current experience and also emphasise that curriculum goes beyond the text.

As part of the assessment tasks, students complete three tasks, with two of the three being partly assessed by their peers. In a commitment to what may be seen as democratic practice, both the guidelines and assessment are open to student input. Students decide on the criteria for assessment and a joint contract is agreed upon. This is part of the module's queerly teaching, i.e. by adopting a more 'co-constructed' approach to curriculum and teaching, the module deliberately deviates from traditional views on teaching, placing more emphasis on collective forms of

teaching, assessment and theorising. The first assignment is a presentation of a reading assigned to them; the second is a visual presentation of their curriculum experiences. Here they are expected to engage in a process of *currere*, i.e. “on the educational experience of the individual as reported by the individual” (Pinar et al., 2006, p. 414). The stories of apartheid horror and education are often demonstrated through the wounded state of South African teachers, and the general dysfunction which exists in schools. The assignment allows them to engage in a grounded process of theorising. It asks for a critical reflection and an interrogation of the self. Many students speak of the experiences that they have never spoken about: they speak of stories of powerlessness as women teachers at the hands of both bureaucracies at work and patriarchal husbands at home; they speak of poverty and its destabilising effect and impact on educational attainment of learners. They talk of their frustrations as teachers as they observe the violence of the schooling system. We hear disturbing accounts of professional jealousy and incompetence in schools: some speak of situations where they have had to flee near-death experiences as a result of their power hungry colleagues who are not afraid to pay money to students and hitmen to kill competent teachers. But it is not always bad news. Stories of possibilities also get presented. We hear about lone teachers trying to make a difference in a rural school with no resources. Teachers tell their stories of paying money out of their own pockets to assist children to get to universities. The stories told are always rich, telling a powerful picture about curriculum in South Africa. I then ask the students to write these studies up using theories of their choice to analyse the experience. The aim of this is to show them that curriculum goes beyond the state mandates, and is interdisciplinary in the process of theorising.

EMERGING ISSUES

In this section, I explore the responses from colleagues and students to the module as presented, and seek to show the limitations around theorising in the context. I show that while the module attempts to present a more progressive view of curriculum theorising, the students’ and colleagues’ histories often hinder learning, resulting in a resistance that involves students resorting to the technicist view of curriculum.

You Are Diluting It! Responses from Colleagues

When I first introduced the redesigned module to colleagues, I was immediately greeted by resistance. It was clear that many thought what I was teaching was not curriculum, but something that was in the preserve of social justice education. It was also clear to me that for many staff, there was a clear demarcation between what curriculum ought to teach and what ‘others’ beyond curriculum must teach. One of the colleagues was bold enough to tell me that “you are diluting it”, i.e. for her, I was mixing curriculum with things it should not be mixed with. I found this declaration quite worrisome in its assumption of the exclusion of questions of justice from

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the curriculum, especially in post-apartheid South Africa! The circulating stories were such that I was trying to justify my queerness through the module. The fact that I'm *assumed* to be gay did little to dissuade colleagues from this thinking. It seemed that the possibility of queerness finding a home in mainstream teaching was particularly unsettling to them, although of course no one could say this directly to me. The idea that I was diluting the curriculum appeared to be the safest and most uncontroversial response my colleagues could give to what they saw as problematic teaching.

Of course the view that those of us who see curriculum as heavily tied to the social and cultural project of justice in education are diluting curriculum is not new. As indicated above, the reconceptualist movement in the United States has been vilified precisely for this reason. The same response has been received by scholars in the United Kingdom, with scholars such as Young (2013) arguing for the need to have a curriculum theory of knowledge. Focusing on the politics of curriculum, Young argues, fails to capture the essentials of what curriculum is and what it ought to do.

It appears that the same preoccupation with 'curriculum knowledge' and sequencing remains the preoccupation of the field of curriculum in South Africa. For example, a quick search of curriculum scholars in South Africa will reveal an over-reliance on Bernstein as the dominant theory in the field. Knowledge structure and organisation remains the one most dominant way in which curriculum is imagined and indeed taught. Yet, if we are to take seriously the need to interrogate the "questions on our time" (Pinar, 2011), it becomes clear that questions of identity cannot be left outside the realm of curriculum. If we are to take seriously Jansen's (2009) assertions that South Africa is a wounded nation, we cannot escape the serious questions of how identity and identification are experienced in South African schools. This is especially so as we engage daily on the horrific stories of violence, racism, homophobia, sexism and other forms of discrimination that continue to define the experiences of our teachers and learners in our schools.

Why Don't You Teach them Theories in Curriculum?

As already established above, curriculum continues to be positioned purely in terms of systems thinking, i.e. either as development or as concerned with questions around knowledge. One of the most prevailing criticisms from colleagues in the discipline is that students ought to be taught theories of curriculum, i.e. the assumption is that students should be taught theories on curriculum development or theories of knowledge. There exists a belief that there are (or should be) theories taught to curriculum students that only speak to curriculum (textual) issues. As students that register for the module are expected to complete a research study on curriculum, there always is a push for students to have "curriculum" enlisted on the topic, or to explore topics that lend themselves towards the study of curriculum as it functions textually. I am often confronted with questions around why it is that students are

not able to use theories learnt in the module when they have to do their research projects. It is important to point out here that the reaction from colleagues is not necessarily fuelled by homophobia or support for the exclusion of discussions around discrimination; it is often resultant from a limited understanding of curriculum as a field of study, i.e. that students doing curriculum should only be taught development topics.

If we accept that curriculum is “an interdisciplinary study of educational experience”, as Pinar (2010) argues, then we ought to accept that by its nature, the field naturally opens itself up for other ‘transgressive’ (hooks, 1994) forms of theorising. This asks our students to go beyond formulaic understandings of theory by visiting scholarly works that they ordinarily wouldn’t engage with in education. Further, this demands for us to shift away from grand, singular understandings of curriculum espoused by scholars like Young (2013) and Wragga and Hlebowitsh (2003). Morrison (2004) captures the need to be more imaginative as curriculum scholars. He writes:

It is perhaps misplaced to seek a single theory of the curriculum or view of its development. Why is curriculum theory singular? After all, we do not have only a single psychological theory, or sociological theory? Rather, if the curriculum theory world is to survive ... then it must come out of the protected, perhaps introverted world of academe and must embrace the complicated, tension-ridden, uncertain, complex, contradictory, messy, uncontrollable, and wonderful world of people; conception and execution must unite.
(p. 489)

Perhaps, the messiness that Morrison speaks of here is exactly what many fear when curriculum theory expands beyond the simplistic, technicist and non-intellectual frames. (Not many want to deal with uncomfortable issues!) When we are forced to go beyond our comfort zones of being conduits for the implementation of state curriculum statements, we get asked to engage in a serious academic process that many in the field fear. As Slattery (2012, p. 146) points out, in curriculum theorising “there is a commitment to a robust investigation of cultural, ethnic, gender, and identity issues”. This commitment isn’t necessarily comfortable because it asks academics to get to a point of not knowing, to imagine new possibilities in theorising and to avoid simplistic explanations.

An important point to highlight here is that the pre-occupation around development is in fact historical (see Le Grange, 2014). In a context where the state has been instrumental in using the curriculum for its own sinister purposes (Christian National Education and Bantu Education are perfect examples of this) it is no wonder that the formal curriculum has received exclusive attention from scholars and students of curriculum in the post-apartheid moment. Academics, like learners of the time, were trained to be apolitical. Thus, curriculum workers and theorists saw their duty as being that of engagement with curriculum from a textual perspective, i.e. assisting the state in advancing its intended purposes, or, for those critical scholars,

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challenging the mandate of the state. However, in a post-apartheid moment, I suggest that theory-building in the field has to be accompanied by a serious project of social justice, and a theory-building process that draws from an eclectic mix of viewpoints.

“We can’t make the connections” : Responses from Students

Linked to the above two points have been limited responses of students to the module. While students enjoy the module and often write enthusiastic reviews about it, they often do not see how it is tied to other modules within curriculum. Although a considerable amount of time is spent explaining that the module deals with the issues it highlights so as to open up possibilities for studies beyond the normative understanding of curriculum (i.e. curriculum development, or functions of the official, hidden and null curriculum); students often struggle to make the links between what they learn in the module and the studies they undertake. At the time of doing their research project, I am often inundated with emails from students who ask me to give them theoretical frameworks in curriculum that they can use to do their studies as their supervisors are asking them to use frameworks learnt in their theorising curriculum module. As I write, I have a student who is demanding that I find a framework for him to use in his study. This is despite my attempts to get him to think outside the box where theory is concerned. For many, the connections of understanding the versatility of curriculum theory and the need to apply this versatility in their Masters degrees is often not made. Instead, I often observe many of them engaging in one ‘framework’ they learn in another module, a ‘framework’ that explains the processes of *curriculum implementation*. This ‘framework’ becomes problematically used in all studies in the field, regardless of focus, leading to the intellectual stagnation of students. Part of the problem is that academics are wary of encouraging students to pursue controversial topics, which results in students not knowing how to fit the learnt material. In the end, I often look like a ‘nutty professor’, who is only pursuing his own political agenda in teaching the things I teach. It doesn’t help that queerness is on the borders of the academe; not to be seen and also not to be heard.

I suggest here that years of internalisation play an immense role in these types of responses that students (and colleagues) make when it comes to changing their own understandings of curriculum. The fact that there exists little reinforcement of more dynamic theorising across the system is also a significant contributor. It suggests a trap that cannot be easily escaped. Yet, the need to transcend an understanding of curriculum beyond the institutional text has never been greater. As Grimmet and Halvorson (2010, p. 242) note,

if curriculum as institutional text does not co-evolve with the contemporary discourses of reconceptualized curriculum, there is no impetus to re-direct its practices... Any act of creating ... must take account of how its creation can be

de-constructed if it is to put in place the necessary re-directive practices that will ultimately ensure its very creation.

Despite the rationale presented here for the work of the module, I need to acknowledge its limitations in that it failed to push students to transgress historically inherited understandings of curriculum, thus creating a process of stagnation and resistance to received knowledge. If the field of curriculum, as previously highlighted, has no or little effect in serious debates about education in South Africa, curriculum theorising becomes a simple retelling of stories already told, hence the proliferation of studies exploring the problems of OBE, and now the problems of CAPS.

“It’s about them, not us”

One of the key reasons for the students’ inability to engage seriously with the newly learnt information regards, I argue, the explicit learning around queerness, which often challenges students. It is interesting to observe that there is not a single student when writing an assignment who engages directly with queer issues, or who does not distance him or herself from queerness, i.e. doesn’t see queer individuals as different to the self. In the same way as queerness is an unfamiliar terrain to them, so is the reconceptualised curriculum. I suggest here that age plays a significant role in the hesitations around queerness and reconceptualisation from students. All the participants in the module are older, respected professionals in their areas of work. Anything that makes them vulnerable is often rejected. For instance, in my engagements with junior students at undergraduate level, many are able to speak out directly about queerness. Yet, the rigidities presented by the construction of curriculum, the age of the students as well as the loss of respectability that would follow from claiming a positioning supportive of queerness, often force students to remain unmoved. This suggests that while the module enables students to think, it doesn’t do adequate work to shift the students’ attitude, i.e. it is insufficient for transformative learning.

It is interesting to point out that students are able to write about stories on discrimination in relation to gender, race and class. Students engage with such stories with seriousness during the class engagements and in their assignment submissions. However, just like theory, these issues are never taken up in their research work as serious curriculum scholarly projects. Students are products of their contexts and environments. I suggest here that for agency to be fully realised, validation and maintenance of respectability become crucial, hence the students’ reluctance.

CONCLUSIONS

While the discussion presented above offers an entry point into problems of curriculum theorising in one institutional setting in South Africa, as well as the challenges that arise when doing queer work, I admit that the non-availability of

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direct empirical data does offer constraints on making definitive declarations. Thus, a serious curriculum project is required in South Africa to understand the theoretical assumptions informing the teaching across institutions, as well as the ways in which the teaching offered to our students is responding to questions of the present moment. I suggest that such research would assist in driving a reconceptualised curriculum in South Africa. Such a call would have to be premised on the need for South African theorists to recognise the ways in which our history continues to trap individuals.

Although I concede the limitations of this reflective piece, I believe the chapter offers an entry point into understanding the field of curriculum in South Africa, as well as the marginality of queerness. It is telling that students never imagine themselves as queer, and that their responses are often patronising. It is also telling that students struggle to engage with the contents taught in the module beyond the confines of the module. Curriculum Studies and Curriculum Theorising remain trapped in systems thinking. There is a pre-occupation with policy and with Tyler's (1949) rationale in understanding curriculum. There is very little interest in engaging directly with the social and political aspects of curriculum, outside the formal curriculum. It is interesting that the very ideals espoused by the critics of reconceptualisation in the north exist in formalised ways in South Africa, or perhaps at least in the context where this chapter is written. Yet, as the chapter shows, this focus has had very little impact in advancing theory work in the field. What has been normalised is a simple and uncritical borrowing of theories, a borrowing that fits into the long historical path of the docile implementation of state curriculum statements. Furthermore, it is clear that the field continues to make very little contribution to curriculum theorising internationally.

Curriculum studies, as a field of study in South African, must confront difficult topics if it is to grow to a field with international appeal. It has to take seriously what it means to be a teacher and a learner, and it must take seriously the questions of power and marginalisation. Learning when dealing with difficult questions can only occur through discomfort. So long as the field is comfortable with its status of officialdom, it will remain stagnant. Only when the field stops the telling of stories already told and confronts seriously the stories from our own history will it grow and make its own contribution to advancing curriculum theory.

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Thabo Msibi
School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

SAROJINI NADAR AND SARASVATHIE REDDY

14. UNDOING ‘PROTECTIVE SCIENTISM’ IN A GENDER, RELIGION AND HEALTH MASTERS CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

In a globalised context where the massification of higher education is endemic, scholars have observed that the quest for “relevant knowledge” is paramount. For example, drawing on the work of Waghid (2002), Van Louw and Beets (2008, p. 473) argue that:

The growing imperative of social relevance and accountability has in the last three decades put the international Higher Education sector under considerable pressure to fill the gap between higher education and society by shifting from disciplinary research to applied or problem-solving research.

The Gender, Religion and Health (GRH) Masters Programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) sought to encourage such problem-solving research (focusing on the issue of sexual and reproductive health) through merging three disciplinary areas of study into one programme: gender studies, religious studies and health (sexual and reproductive health). In the first two years of the programme, the curriculum was designed in a multi-disciplinary form, rather than an interdisciplinary one owing to pragmatic and operational reasons, given that this was a pilot programme that was launched in 2013. A study of the programme by Nadar et al. (2014) led to shifts from a multi-disciplinary perspective of the curriculum to a more interdisciplinary one (the distinctions will be made clearer in the forthcoming sections of the chapter).

In this chapter, we argue that multi-disciplinary perspectives on the curriculum are inadequate to meeting the transformative goals of a higher education system, and in fact, multi-disciplinarity can also serve the goals of “protective scientism” (Spivak, 2012, p. 11). We understand the multi-disciplinary perspective to be limiting in that it still seeks to police and protect the intellectual borders of disciplines, while engaging on a superficial level with other disciplines. In her earlier work, *Death of a Discipline*, Gayatri Spivak (2005) makes the case against such protection of disciplines, calling for a permeability of the boundaries between disciplines. In 2012, she goes further to argue for an aesthetic education that “teaches the humanities in such a way that all subjects are ‘contaminated’” (Spivak 2012, p. 9).

Through a case study of curriculum design and reform of the Masters Programme in Gender, Religion and Health within a transforming South African higher education institution, we explore the possibilities of what can happen when disciplinary boundaries are made permeable in response to the complexities of transforming higher education systems. The chapter will first provide a background and context to the Masters Programme in Gender, Religion and Health. Thereafter the following three points will be explored: (i) *Creative curriculum reform* – Here how three disciplines were integrated within a single programme are explored. The foundational strategies for *interdisciplinarity* that made this possible is also examined; (ii) *Boundary crossing skills* – In this section the ways in which the curriculum enabled the students to cross religion, *epistemological and ontological boundaries* are interrogated; (iii) *Epistemic transformation in higher education* – The separation (and protection) of the disciplines through “protective scientism” is counter-productive, we argue in this section, to a transforming higher education system – one that aspires to both *social and epistemic transformation*. The chapter concludes that the curriculum reform of the programme under study provides new and imaginative ways of teaching students how to produce socially relevant knowledge, through a navigation and negotiation of the boundaries between three disciplines.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE MASTERS PROGRAMME IN GENDER, RELIGION AND HEALTH (GRH)

In 2012, UKZN, Stellenbosch University (SUN), Makumira University College in Tanzania (MUCT) and the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST), Ethiopia responded to a call by the Church of Sweden (CoS) to initiate a Masters programme in Gender, Religion/Theology¹ and Health. In 2014 a conference with the goal of assessing the Pilot Phase of the Programme was held in Swaziland. It was there that a renewed vision and mission for the network of academic institutions, faith communities and health service providers was conceptualised. The network was officially named as the Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and Religion and the Network Mission Statement is:

Through active collaboration between academic, community and faith intervention programmes, the mission of the Network is to facilitate connections, communication and critical reflections on the intersections between Gender, Health and Religion/Theology for the purpose of improving sexual and reproductive health rights in Africa.

This chapter focuses on only one of the four higher education institutions in the network – UKZN, as a case-study. The initial concept note from the CoS for the Pilot Project of the programme from February 1, 2012, underlines the rationale for the project:

Two of the Millennium Development Goals that have been hardest to achieve are to reduce infant and maternal mortality (MDG 4 and 5), reflecting the low

priority given to children's and women's health in many parts of the world. These two objectives are closely linked to each other but also to MDG 3 on gender equality and improving women's status in society...

Following this rationale based on the real-life public health problem, the CoS concept note, immediately makes a link to the religious and cultural dimensions of the real problem regarding sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) in the African context:

The religious and cultural understanding in a larger number of churches in Africa on issues related to sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) has often helped to reduce the ability of men and women to live equally, to decide over their own bodies and sexuality and has limited their reproductive choices. Through the church and church leaders' authority in the African context access to SRHR is not promoted.

The mandate to the participating higher education institutions was, therefore, to develop a Masters programme that would intersect these three disciplinary areas in meaningful ways. The overarching aim of the programme was to facilitate social transformation in faith communities through engagement between the academy, health provision services, and faith communities. The concept note makes it clear that, at least according to the CoS, the boundaries between the disciplines of theology, social sciences and the health sciences are permeable and certainly inter-linked. In fact, they lay the public health problem largely at the doors of religious and theological doctrines, beliefs and practices. With funding being provided by the CoS for the administration of the programme as well as scholarships for the students, all four higher education institutions responded to the invitation by enrolling 10–12 students in each programme. The initial pilot programme was conceptualised in 2012, implemented during 2013 and continued its intake of students in 2015 and 2016.

METHODOLOGY

As already intimated, the chapter employs a case study methodology using the GRH Masters programme at UKZN as an example of an interdisciplinary curriculum that intersects the three disciplines of gender, religion and health. The primary data for this chapter were produced through document analysis of core module outlines, concept notes, the GRH Programme Strategic Plan (2015 to 2017), a sample of selected students' research proposals, and our observations as key facilitators in the cohort supervision seminars. So, as curriculum developers and lecturers in the programme,² and as facilitators in the collaborative cohort supervision seminars, we reflect on these pedagogical experiences.

The Masters qualification at UKZN is a 192 credit-bearing module (1920 hours) that consists of a 32 credit core module (320 hours), two 16 credit electives (160

hours) and a 128 credit research dissertation (1280 hours). In this chapter we will focus only on the curriculum of the core module and on the research proposal writing process. With this background and context of the programme in mind we proceed to engage our first point on how foundational strategies for interdisciplinarity were used in the design and reform of the core module curriculum in 2015.

I. CREATIVE CURRICULUM REFORM: INTEGRATING THREE DISCIPLINES

In this section we will show, through a comparison from 2014 how the curriculum for the core module was reformed to integrate the three disciplines in such a way as to develop interdisciplinary thinking and understanding. In 2015, due to academic staff restructuring, we were part of a relatively new team of five core lecturers and one guest lecturer from Sweden residing in Swaziland, who were responsible for the design, reform and implementation of the module. In 2013 and 2014, the curriculum was designed and implemented by a different group of academic staff, working under significant pressure to develop a new module that integrated the three disciplinary areas. This section represents our critical reflections on the module from 2014 to 2015, and is largely based on the findings of a research study from 2014 that investigated

the extent to which the research produced by the students, as reflected in their final dissertations, mediate and push the boundaries of the intersectionality, interdisciplinarity and ‘education for advocacy’ framing of the Gender, Religion and Health Masters Programme. (Nadar et al., 2014, p. 203)

This study found that fostering interdisciplinarity with regard to both research and pedagogy proved to be challenging for both students as well as the curriculum developers, hence the decision to reform the curriculum.

The module in 2013 and 2014 began with a focus on feminist and gender theories. The rationale for this was that while many students possessed theological competencies gained during their undergraduate studies, they had limited grounding in gender epistemologies. Hence, the students were provided with a thorough introduction to theories of feminism and gender. Thereafter, the module proceeded to explore systematic theological themes such as spirituality and doctrines of faith, and how these interface with theories of gender within fields such as masculinities and ecofeminism. This was then followed by guest lectures on the interface between public health and faith. The core module outline from 2014 quotes Gary Gunderson (1997, p. 4) to make the point about the importance of relating these two disciplines as follows:

Faith needs the language of health to understand how it applies to life; health needs the language of faith in order to find its larger context, its meaning.

In 2015, based on the aforementioned 2014 research findings, the GRH Programme curriculum developers revised the core curriculum to greater reflect

the commitment to interdisciplinarity. This time, instead of beginning with theories and theologies, the core module began with a focus on SRHR since this discourse focuses on the real-world social problem. In this way, the hermeneutical and pedagogical circle began, in 2015, with the sociological, and then moved to the theological and epistemological. The 2015 module was described as follows in the module outline:

This module will introduce students to the interdisciplinary study of gender, religion and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) using methodological and theoretical frameworks drawn from feminist studies of gender and religion and attentive to matters of tradition and culture. The geographical focus is continental Africa, with a preference for sub-Saharan Africa and a perspective that encompasses a range of faith traditions. Case studies on health for 2015 will focus on gender-based violence, HIV and sexualities.

In addition to the description above, the outcomes were firmly geared towards achieving the skill of interdisciplinarity and intersectionality, as is reflected in the 2015 module outline below.³

At the end of this module, through written and practical assessments, students will be equipped with knowledge, skills and attitudes to critically assess the intersections of gender, religion and SRHR. Students will have:

- knowledge of critical debates at the intersections of gender, religion and SRHR
- skills for critical analysis of issues of gender, religion and SRHR
- an understanding of and ability to negotiate critical debates in gender, religion and SRHR.

There were several topics that were covered in the thirteen three-hour long seminars of the 2015 core module. The core module began with a focus on situating maternal and child health in the context of gender and religion – for this part of the module the students travelled to Swaziland to meaningfully engage with the work that the Siphilile Mentor Mothers Project⁴ were undertaking. They were given two lectures on the relationship between public health and SRHR by a Swedish medical doctor working in Swaziland with the Mentor Mothers Project. When the students returned from Swaziland, they participated in a three-week intensive block module where they further explored health case studies drawn from research studies and literature largely in the human-rights fields dealing with gender-based violence, HIV and sexualities. From there they were introduced to feminist and gender theories and methods, which then led to an exploration of Christian feminist theologies and Islam and feminism.

In the strategic planning for 2015–2017, drawing on the research findings on the programme (Nadar et al., 2014), it emerged that over the 2013–2014 period the research outcomes of the students did not reflect the desired degrees of intersectionality and interdisciplinarity which were core to the GRH programme.

Religion and gendered perspectives found fair representation within the respective bodies of research produced by the students, however, the health component needed strengthening. It was decided in the strategic planning that these principles should be key determinants in the formulation of the research topics by students and supervisors at the beginning of the academic year.

The shift⁵ in the curriculum design therefore indicates a redirection from the deductive approach to curriculum design that is theory-driven, to an *inductive approach which is largely context-driven* – namely the human-rights based discourses on the subjects. The former privileges abstraction, the latter *lived experiences*. It was found that the former approach to the curriculum tended to solidify the boundaries between the ‘feeder-disciplines’ whilst the latter promotes attention to the *blurring across boundaries*, which is more akin to promoting socially relevant knowledge.

It was with the above in mind that the module ended with two intensive three hour seminars with the theme of Interdisciplinarity, Transdisciplinarity and Intentionality. In the course outline this was described as the skill to “work amongst the fields while maintaining integrity within the fields.”⁶ The lecturers for this section had expertise in research methodologies in the disciplines of Sociology of Religion, Higher Education and Public Health. The students were introduced to the value of interdisciplinarity – but with firm guidance that only through sound disciplinary rigour can scholars master the movement between, and the transformation of, disciplines.

In her article “Three strategies for interdisciplinary teaching: Contextualising, conceptualising and problem centring” Svetlana Nikitina proposes three basic approaches to understanding an interdisciplinary curriculum. The typology proposed by her of *contextualising*, *conceptualising*, and *problem-centring* (Nikitina, 2006, p. 251) are appropriate for understanding the interdisciplinary Masters curriculum of the core module of the GRH programme presented above. These three strategies are related to an epistemological focus which we perceive to be loosely aligned with the three disciplines that were integrated within the core curriculum. For example, Nikitina asserts that within the contextualising strategy “core metaphysical beliefs, personal or cultural philosophies” (Nikitina, 2006, pp. 252–253) are embedded. This strategy aligns well with traditional theological disciplines, and feminist theologies within Islam and Christianity. The second approach of conceptualising involves

identifying core concepts that are central to two or more disciplines and establishing a rigorous quantifiable connection among them. (Nikitina, 2006, p. 253)

This strategy aligns itself with the health component of the programme which has a specific focus on public health as it is related to SRHR. The focus on SRHR was covered in the first three seminars of the module where students were introduced to ways of situating maternal and child health in the context of gender and religion.⁷ Furthermore, SRHR were situated within the broader human rights paradigm.

The third strategy of problem centring “involves enlisting the knowledge and modes of thinking to examine messy-real life problems that require more than one discipline to solve” (Nikitina, 2006, p. 253). Here the module explicitly dedicated three seminars to case studies related to gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS and sexualities. The strategy of problem-centering enabled the students to appropriate the theories and methods they were introduced to earlier with real-life problems.

From the above, it is clear why this three-fold strategy is appropriate as a rubric for understanding the interdisciplinary nature of the core module in Gender, Religion and Health. By tracing the development of the curriculum over the two years, through these three strategies, we are now better able to understand the “teaching and learning of interdisciplinary thinking” (Spelt et al., 2009, p. 367). We understand interdisciplinary thinking as the “capacity to integrate knowledge of two or more disciplines to produce a cognitive advancement in ways that would have been impossible or unlikely through single disciplinary means” (Spelt et al., 2009, p. 365).

In the next section we will show how the above strategies to interdisciplinary teaching and learning supported students’ capacities to cross academic and theoretical boundaries in meaningful ways.

II. BOUNDARY CROSSING

In comparison with traditional higher education, which focuses on domain-specific knowledge and general skills development, this kind of higher education [interdisciplinary] also aims to develop boundary-crossing skills. (Spelt et al., 2009, p. 366)

While boundary-crossing may imply a shifting of positions, these shifts are more temporal than permanent, and we prefer a more permeable image, hence we understand the crossing-over as a fluid movement across and between boundaries, while making meaningful connections. The ways in which the boundary-crossing skills were developed in the students of the programme, was arguably most evident in the cohort model of postgraduate supervision, which is a mandatory component of the curriculum. Before we demonstrate how the students reflected boundary-crossing skills, it is important to first provide a brief background to the cohort model of postgraduate supervision, as an integral teaching method within the GRH curriculum.

The cohort supervision seminars provide guided mentoring for students from their initial conceptualisation of the research topics and foci for the proposals to the completion of the dissertations. While each student is assigned a personal supervisor, the cohort supervision seminar brings together the expertise of all the supervisors within the programme – on average there are 5–7 supervisors present at any given time at the cohort seminars. This means that the students are able to harness a wide and varied range of expert feedback at every stage of their research journey. The

fact that each of the supervisors present are from diverse disciplines makes the interaction all the more enriching (and admittedly daunting as some students have expressed).

A review of the literature on the collaborative cohort model of supervision reveals that almost all of the studies are related to Doctoral teaching and learning (Burnett, 1999; Govender & Dhunpath, 2011; Samuel & Vithal, 2011). It is only recently that the model has been adapted for Masters students, and while the GRH Programme is innovating in this regard, more research on the academic efficacy of the model is required. This chapter offers an exploration of how this cohort model lends itself to the crossing of boundaries.

There are on average nine cohort supervision seminars during the year, including two week-long writing retreats designed respectively to support the completion of the dissertation proposal, and subsequently the completion of the entire dissertation. At every seminar students are required to make oral presentations on the relevant theme with the aim of receiving and providing feedback from both the facilitators (supervisors) and their peers. The themes for each of the seminars were as follows: Research Focus, Literature Review, Theories, Research Methodology and Ethical Considerations, Completed Proposal Presentation. The remaining three seminars were devoted to the presentation of work in progress of chapters and the final dissertation writing retreat. Our observations on the presentations as well as the peer review within the seminars reveal *inter alia* three spheres in which students were acquiring boundary-crossing skills. We observed that the first boundary which the students were learning to cross was a religious one – this is due to the fact that for the first year in the history of the traditionally Christian theological programme, Islam was now included in the curriculum. The second observable boundary that the students were learning to cross was an epistemological boundary – not only were the students being trained in feminist epistemology but they were being trained to simultaneously critique it. Finally, we observed that many students were crossing ontological boundaries particularly with regard to their activist and academic locations. We will explore each of these boundary-crossings in turn below.

Crossing Religion Boundaries

While the generic Gender and Religion programme wherein this GRH Masters project found a home was designed to focus on the interface of gender with various faith traditions, over the last decade this goal was difficult to realise as a result of limited human resources in the form of academic staff working on comparative religious studies or even in specific religious traditions other than Christian Theology. The opportunity arose for the offering of Islam as a field of study when an academic with expertise in feminism and Islam was appointed to the position of Academic Coordinator of the GRH Programme. This appointment has to be appreciated within the context of the history of a School of Theology that was restructured to become a School of Religion and Theology in 2004 after the merger of two institutions,

and a further re-organisation in 2012 to become known as the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, wherein the disciplines of Classics, Ethics and Philosophy were included in the newly-formed school. While Theology was dropped from the nomenclature, Christian Theology still dominated in the postgraduate offerings. Furthermore, despite the erstwhile combining of Religion and Theology into one school in 2004, teaching in the various religious traditions remained largely within the silos of each religious tradition, with some attempt at comparative work at an undergraduate level, but none at the postgraduate level. The work being done on gender and health via a genuine study of multi-faith traditions framework in 2015 enabled a significant boundary crossing within a school where Christian Theology has historically dominated in both research and pedagogy.

Commenting on a roundtable intellectual discussion event with the theme Sexuality and Scripture hosted by the GRH programme in April 2015, Shahid Mathee notes that:

...this was arguably the first time in South Africa that a serious theological discussion on a specific theme was conducted at Christian-Muslim comparative religion level. It augurs well for scholarship on gender, but is even more significant for the possibilities of interreligious intellectual conversation.⁸

This boundary crossing is in line with calls for more interreligious feminist theology, especially in the light of the “complex situation” of the “post-secular turn.” Commenting on this Maaïke de Haardt (2011, p. 117) asserts:

In this complex situation, feminist theology or, perhaps better, feminist studies in religion is no longer an enterprise that is solely and self-evidently related to Christian theology and Christian churches or to Jewish theology and synagogues, as it was in the early days of a Western monoreligious culture... The (feminist) study of religion is also still dominated, despite itself, by the concepts and the methods derived from a more classical view of religion, a notion of religion that is itself determined very much by Christianity and therefore needs rethinking. If religion is indeed transformative, how does this influence our theology and our way of doing theology?

The call for a more transformative way of doing and studying theology is arguably embodied within the GRH programme through the decision to cross the boundaries of religion. Furthermore, originally, due to the interdisciplinary nature of the programme, admission to it was always open to students with religious studies and theological backgrounds, but also more widely to students who had backgrounds in gender studies or other cognate disciplines; and consideration was also given to potential students who had work experience in gender non-governmental organisations. The reform of the curriculum discussed in the first part of this chapter, also gave the curriculum developers confidence to open admission to students with backgrounds in the health sciences, as disciplinary and interdisciplinary expertise was assured through the foundations provided.

In 2015, of the nine registered students, three students chose a focus on Islam, five chose a focus on Christianity and one chose a general African religion and culture focus for their research dissertations.

The difference in content focus in the core curriculum to include both Islam and Christianity, enabled visible shifts in the students' thinking and provided the impetus for students to choose varied approaches to the study of their chosen religious traditions – which while taking seriously feminism's critique of patriarchal religious traditions, nevertheless also departed from the typical 'religion is a problem' focus in much of feminist work on the subject. The skills that the students were acquiring for theoretical critique of various religious traditions enabled them to make more nuanced and tentative claims in their research proposals as we shall see in the section below on epistemological boundary crossing.

Crossing Epistemological Boundaries

As explained earlier at the heart of what we were doing in the core curriculum of the GRH programme was interdisciplinary work. Matthew Miller and Veronica Boix-Mansilla (2004, p. 4) define interdisciplinary work as:

...a kind of integrated work, (that) builds on disciplinary perspectives ...and combines them to create a product, develop an explanation, or propose a solution that would have been unattainable through single disciplinary means. ...integration is not an end in itself but a means to attain a goal worth pursuing; disciplinary expertise is considered seriously; and disciplines are not simply juxtaposed but deeply intertwined – where the findings in one domain raise new questions in another, which in turn illuminate the problem at hand.

Students admitted into the programme in 2015 came from varied backgrounds. Three students had qualifications in the health sciences, whilst the others had qualifications in theology. Their epistemological positioning at first was deeply located within the disciplines that they came from. By being introduced to the real-life health problem (maternal and child health) in the context of Swaziland at the beginning of the core module, and by making the connections in the subsequent lectures on SRHR, students were being asked to frame the 'real problem' into a 'research problem.' They were learning that the real problem could be understood through various frameworks including their traditional home disciplines, but were specifically being taught through the core curriculum and the cohort supervision seminars, to view the problem through the intersecting theoretical frameworks of gender and religion, in particular various feminist theologies within Islam and Christianity. This was the first epistemological learning – feminist epistemologies.

The second was a deeper learning that problematised the very epistemologies which they were learning. In the core module, in each of the case studies presented, students learned to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions regarding gender in the various feminist framings of the selected religious traditions. For example,

stereotypical popular images of the 'oppressed Muslim woman' were engaged with, using postcolonial and anticolonial theories and methods. Similarly, the supposedly archetypal 'liberated Western Christian woman' was deconstructed in the section on gender-based violence using postcolonial feminist analysis, and the myth of the pro-typical 'hetero-patriarchal traditional African family' was critiqued using queer theories and African epistemologies in the section on sexualities. Hence, while the students were learning about feminist epistemologies and how they are framed at the intersections of gender and religion, they were also learning to deconstruct these very epistemologies. This is usually a skill learned during the PhD journey, however it was an epistemological boundary that we were consciously pushing at Masters level – since such is the demand of an interdisciplinary programme.

These two levels of epistemological boundary crossing are aptly illustrated in a student's development of a research focus for the dissertation proposal, from its inception to its final form. The student wished to research the topic of "female genital excision" which she originally framed as "female genital mutilation." An extract from her draft proposal reveals a one-dimensional feminist view of the cultural practice as "dehumanising":

This study intends to explore why women would still consider excision a worthwhile cultural practice to participate in despite the dehumanising circumstances under which the practise is carried out on them. Secondly the study is concerned with examining the impact that excision might cause on the sexual and reproductive health of women who undergo this cultural practice... Female Genital Mutilation is (and should be) considered a violation of Human Rights. However, excisions practising African communities rely on traditional beliefs to justify FGM and women are forced to undergo excision as a cultural requirement into womanhood.

It is clear from the above that the initial draft lacked a nuanced theoretical positioning on the subject, but furthermore, the claims made were unsubstantiated by the literature in the field. After the cohort supervision seminars where lengthy debates on female genital cutting ensued, the research focus shifted from seeking to understand why women undergo the practice to understanding how the discourse is framed within the intervention strategies such as the UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) documents. What enabled and promoted these debates was the introduction of postcolonial and feminist theorising in the core module, especially the sections on feminism and Islam and African Christian feminist theologies which highlighted the global politics involved in the construction of knowledge in these fields. The subsequent debates by the students in the cohort seminars revealed their learning from the core module and served as a catalyst for this student to question how knowledge is produced around this subject. This is an example of epistemological boundary-crossing and reflects the kind of transformation of student thinking that a democratic higher education system should aspire to, we argue. As Waghid (2002, p. 459) asserts:

... transformation in higher education is not merely adding to students' knowledge base, skills and potential...by implication, transformation is about empowering those involved in the higher education process, to develop the critical ability of students and educators to the extent that they become self-determined (rational) and reflexive.

The result of the self-determination and reflexivity that was being inculcated through the cohort seminars is reflected in the change of the research focus to the following, as reflected in the final proposal:

Female Genital Cutting understood as a violation of human rights of young girls and women has continually been on the agenda of feminist work and scholars. However, as Rogaia Abusharaf (1995, p. 52) observes, "feminist representational discourses tend (with some exceptions) to ignore the conceptuality of the forces within society that pertain to and regulate female sexuality". It is within this light that feminist studies on FGC should increasingly see the need to understand and alter, if need be the discourses surrounding FGC.

What is evident in the above change of the student's research focus is also a creative negotiation of an ontological activist positioning highlighting the dehumanising aspects of the practice and an epistemological academic positioning, which sought to understand the ways in which the knowledge that the practice is dehumanising is produced. It is to this boundary-crossing discussion of the activist and academic divide that we now turn.

Crossing Ontological Boundaries: Negotiating the Activist and Academic

Feminist theologians,⁹ I would insist, cannot restrict ourselves to the academy but also must learn to understand ourselves as working for changing religious communities and their leadership. We need to address the questions of women in the churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples in order for feminist theology/studies in religion to remain rooted in grassroots movements for change and transformation (Hidayatullah, 2011, p. 102).

The CoS concept note which gave rise to the design and implementation of the GRH programme is clear about the social transformation dimension of the higher education project that they were supporting. This is captured in the vision and mission statement of the network which describes the core values as follows:

The core values of the Network are intersectionality and interdisciplinarity, bringing together academic inquiry, community engagement and faith leadership, within a human rights paradigm, to inform a praxis of equality and diversity.

Hidayatullah's statement above, about the mandate of feminist theologies resonated well with the CoS's core values which had a distinct focus on community engagement and praxis. It was for this reason that the theories of feminist theologies undergirded

the philosophy of the entire curriculum. It has long been established that all feminist theology begins with the legitimising of women's experiences as a starting point. This philosophy required that the students deeply reflect on their own ontological positioning. We witnessed various struggles with bridging the epistemological and the ontological divides, particularly with regard to the students naming of themselves or their work as 'feminist.'

During the cohort seminars for example, one male student, expressed a great deal of awkwardness with labelling his analysis 'feminist' and instead called it a "feminist ally analysis." He rationalised his struggle by explaining that while he supported the epistemological tenets of feminism, he struggled with the ontological dimensions, declaring that by laying claim to the term feminist he was "colonising" a space reserved for women to express their experiences and struggles. This was an activist concern by a rector of a parish, who already had considerable power and was uncomfortable with his own voice replacing that of women's voices within the academy. The advice offered from the cohort seminars was for the student not to dismiss this struggle, but to infuse it and appropriate it in the writing of his dissertation. The student eventually settled on writing about this struggle in his methodology section on critical research reflexivity. In so doing, the student was actively engaging the boundaries between the activist and the academic.

While the above student experienced ontological struggles from a gender perspective, another student expressed concerns from a perspective of religion. This student was reluctant to name her work as feminist. While she also, like the above student, agreed with the tenets of political feminism and its project of critiquing patriarchy, she was concerned that in the context of Islam, this critique was embedded within a larger geo-political strategy to entrench Islamophobia and stereotype Islam as oppressive to women. In the core module in the section on women and Islam it was emphasised that one of the significant challenges for Muslim scholars who identify with the feminist activist cause is to navigate the tension between a critique of patriarchy within the practices of Islam and at the same time protect against Islamophobic sentiments that stereotype all Muslim women as oppressed and all Muslim men as oppressors. The core module laid the foundation for the subsequent debates about this tension within the cohort seminars and this student also reflects on these ontological challenges in the final dissertation proposal.

It is clear from the above negotiations between the activist and the academic that:

Feminist studies in religion are not only about transformative reinterpretations of 'faith' (scriptures, history, dogmas, ethics, and ecclesia) but are also about seeking to understand how women (and men) negotiate power and identity in ordinary life and how they strategically appropriate religious practices to manoeuvre in everyday encounters, thereby reshaping their own participation in society, culture, and religion. (de Haardt, 2011, p. 116)

While the above argument is restricted to society, culture and religion – the evidence from the students' ontological struggles in the programme reveals that there is also

a “reshaping” that is happening at the level of the academy. This bodes well for the epistemic transformation of the academy which will be discussed in the final part of our chapter below.

III. EPISTEMIC TRANSFORMATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

We have argued elsewhere (Nadar et al., 2014) that the GRH programme fits well within a global and certainly national higher education mandate to transform, as articulated by the World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action (UNESCO, 1998):

The advancement of knowledge through research is an essential function of all systems of higher education, which should promote postgraduate studies. Innovation, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity should be promoted and reinforced in programmes with long-term orientations on social and cultural aims and needs. An appropriate balance should be established between basic and target-oriented research.

The reformation of the GRH curriculum is a signpost, we would argue, towards epistemic transformation in higher education in the South African higher education context. In this regard we concur with a range of scholars writing on the transformation of the South African higher education post-apartheid landscape (Le Grange, 2005; Waghid, 2002; Van Louw & Beets, 2008) who show the importance of the shift from Mode 1 knowledge production to Mode 2 knowledge production (Gibbons et al., 1994) within this system.

In the Mode 1 form of knowledge production, disciplinary science and expertise is paramount. Gibbons et al. (1994, p. 3) assert that

For many, Mode 1 is identical with what is meant by science. Its cognitive and social norms determine what shall count as significant problems, who shall be allowed to practice science and what constitutes good science,

In essence, this characterises protective scientism. However, the Mode 2 form of knowledge production aligns itself with knowledge that is

applied, problem-solving, trans-disciplinary, heterogeneous, hybrid, question driven, entrepreneurial, network-embedded knowledge. (Van Louw & Beets, 2008, p. 475)

By adopting a Mode 2 approach to curriculum reform, the case study has shown that epistemic transformation opens up possibilities for social transformation. This is most clearly revealed in the students’ dissertations which demonstrate that academia no longer has to be perceived as irrelevant and ivory-towered, divorced from the connectivity to the lived everyday world. The table below containing the students’ final dissertation titles reflects the link between epistemic and social transformation:

Table 14.1. Students' interdisciplinary dissertation titles

Title
Women's health seeking behaviour in the context of sexual violence, sexual health rights and Islam: A case study of "Hope" Careline Counselling
An analysis of the discursive representations of women's sexual agency in online fatwa sites: A case study of askimam.org
Negotiating between health-based contraceptive concerns and piety: The experiences of Muslim wives
Exploring the influence of faith (as belief) and migration on African Christian women's sexual reproductive health rights: A case study of City Harvest
The Roman Catholic Church and contraception: Exploring married African Catholic women's engagement with <i>Humane Vitae</i>
Discursive representations of gender-based violence in a synod resolution of the Anglican Diocese of Natal of October 2013
The role of biblical interpretation in the construction of sexual identity in Christian Sunday School material for children: Re-reading of Genesis 3 and Matthew 1:18–24 from a feminist and queer perspective
Mediating human rights and religio-cultural beliefs: An African feminist examination of conceptualisations of female genital cutting in the UNICEF documents (2004–2014)
An analysis of perceptions of African Christian men regarding sexual and reproductive choices at Paran Pentecostal Church in Durban

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in a review of Gayatri Spivak's book, *Death of a Discipline* (2003) Amar Acheriou (2009, p. 311) notes that

She advocates disciplinary collaboration and unrestricted permeability, urging these disciplines [Humanities and the Social Sciences] to establish institutional bridges to respond more appropriately to students' needs and to the demands of today's complex, fragmenting world.

In this chapter we have shown that the inter-disciplinary curriculum reform of the programme under study, provides a model for undoing "protective scientism" and steers us away from models that "promote the fragmentation and slavish adherence to 'disciple-ship' rather than the production of imaginative ways of being."¹⁰ Along with Spelt et al. we believe that this kind of understanding

provides a platform from which the theory and practice of interdisciplinary higher education can move forward. (Spelt et al., 2009, p. 365)

NOTES

- ¹ The difference in nomenclature of the programmes is attributed to the varied emphasis at each institution. At SUN the focus in the faculty is exclusively Christian Theology, while at UKZN the focus is Religious Studies. Notwithstanding the latter, in 2013, all the students from UKZN also had a focus on Christian Theology.
- ² We co-developed the curriculum with three other academic staff from UKZN.
- ³ 2015 Module Outline, page 2.
- ⁴ “Siphilile Maternal and Child Health is an independent non-governmental organisation in Swaziland with the aim to improve maternal and child health and nutrition through the implementation of a community-based Mentor Mother program. Siphilile identifies and recruits mothers to be mentors and supporters for pregnant women and other mothers in their own living area. This community-based peer support model empowers women, and society as a whole, to make fact-based decisions and to take action for a better and healthier life.” Retrieved on 18 July 2015 from <http://www.siphilile.org/index.html>
- ⁵ Thanks to Michael Anthony Samuel for this insight on the shifting nature of the curriculum.
- ⁶ 2015 Core Module Outline, p. 11.
- ⁷ The distinction between upper and lower case to refer to the terms, gender, religion and health is made to emphasise the permeability of disciplines and to reinforce the undoing of protective scientism.
- ⁸ Shahid Mathhee, *Muslim Views*, June 2015.
- ⁹ The * in the term theo*logian denotes respect for those who do not wish to mention the name of God often rendering God as G*D.
- ¹⁰ Thanks to Michael Anthony Samuel for this insight and phrasing.

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Sarojini Nadar
School of Religion, Philosophy & Classics
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Sarasvathie Reddy
Higher Education Training and Development Unit
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

LANGA KHUMALO

15. DISRUPTING LANGUAGE HEGEMONY

Intellectualising African Languages

INTRODUCTION

It has been persuasively argued that from end of the Second World War, language imperialism became a new strategic instrument for global domination (see Phillipson, 2014, 2015). To fuel this agenda, English especially has been paraded as a unifying global *lingua franca* without sufficient focus on the attendant detrimental effect on other languages, particularly African languages. The staggering effect of the English hegemony in Africa is that despite having over 2000 languages (Heine & Nurse, 2000), there seems to be no single indigenous African language that is used presently as a medium of instruction beyond primary education level in disciplines other than specific language courses. Even Kiswahili, a relatively well-developed and accepted *lingua franca* of Tanzania, East and Central Africa, is not used as a language of instruction (LoI) in tertiary education (Mwansoko, 2004, p. 155). Africa still retains English (and in some parts French and Portuguese) as the LoI in formal education settings. Furthermore, locally-formed hybridised pidgins which over the years became elevated as mother tongues of the African local scene, are only recently being included into formal education spaces (e.g. Kreol, Morissien in Mauritian primary schools) (Harmon, 2015). A notable exception in the South African context, is Afrikaans, the language systematically supported through deliberate political, social and economic developmental forces (Prah, 2007).

In recent years, post-apartheid South Africa has started to be responsive to a yearning to advance indigenous African languages consistent with the provisions of her arguably laudable and progressive new constitution (RSA, 1996). The University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) is a case in point and has taken the lead in institutionalising the intellectualisation of isiZulu, one of the most dominantly-spoken African language in South Africa, as an effective strategy in the advancement of indigenous African languages in higher education and training institutions. This chapter will demonstrate that African languages can be developed both in their spoken and written forms in order to contribute to the knowledge economy. The chapter demonstrates that at the heart of the intellectualisation process is the initiative to provide *material conditions* and *intellectual space* for language elaboration to take effect. The chapter begins with an overview of the historical subjugation of African languages exploring how English has been presented and interpreted over different

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evolving eras sketching the scope of reform required. Thereafter, the chapter deals with the intervention adopted by the case study institution in addressing three kinds of positive realignments to elevate an African language: through policy, through terminology development and through corpus building. The discussion of the potential and limitations of this kind of intervention conclude the chapter.

THE SUBJUGATION OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

What explains the tragic domination of English in the African education system and the knowledge economy? What characterises these material conditions and intellectual spaces around African languages in higher education? I argue that rampant colonialist subjugation and imposition alone are perhaps, insufficient explanations. English arrived in Africa as a colonial language of domination, but has since evolved to assume a unique position as a language of choice, particularly in the education system across the African continent by African people themselves. Why? How did this arise?

According to Prah (1995, p. 8), this expansion has especially burgeoned and consolidated in orchestrated circumstances under which indigenous African languages are being systematically annihilated. African governments and policy makers have been complicit in this crisis through lack of coherent policies to arrest their own linguistic genocide. Bamgbose (1990) bemoans this lack of policy foresight when he observes that many policies on language, in a plethora of countries around the African continent, typically have problems pertaining to lack of clarity, ambivalence, fluctuation, and commitment, and are devoid of implementation strategies with respect to the correspondent affirmation of African languages.

I want to sharply moderate the argument about the lack of clarity of policy, foresight and vision within African governments with a citation from Phillipson (2014, p. 2) repeating a statement by Winston Churchill, who was speaking at a momentous occasion when he was receiving an honorary doctorate at Harvard University on 6 September 1943:

I like to think of British and Americans moving about freely over each other's wide estates with hardly a sense of being foreigners to one another. *But I do not see why we should not try to spread our common language even more widely throughout the globe* and, without seeking selfish advantage over any, possess ourselves of this invaluable amenity and birthright...Let us go forward as with other matters and other measures . . .Such plans offer far better prizes than taking away other people's provinces or lands or grinding them down in exploitation. *The empires of the future are the empires of the mind* (my emphasis added).

I concur with Robert Phillipson (1992, 2009), who notes that Winston Churchill was at this occasion effectively launching a global programme to situate English as the indispensable language at the centre of linguistic global governance after the Second World War. In other words, a creation of the new English-speaking "Empire

of the mind” with the British and the American in insidious control globally. While history, particularly African history, has recorded how colonial domination exported the English language to the African shores in the 1950s and 1960s, a recent British Council report (Graddol, 2010) demonstrates further how this Churchillian programme is still sustained through slow endemic infusion at multiple levels and maintains high status up to today. The British Council Annual Report 2009–2010: *English Next India* (Graddol, 2010, p. 10) states that:

From education to the economy, from employability to social mobility, the prospects for India and its people will be greatly enhanced by bringing English into every classroom, every office and every home.

The distinct and unambiguous objective is that English expansionism is directed towards it becoming a world language, a universal language, a dominant language spoken even in countries in which it is not the native or primary tongue. Frantz Fanon (1968) recognised this when he commented that the subjugation of African languages is a subtle, but deliberate strategic goal of neo-colonialism, a colonisation of the mind. This agenda has been unabated in the continued neo-colonial assault on India camouflaged as a *lingua nullius* argument even today which suggests that this populous country and age-old civilisation have no appropriate languages of its own to steer its formal education systems, and that English will provide for this orchestrated gap (see further discussion in the next section). It is also instructive and therefore not surprising within the South African context when one of its leading academics writing in a newspaper journalistic opinion piece reinforces this view that

virtually the entire economy is now organised on English terms and therefore the chances of (academic) success are much greater in the colonial language. (Jansen, 2013, p. 3)

The Churchillian vision and foresight has firmly taken root. It is thus clear that the domination of English is not an accident of history. It is a carefully planned programme (in Churchill’s sentiments emphasised above) transitioning from “taking away people’s provinces or lands” to dominating their minds as (the English) language ushers in the “the future empires”. English is presented as the solution, rather than the problem. And advocates are not rare. Fanon (1968) argues that this constitutes living life not on one’s own terms, but on those defined from outside. He saw this as an intricate web of self-oppression which manifested itself in the choices the colonised mind makes: economically, socially, politically, culturally and psychologically. The educational policy choices one makes for a truly free society are reflective of a positioning in relation to the Empired mind.

ENGLISH AS THE LINGUA NULLIUS

English has been differently presented to, and experienced by the African continent in multiple ways over its varied historical periods. Whilst variations no doubt exist,

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under colonialism English was viewed by the average subaltern African as ‘the oppressors’ language’, a language of cruel domination of other languages and their cultures, consistent with the legacy of colonial subjugation. It was interpreted as ‘*the language of the other*’. However, in the immediate postcolonial (independence) period many on the African continent also saw a strategic alignment with former vestiges of colonial power and became mantled advocates of the borrowed clothes from the Empire. They too, paradoxically became proponents of support for English (as ‘*the language of development*’) whilst most times overtly professing separation from colonial ties.

However, during the later period of continued economic relations between the former Empire and its colonies (at the turn of the century), the economic superpowers had to re-negotiate their collaborations. In pursuing their continued objective of global domination, the Americans and the British led efforts to sanitise the English language, to delink it from its colonial and neo-colonial entanglement, and present it as a ‘*language that does not belong to anyone*’, a *lingua nullius*, in order to bolster again its hegemony and supremacy, especially in a counterforce to the rise of indigeneity and alternative local ascendancy of African preferences. Phillipson (2015a, p. 3) discusses the notion of *nullius* in all its three connotations, which comprise land, culture and language. *Nullius* is a Latin word meaning ‘belonging to nobody’. *Nullius* often collocates with *terra* or *res* as Latin expressions deriving from Roman law respectively meaning ‘nobody’s land’ and ‘nobody’s property’. *Lingua nullius* is thus used by Phillipson (2005a) as a Latin derivative meaning “a language that belongs to nobody and not contained within defined borders”. Phillipson (2015b, p. 1) explains the phenomenon as follows:

The expansion of English has been energetically pursued, in a shift from occupying non-European territory, falsely seen as *terra nullius*, to disseminating the values of a *cultura nullius*, and the pernicious myth of English serving all equally well worldwide, a *lingua nullius*. British academic discourse on higher education falsely legitimates an increased use of English, and thereby strengthens linguistic imperialism.

English is thus increasingly marketed as a necessity, internalised as though it serves all the world’s citizens in a similar way. It is officialised as merely a tool, a socio-economic ladder that belongs to no-one, works for all of us and secures everyone’s well-being and promotes our human endeavours. David Graddol (2010, p. 10) cited in Phillipson (2014, p. 7) describes the successful propaganda as follows:

English is now seen as a ‘basic skill’, which all children require if they are fully to participate in 21st century civil society ...It can now be used to communicate to people from almost any country in the world...we are fast moving into a world in which, not to have English, is to be marginalised and excluded.

Jansen (2013, p. 3) accentuates this position when he says:

Black parents prefer to have their children study in English. No matter what politicians say about indigenous education, or the Pan South African Language Board about language rights, black parents make the correct calculation.

This constitutes the success of “*linguistic imperialism*”, a notion developed by Phillipson (1992), to refer to the imposition of a hegemonic language on other people, a reference to colonial English and its dominance over other languages and cultures and moreover, advocated by even those it subjugates. The dominance of both the British and American societies decades after the Allied Forces’ victory rides on such accepted force of the power of English within the minds of its recipient markets across the globe. On closer examination, English becomes a global marketisation force, a purveyor of Anglo-Americanisms, its rationalities and economic principles. An exploration of ‘globalisation’ is provided by Phillipson (2014, p. 17):

Globalisation is, as Bourdieu writes (2001), a pseudo-concept that conceals the interests hidden behind the notion and the interests it serves. Global English is likewise in no sense a reality, if it is understood as meaning either that English is used universally, which is patent nonsense, or that it serves the interests of the whole world’s citizens, which it equally patently does not.

An example of this globalising tendency is the tenor of the claims in the British Council report by Graddol (2010) (cited above), which are gaining currency in the South African academy, are outlandish and have no basis in lived realities. About two-thirds of the world’s population has no proficiency in English. The report could therefore be read as a deliberate attempt to mask a continued Anglo-American hegemony. It presents the English language as sanitised, stripped of its historical role in global imperialism, and presented as a neutral language that “belongs to nobody”, a global instrument that serves all of humanity equally well. Anne Johnson (2009, pp. 141–142) resists such capitulation hinting about the possibility of a disruptive potential from within the marginalised:

It is important to remember that English is still only spoken by a minority of the world’s population, and that, ‘just because a wide array of young people around the world may be able to sing along to a new Madonna song does not mean that they can hold a rudimentary conversation in English, or even understand what Madonna is saying’ ...Regional languages are gaining speed as the societies who speak them gain economic inertia and power on the global playing field. Many people agree that it won’t be long before they become major competitors to the English language. (Johnson, 2009, p. 141)

She suggests there are subliminal counterforces when “regional languages” of the marginalised groups choose to resist the hegemonic force of globalisation. This argument nevertheless, recognises the power of the *lingua nullius* ideology which should not be underestimated. So what are the strategies of countering the *lingua*

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nullius ideology for Africa, and South Africa, which aspires to be a multilingual nation drawing on its linguistic diversities and heritages? How do we undo our cognitive damage (Spivak, 1999)? Such considerations are more than simply about language enhancement, but also about economic realignment of potential in the international sphere.

SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY RECOGNITION OF MULTILINGUAL DIVERSITY AS A HUMAN RIGHT

A first strategy of redirection within the post-apartheid South Africa was to promulgate its new constitution (Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996) within a conscious official policy framework to recognise, uphold, promote and defend the multiplicity of languages that co-exist in its society. South Africa is like many other African countries, a multilingual country, with between 24 and 30 languages spoken within its borders by over 50 million people (Finlayson & Madiba, 2002, p. 41). The new constitution chose to endorse eleven official languages which were most widely used: English and Afrikaans, together with nine indigenous languages namely, isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, siSwati, Sesotho, Sesotho saLeboa, Setswana, Xitsonga and Chivenda. Section 6(2) and section 6(4) of the constitution profess respectively an affirmatory and redress responsibility of State and society:

Section 6(2): Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages.

Section 6(4): The national government and provincial government by legislative and other measures, must regulate and monitor the use of official languages. Without detracting from provisions of subsection (2), all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equitably.

It is in this respect that the South African constitution is lauded as being one of the most progressive constitutions in Africa, and the world. This recognition was further consolidated through the creation of national structures such as the Pan South African Language Board (henceforth PanSALB) and the National Language Service (regulating the usage of languages in the public media) which aimed at providing the enabling framework within which a new recognition of African languages and multilingual diversity would flourish. Whilst these interventions of policy and governance structures were rightly applauded as a “shining model” for the rest of the African continent (Bamogse, 1990), there is still doubt about whether policy alone can shift deeply-ingrained patterns of hierarchy and subjugation in everyday practice. Was the policy merely enabling a symbolic rhetorical nod to challenge the past inequities, whilst recognising that deep systemic change required much more?

Although all the nine official indigenous languages have been partially developed over the past two decades, this has happened in fits-and-starts, in an eclectic, and unco-ordinated fashion, hence all of them still lag far behind English

and Afrikaans. Commenting a decade after the fall of apartheid, Prah (2007, p. 16) observes that English still dominates post-apartheid society; Afrikaans, and the other nine indigenous African languages are still relegated to the margins, especially in educational contexts. Recent higher education student protests have repeatedly raised matters of the institutions' expressed language policies and their (students') experiences of prejudicial language practices. This has again, like under apartheid in the 1976 Soweto Uprising, placed contestations over language rights at the forefront of protest between State and official educational institutional provisionings. Campaigners fittingly assert the right to receive education in one's own mother tongue which is understood as an universal basic human right, affirming the internationally enunciated UNESCO (1958) principles (Msila, 2016, p. 3). The exclusion of indigenous African languages as languages of instruction in the South African educational system constitutes a denial of these basic and essential rights (Babaci-White, 2013).

INTELLECTUALISATION OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

In order for indigenous African languages to be used in education as languages of instruction, innovation, and logic, there has to be a clear, conscious and careful process of intellectualisation of these indigenous languages. Intellectualisation must not be wrongly conceived as a specious academic engagement in futility. Following Garvin (1973, p. 43) cited in Finlayson and Madiba (2002, p. 1) intellectualisation means sufficiently developing a language so that it can articulate domains of

modern life including science and technology, government and politics, higher education and contemporary culture.

For the South Africa context, Finlayson and Madiba (2002, p. 41) maintain that the intellectualisation, specifically of African languages, should involve a

planned process of accelerating the growth and development of our indigenous languages to enhance their effective interface with modern developments, theories and concepts.

The scholarship of 'intellectualising language' could emulate exemplary strategies adopted by Phillipine linguistics and sociolinguists (Busch, Busch, & Press, 2014). The intention should be directed, as suggested by Sibayan (1999, p. 229), a leading proponent of this agenda, to develop a language as one "which can be used for educating a person in any field of knowledge from kindergarten to the university and beyond." Since African languages continue to remain marginalised even outside of education settings, the project should ideally embrace the capacity and role of indigenous African languages in carrying and conveying all forms of knowledge in diverse spheres of everyday life. This admittedly is a large undertaking, but it however, has a clear precedent. Lategan, (1964, p. i) presents Afrikaans as the clearest and closest example:

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The rise and development of Afrikaans as a literary language is a remarkable – perhaps the most remarkable – linguistic phenomenon of modern times. As a spoken language Afrikaans is less than three hundred years old; as a written language barely a hundred years old; and as a medium of literary expression it has reached maturity in less than the life-span of a man.

Afrikaans is today a language of wider communication used in all spheres of life. Prah (2007) extols the development of Afrikaans as a “linguistic miracle” adding that Afrikaans was developed from “a *kombuis taal* (kitchen language)” into a language capable of discussing the most advanced contemporary scientific knowledge.

While the development and expansion of Afrikaans was fueled by a political ideology of domination and perhaps racial, cultural and class exclusivity, the present intellectualisation of indigenous African languages should be seen within the context of national and constitutional developmental inclusivity imperatives. The fine interconnected balance across different languages within a multilingual context needs attention. Prah (2007, p. 25) cautions against the propensity to “pull Afrikaans down” which may accompany the promotion of African languages. He suggests that this may have the unintended consequence of indirectly supporting the hegemony of the English language. What structures then will enable the constitutional mandate of a “parity of esteem” (RSA, 1996)?

Finlayson and Madiba (2002, p. 40) argue that it is the new democratic government that should legitimately “effectuate and accelerate the process of language intellectualisation” as part of national reconciliation and nation-building. This has been seen to have been embraced in the various enacted policies on language in education, among others, the Language in Education Policy (1997), the Language Policy for Higher Education (2002), and the Use of Official Language Act (2012). However, these have been roundly criticised by Prah (2007, p. 34) as “pious articles of faith” which still need to be actively implemented in practice. It is towards this goal of infusing deeply, constitutional language and human rights values, as well as nationalistic developmental goals into different layers of the social fabric of post-apartheid South Africa that the case study discussed below engaged with a formal and deliberate process of raising the potential of African languages within the higher education system in one South African university context. We acknowledge this as but one means of redirecting alternatives to destabilise the subjugated speakers of African languages.

DISRUPTING LANGUAGE HEGEMONY AT UKZN

Three interventions will be explored in this section which point to the intersected levels of change required to promote sustained intervention for a long-term redirection: 1) the development of *institutional language policies* supported by appropriate monitoring governance structures; 2) the development of a institutional-wide *construction of a database of terminology* to activate African language usage

in a variety of disciplines; and 3) the *assemblage of the corpus* of already existing and emerging textual information which consolidate the reservoir of resources to activate scholarship in and for African languages. The contextual landscape of the institution as a post-apartheid merged institution needs some brief clarification.

The institution is the product of a merger of legacy institutions which were largely racialised in their separate composition. The new institution established in 2004 consists now (2016) of about 42000 students, the majority of whom are African first language speakers, with isiZulu being the most widely reported as their mother tongue (Mkhize & Hlongwa, 2004). Class, linguistic and racial diversity marks the institution as more representative of the wider South African society than most other higher education institutions in the country. However, except for some language specialisation courses, the majority of course curriculum offerings at the commencement of the merger were mediated through the medium of English (Mkhize & Hlongwa, 2004). The formulation of a new contextual spatiality for the merged institution in line with changing national higher education policy requirements could be said to have propelled the initial stages of redirection of the language hegemony within the institution.

Policies and Governance Structures: An Enabling and Monitoring Responsibility

Most South African educational institutions have complied with the statutes on language in South Africa, particularly the “Use of Official Languages Act of 2012” (Ramoupi, 2014), which compels government institutions to develop language policies that recognise at least three official languages. These have been further officially translated into localised institutional policies noting their intended official intentions about linguistic diversity. UKZN’s original Language Policy and Plan (henceforth “the Language Plan”) (UKZN, 2006) was further revised in 2014 to include a conscious planned process of setting up an “intellectualisation of African languages component”.

Firstly, it set out that this Language Plan would fall under the jurisdiction of a *University Language Board* created through a Senate-approved charter. This Board is required to report annually to Senate and is housed in an executive portfolio under the executive leadership of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Teaching and Learning. This governance structure elevates the mandate of intellectualisation as an institutionally-mandated responsibility, not simply a reactive positioning in response to crises which flair up during (student) protests which accentuate debates around matters of alienation or prejudicial experiences. The Language Board consists of representatives from across the institution, including representatives of the student body and a PanSALB representative seconded by the PanSALB CEO in Pretoria. The Board has oversight of the strategies being developed to engage the promotion of the African languages as a language of dialogue, as a language of negotiation.

The Board has to date tackled matters not only within the scope of the classroom teaching and learning environment, but also into how the institution chooses

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to designate its official languages in all official institutional documentation, all public reports of the organisation; engages the decision-making of the naming and re-naming of buildings and spaces; and develops the university signage systems, including its websites and marketing material. The choice of languages used during public gatherings such as graduation or public meetings is officially sanctioned and are monitored by this Language Board which regularly provides updates to the official structures on the advances being made. One of the important directives led from the Teaching and Learning office has been the compulsory undertaking of a module in isiZulu for Communication for all undergraduate students who are not first language speakers of the language or have not previously studied it. Staff are also required to undertake basic communicative isiZulu as part of their staff development profile. This is intended to promote interactive dialogues amongst speakers of different linguistic groups, and ultimately provide a baseline of African languages competence. These interventions, even though reportedly interpreted as being top-down driven, and perhaps providing only a basic building block for deeper development, we believe, provide a re-acculturation of the intellectual space and the respect required to elevate the recognition of African languages. It is not surprising that classroom spaces: lecture halls and tutorials are more respectful of the use of diverse languages.

Terminology Development: An Iterative Programme

The commitment to developing indigenous African languages is not measured by how elegant institutional language policies are. The process of intellectualising these previously marginalised languages from village vernaculars to languages of science, technology, mathematics, as well as the vocabulary and syntax for social sciences is an expensive, one expansive, and requires extended effort. One of the often-cited reasons advanced against the introduction of indigenous African languages in education is the paucity of technical/scientific terminology in these languages. To address this lacuna involves the construction, consolidation and/or composition of databases of technical terminology, spanning administrative to academic items and this requires substantial resources and planning. UKZN has deployed requisite resources in the development of technical terminology ranging in responsibilities from *consultation* with experts in the particular disciplines, to *verification* of the technical terminology with linguists and lexicographers together with the field experts up to the *authentication and standardisation* of terminology with the isiZulu National Language Body.

Terminology development, as an engine to drive the goal of African languages becoming a language of teaching and learning, is at the core of language intellectualisation. One of the important principles in terminology development is to observe statutory mandatory processes. UKZN has designed a unique terminology development process with five important stages that incorporate the statutory processes facilitated by PanSALB. The stages are terminology (1) *harvesting* of existing usage and practices of African languages; (2) *description and translation*

of terminology created; (3) *consultation and verification* with end-users about terminology proposed, and (4) *authentication and standardisation through official national structures*. The ‘finalisation’ of the process is (5) the listing on *the terminology databases* for wider institutional and national usage. The five stages are illustrated in Figure 15.1.

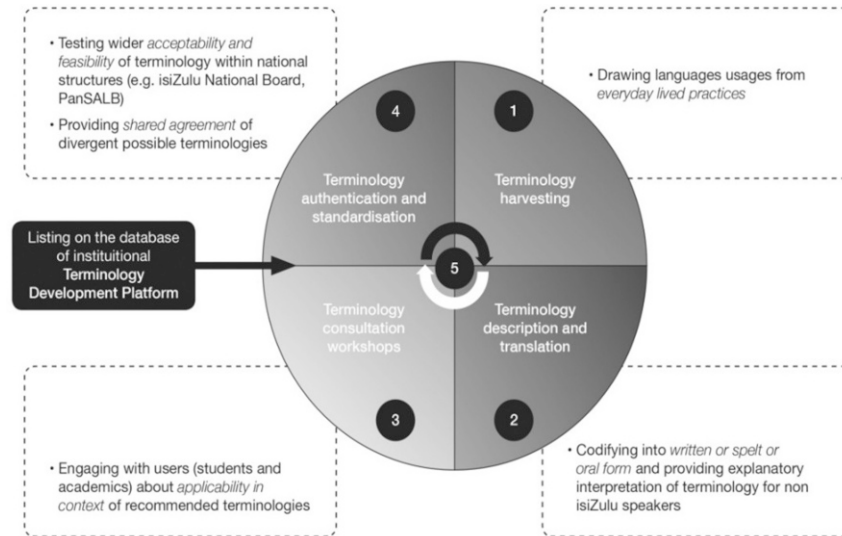


Figure 15.1. UKZN terminology development processes

This cyclical process suggests an interactive, evolving and ongoing construction of the Terminology Development Platform which constitutes an electronic database that is accessible to prospective users to activate their teaching and learning processes, their construction of textual material (e.g. handouts, course-material, and textbooks) and its use as a validated benchmark of translations used within the university. In this way the user is not only seen as a consumer, but a constructor of the new linguistic space. The process is evidentially a lengthy engagement of drawing from the wider public practices in everyday use, the formalising through a process of recording in written or oral form of selected preferences of terminology, and the acknowledging by participants who are likely end-users to test contextual applicability of the terminology, as well as the presentation amongst a wider public to engage the range of alternatives that may exist around a selected item. As to be expected, the process of authentication and standardisation is iterative and may be more contested with particular disciplinary/field-specific items. The dialogue around terminology infuses matters of cultural, social, political and inter-relational language matters as is expected of this sociolinguistic endeavour. Nevertheless, the listing on the institutional database provides an elevation from everyday use to

officialised sanctioned use, but permits the contested space for negotiations around decision-making as it unfolds.

Notably, like the intellectualisation process of any language, this terminology development process is not without contestation and reformulations. To this end an electronic platform developed by the UKZN Information and Communications Services Department (ICS): the Terminology Development Platform¹ allows the five stage process to be monitored and engaged by the wider public. The Platform also has various suites that include audio, picture and comments to yield simultaneous feedback and promote dialogue about the emergent terminologies. An application that is compatible with smartphones has been developed for ease of access by students and lecturers.

Language experts and subject specialists spend weeks on end to carefully consider each and every term in both English and isiZulu in a sequence of meetings convened by UKZN. This is done to observe the statutory and mandatory processes in terminology development in collaboration with the regional PanSALB office as a legislated body that convenes such gatherings. [Table 15.1](#) below shows the number of terms that have been developed and the respective disciplines.

Table 15.1. UKZN multidisciplinary terminology development

<i>No.</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Number of terms developed</i>	<i>Number of verified terms</i>	<i>Number of authenticated terms</i>
1.	Anatomy	673	834	834
2.	Literature and Onomastic	271	0	0
3.	Architecture	210	222	224
4.	Computer Science	145	146	0
5.	Corporate Relations	192	192	0
6.	Law	748	748	748
7.	Environmental Studies	513	513	513
8.	Nursing	549	549	549
9.	Research	493	493	0
10.	Physics	606	606	606
11.	Linguistics	516	516	0
	Total	5408	4819	3480

To date a total of 3480 terms in various disciplines have been authenticated and standardised. These include terms listed in the following categories: Administration, Anatomy, Architecture, Law, Environmental Science, Nursing, and Physics. The expectation is that these databases will spur other disciplinary and field-related areas of academic study to activate their terminology development process in line with

formal processes set up by the Language Board and become co-constructors of a new intellectual linguistic space. It is believed that the approval of these terminologies on the database could have the effect of activating not only internal usage in UKZN, but also by a broader general public. The ultimate value of these internal terminology development processes will be in its recognition and use as shared vocabulary more widely outside UKZN. Further projects have aimed to more seriously tackle matters, not just of nomenclature or terminologies, but also phonology, syntax, semantics studies and the occurrences of the language in broader public domains. This constitutes the argument of the next section.

Corpus Building: A Forward Long-Term Developmental Agenda

Another vitally important process in the intellectualisation of isiZulu is the development of a corpus. A corpus is a careful and complex collection of a large body of naturally occurring texts, which is either spoken or written, which is then stored and accessed, usually by means of computers (Sinclair, 1991). This body of material forms a representative sample of the language as it is used by the people who own it. The corpus stores and reflects the history, artistic talent, scientific development and general cultural, economic, social and political life of the people. It becomes a critical mass of linguistic data that mirrors the language in all its complexities, its dialects, its varieties and evolutions, and is thus a treasure for posterity.

In March and September 2013, UKZN hosted two important meetings to chart the process of corpus building of isiZulu. The first was a one-day colloquium, titled “The role of African Languages in higher education”. Eminent academics, representatives from PanSALB, the Department of Arts and Culture, universities in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, the KZN Legislature, eThekweni Municipality (within which UKZN resides) and other key stakeholders resolved that UKZN be the site to stimulate and house the development of an isiZulu National Corpus (INC). A process to concretise this agreement through multiple roles and responsibilities across varied stakeholders by way of bilateral Memorandum of Agreements is still underway. The second meeting was a corpus workshop, which was led by an international corpus linguist, and whose purpose was to explain the processes involved in corpus development and the benefit thereto.

The initial stages of corpus building of the INC led by UKZN has to date assembled a resource of materials currently consisting of 11 million running words. It is however, not exhaustive of all available textual material and warrants more active, targeted gathering and sampling processes. The costs of such a detailed responsible process indeed prohibit rapid expansion. The INC now also serves a basis to review the construction of the terminologies described in the sub-section above. It serves as a reservoir from which to draw recurring patterns of terminologies and practices of isiZulu language usage over time and space. It reflects that the language has indeed been grappling with the uses and preferences of different forms of Africanising of the technical terms for academia where these do not already exist. The examination of the

corpus provides a scientific exploration of a language attempting to establish itself as equally capable of being a language of use in science and technology, and in the knowledge economy, a language in and for academic, research and intellectual activity.

The establishment of the INC is a crucial precursor to the development of human language technologies (HLTs) and computer/mobile applications in isiZulu to more expansively infuse isiZulu language amongst students and staff. It is envisaged that the corpus as an electronic resource will lead to the development of academic pursuits in isiZulu as both a means of communication (including theorising how it borrows or influences the pedagogy of language) and as an object of study in and of itself. The range of potential cultural, sociolinguistic, political and artistic endeavours in a well-developed corpus are endless. The projects sought to provide computational technologies for isiZulu using Natural Language Generation (NLG). This involves the design and implementation of an algorithm to automatically generate isiZulu sentences (Keet & Khumalo, 2014a, 2014b). This involved several iterations of experimentation, error analysis and updating the code. These are concrete steps towards the intellectualisation of an African language in order for its successful use in modern technology engineering and in the knowledge economy. The isiZulu national corpus will be a vital resource in the development of *inter alia* thesaurus and electronic dictionaries.

Appropriate technologies to activate more everyday use of isiZulu in academia is also another offshoot of the corpus building project. Since INC is also an invaluable body of knowledge for academic research, a group of academics have collaboratively designed a corpus-based prototype spellchecker for isiZulu (Ndaba, Hussein, Keet, & Khumalo, 2016). This constitutes an international innovation amongst African languages.

The emergent language intellectualisation programme at UKZN can thus be illustrated in Figure 15.2:

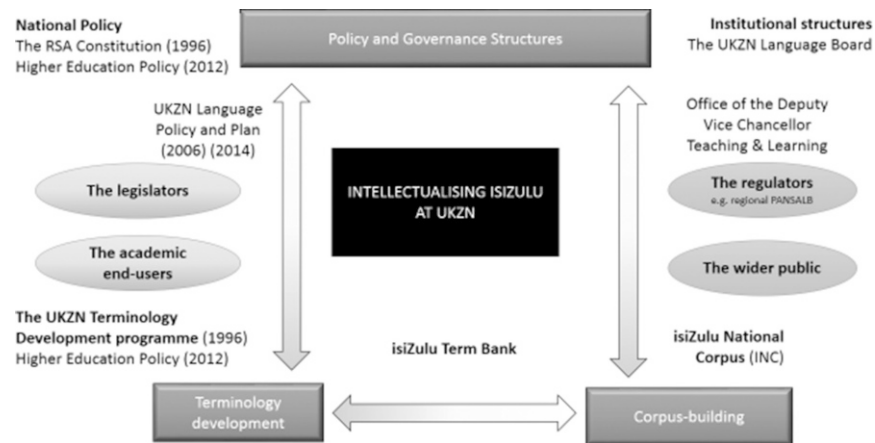


Figure 15.2. UKZN isiZulu intellectualisation programme

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The imperative to promote, develop and raise the status and role of the official indigenous African languages, especially in higher education, is a colossal undertaking. Oftentimes, when language planners advocate for the use of indigenous languages in education, they are told that these languages have no capacity to teach complex scientific and mathematical concepts. Mchombo (2016, p. 144) responds:

Put bluntly, the prevalence of English in science and math education has less to do with the intrinsic aspects of science and math or those of African linguistic structure, but more to do with power relations of dominance and subjugation buttressed by the political and social circumstances under which formal education made its debut. The colonial framework of the introduction of formal schooling was accompanied by the racist ideology that was the order of the day. The dominance of English or European languages as LoIs in Africa merely reflects the political domination of colonialism.

By not responding to the clarion call to increase the role of African languages in our education system, African governments are complicit in perpetuating the colonial education model, which is intended to relegate African languages to unsophisticated tools of oral communication. This has the fatal consequence of preserving the Churchillian grand plan. Promoting African languages at the higher education sector level could serve as a catalyst for infusion throughout all levels of the education and social system.

We have in this chapter argued that the intellectualisation of indigenous African languages can be achieved, as the isiZulu example at UKZN has indicated. The idea that there is anything linguistically and cognitively plausible in holding on to the English language as a global language is a myth, which only serves the neocolonial agenda. The denial of indigenous African languages' role in the creation and spreading of knowledge in the continent through their absence in the education system of its children is linguistic genocide. Africa can progress through the use of her tongues just as China, Japan and Korea have succeeded through using their local languages in basic education.

This is not to deny the challenges facing the elevation of the African languages as languages of academia. The global hegemonic force of English (and other colonising and insidious imperialistic languages), their proliferation and accessibility of scientific and technological material supported by fluent super highways like information technology, and the costly enterprise of providing a counterforce are all indeed pragmatic (if not ideological) considerations to bear in mind. However, not to tackle the alternative would be to become complicit in our own cognitive damage. Fanon (1968) remains an inspiration to exert the right to self-define our future, rather than become enslaved or encased in the cocoon of others. This is a project not just about language but about an intellectual renewal of our agentic powers.

NOTE

- ¹ The platform, which is constantly being updated is accessible at: <https://language.ukzn.ac.za/intro.html>

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Langa Khumalo
School of Arts: Linguistics Programme
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

CRAIG BLEWETT

16. FROM TRADITIONAL PEDAGOGY TO DIGITAL PEDAGOGY

Paradoxes, Affordances, and Approaches

INTRODUCTION

The future of educational technology has never seemed brighter, with the explosion of devices like smartphones, tablets, and netbooks. All of a sudden most students and staff have access to powerful computing technology that offers the possibility of new ways of teaching and learning. As a result

more and more instructors are beginning to abandon traditional approaches to instruction, which merely transfer knowledge from faculty to students, for cutting-edge strategies, which allow students to construct their own learning. (Heider, Laverick, & Bennett, 2009, p. 104)

However inherent in this thinking is the supposition that traditional approaches are inferior to newer approaches and that “cutting-edge strategies” will invoke different and innovative pedagogies.

A key part of the problem relates to the perception of technology as a tool rather than a system or set of affordances.

Most concepts of computer-supported learning are still based on a tool-paradigm... (where) technology is seen as a medium for delivering precast instructional content faster, cheaper, better managed and better targeted. (Lindner, 2006, p. 41)

This implies that we simply replace the old tool – blackboards, textbooks, and overhead projectors, with the new tools smartboards, iPads and websites. Undoing the cognitive damage of this type of thinking is key to effectively transitioning from a traditional pedagogy to an appropriate digital pedagogy.

While there is a move by many universities to provide online learning environments, these environments are often used simply as channels to deliver offline content more efficiently, rather than to explore new approaches to teaching and learning. If online learning is to be effective, and not simply efficient, it will be necessary to move beyond copy/paste approaches that simply seek to replicate offline approaches within online spaces.

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As Lindner (2006) says, there is an irony in this as when the term ‘e-learning’ was originally coined in 1998, it stood as a counterdraft to static, restrictive ‘computer-based training’. However now the term has, like its forebear, come to mean the storage and transfer of content through online channels.

This chapter seeks to explore the horizons beyond copy/paste pedagogies, and how the new affordances of technology spaces can be used to improve how we teach and learn with these new technologies. Firstly, the chapter begins by looking at the paradox that currently exists in educational institutions’ use of technology. Next, the skeuomorphic problem that underlies the issue of appropriate technology use is explored. In order to move beyond copy/paste it is necessary to use a lens that encourages a change in perspective. To this end, the following section explores the use of affordance theory as a lens to identify the affordances that technology provides for learning. Next, research exploring student learning in a Facebook environment, and the affordances, principles and related pedagogies that are signalled by the research are discussed. Finally, the @CTIVATED Classroom Model is presented as a digital pedagogy arising from the research.

THE PARADOX

It appears that there is a paradoxical situation in higher education as Warschauer (2007) argues in his paper entitled, “The paradoxical future of digital learning”. On the one hand universities are lauding the advent of new technologies to support innovative learning (Williams, Karousou, & Mackness, 2011), yet on the other hand they are simply delivering precast offline content through online environments (Lindner, 2006).

This raises the question as to why it is when education technology advocates are lauding “the advent of new technologies (that) will radically transform what people learn, how they learn, and where they learn” (Warschauer, 2007, p. 41), and where students in their non-academic lives are immersed in online spaces (McCarthy, 2013), that we appear to be making little progress in our use of e-learning environments in higher education. As Phillips (2015, p. 319) says,

A number of researchers examining teachers’ pedagogical adoption of information and communication technologies (ICT) in schools claim that technology integration is not happening, happening too slowly or happening with little or no effect on student learning.

Possibly part of the issue lies in a failure to yet understand how learning takes place in online spaces, and what pedagogies are best supported. As Duncan (2010) points out:

One of the most pertinent questions for today’s educational climate is that of how learning and literacy are fostered (or hampered) by the use of digital, electronic media. (p. 21)

FROM TRADITIONAL PEDAGOGY TO DIGITAL PEDAGOGY

Just like the affordances of the book or the chalkboard brought with them interesting opportunities to explore learning, so too do the raft of new affordances arising from new technologies.

There have been an explosion of Web 2.0 technologies, however, there is relatively little theoretical and empirical attention paid by social researchers to the form and nature of that learning in general. (Linxen, Gröhbiel, & Pimmer, 2012, p. 3)

THE SKEUOMORPHIC PROBLEM

When moving from the old to the new, skeuomorphs are often used to ease and facilitate the transition. Skeuomorphism is keeping the form of the old even though it has no function in the new; like 'leather bound' diaries on a computer, or 'bookshelves' in an e-book reader, or the 'clicking' sound a camera makes on a smartphone, or the curling pages in an e-book.



Figure 16.1. Skeuomorphic bookshelf for e-books

Skeuomorphic techniques are often employed in the digital world to ease the transition from the offline to the online, and so it would seem natural to continue to

employ this technique in our transition from traditional teaching to online learning environments. However, there are serious risks in adopting this approach.

The risks arise from the incorrect supposition that employing the form of the old, without its functionality in the new, would not have a negative impact. For example, it would seem that creating a book with pages that appear to curl as the reader flicks through the e-book will have no negative impact. If anything, it will remind readers of paper-based books and give them a sense of familiarity. However, take this common skeuomorphic implementation as an example.

Some e-book readers give the reader an option, to either read the book by scrolling up/down, as would be the case in a webpage, or to read it by flicking from right to left, as we would do with a traditional book. Opting to use the skeuomorphic right-to-left flicking brings with it an unintentional limitation – page size. The page size is limited to the screen size. Unlike a webpage, which has no page size limit, paper-based books are limited by the form of their physical page size. By selecting the right-to-left, page curling skeuomorphic style as a reading mode in an e-book, this unnecessary page size limit is imposed on the e-book too.

Again, this may seem trivial, yet there are use-case scenarios where this limitation will impact usability. An example of where this limit would be a problem is the recent surge of infographics. Infographics (see [Figure 16.2](#)) are visual representations that attempt to present lots of information in a single set of images.



Figure 16.2. Infographics

FROM TRADITIONAL PEDAGOGY TO DIGITAL PEDAGOGY

In order to do this, infographics are typically long graphical images that a user scrolls through on a webpage. This type of image cannot be displayed on a single page, limited by a traditional book's form factor. So, unwittingly the limits of the paper-based book have been brought across into the digital environment, and in this case would not allow the viewing of an infographic.

Essentially this type of transference of approach is nothing more than a copy-paste approach. Examples include smartboards replacing blackboards, e-books replacing textbooks, YouTube replacing teachers, and so on. None of these is inherently incorrect, however simply copy-pasting offline approaches into online spaces potentially limits the affordances of digital tools for teaching and learning.

GETTING OUT OF THE WATER

The big issue that we all face when trying to identify effective ways of teaching and learning with technology, is that we have not yet done it. Most teachers grew up in a world where teaching took place in classrooms with blackboards. Now with the sudden explosion of social media spaces like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others, and the opportunities these spaces seem to offer, we are unsure of how to use them. Our natural approach is to use them, as discussed in the previous section; in the same way we have always used our traditional teaching tools. Yet this masks the potential of new approaches that technology brings. Essentially, we need to, borrowing the words of Marshall McLuhan, get out of the water before we can understand what is going on.

I don't know who discovered water, but I'm pretty sure it wasn't a fish.
(Marshall McLuhan, 1967)

However, this raises another issue. How do we get out of 'the water'? How do we step outside of our preconceived notions of teaching, our limiting perceptions based on our offline experience, and understand how to teach in an online world? One option is to ask students how they learn in online spaces. However, this too is not without issues. Students themselves are often using online spaces for everything besides formal learning, and as such may not be able to answer this question. If they are using these spaces for online learning, this does not imply that they are explicitly aware of how they learn. What is required is a lens that enables us to observe learning in digital spaces and the opportunities it affords.

As Albert Einstein (Heisenberg, 1990) said, "*It is the theory which decides what can be observed.*" This is especially true when it comes to how we try and understand how learning is taking place in online learning spaces. The lens we use to view the environment we are studying not only assists and/or impedes our ability to see what is happening, but it also impacts what we can see. So when attempting to understand how learning happens in digital spaces, it is important to choose a lens that will provide the best insight into the workings within these spaces.

Traditionally, research into online learning attempts to use design-based lenses such as Design Theory (Anderson, 2008), or Design Based Research (Howland, Moore, & Caplow, 2015). Other models share similar rationalities. These theories explore the design aspects of environments. However, rather than look at the design of a learning space, my research sought to explore how learners use these spaces, whether the space was designed for learning, or not. As such, Affordance Theory (Gibson, 1977) was used as a lens to explore learning in Facebook, where affordances are the action opportunities that exist in an environment.

While there has been some critique of affordance theory and its apparently shifting paradigmatic base (Oliver, 2005), affordances have been used extensively over the years, including as a theoretical lens for studying 3-D Virtual Environments (Dalgarno & Lee, 2010), online social networks (Veletsianos & Navarrete, 2012), scaffolded social learning (Zywica, Richards, & Gomez, 2011), blogs and learning (Robertson, 2011), science learning (Webb, 2005), and literacy (Hawkins, 2004).

Affordance theory enables the researcher to explore the intentional and non-intentional design affordances of a digital space and so provides a useful lens to foreground learning within online spaces. In addition to its action opportunity focus, affordances are “a helpful way to conceive of the generative mechanisms associated with technical artefacts” (Volkoff & Strong, 2013, p. 822), and so provide an insight, not simply into feature sets, but underlying generative mechanisms impacting student learning.

LEARNING IN FACEBOOK

My research focused on Facebook as a learning environment. Many would consider having the words ‘Facebook’ and ‘learning’ in the same sentence as an oxymoron. In fact, several authors point to key issues surrounding using Facebook as a learning space, such as the issue of cyber and real identities (Turkle, 2006), its unsuitability for coherent knowledge construction (Kirschner, 2015) and the panoptic effect of social media spaces (Mitrou, Kandias, Stavrou, & Gritzalis, 2014). Others argue that Facebook has a positive impact on grades, engagement, and motivation (Wang, Lin, Wei-Chieh, & Emily, 2013).

Whether the impact of using Facebook for learning is positive or negative, it is nonetheless the “the most proliferant, expansive, and penetrating iteration of the digital cloud” (Monea, 2012, p. 5). As Lim (2010) says,

any technology that is able to captivate so many students for so much time not only carries implications for how those students view the world, but also offers an opportunity for educators to understand the elements of social networking that students find so compelling and to incorporate those elements into teaching and learning. (p. 1)

However, even Facebook with its billions of users will eventually wane in popularity. Yet its impact on how we connect and consume content will continue to be felt,

as millions of other tools have now perpetuated this social connective style of engagement.

The purpose of my study was to explore student learning within a Facebook learning environment. Using a Facebook Page, the research explored student learning of a higher education class during a semester within this environment. The research sought to answer the research question: what does students' use of a Facebook learning environment reveal about learning? However, implicit in the search for the answer to this question, is a definition and perspective of learning. As such, it is important to discuss briefly, the notion and changing definition of learning.

WHAT IS LEARNING?

There are various theories about learning. These theories do not only inform how learning takes place, but also implicitly include definitions of what learning is. It may be argued that we are still biological beings and despite all of our innovations, we must still learn in the same way. However, while this is true to a certain extent, our understanding of how we learn, and hence what learning is, alters as our theories develop, often in response to prevailing technological developments.

For example, Behaviourism, an early theory of learning, focused on behaviour modification through stimulus and response, with learning seen more as a passive process with a focus on the role of the teacher (Conole, 2010). Behaviourist approaches, at their peak in the 1960s, tended to mirror the prevailing pre-computerisation 'industrial' mindset, with a focus on procedure and process (Anderson & Dron, 2011). Behaviourism is about ordering that leads to learning.

This was followed by Humanism with its focus on issues of internal motivation, and so learning is from the learner's viewpoint rather than the teacher's. Learning is about meeting the needs of the learner as they strive towards higher values. Humanist approaches, at their peak in the 1970s, tended to mirror the birth of the technology era with its 'hope' of better living through machines. Humanism is about intentionality towards higher values that leads to learning.

Cognitivism focuses on learning as a process of transforming cognitive structures. Learning is about building mental structures and the study of learning is about understanding the operation of the mind (Conole, 2010a). Cognitivist approaches, at their peak in the 1980s, tended to mirror early technological innovations around the PC and its promise of being a 'brain' for everyone. Cognitivism is about knowledge discovery that leads to learning.

Constructivism focuses on learning in contexts and through relationships with knowledge being constructed (Anderson & Dron, 2011). Knowledge is constructed through encounters with information and as such, the new information is related to prior knowledge. Constructivism, which gained popularity in the early parts of the new millennium, tended to mirror the rapid development of the Internet and web technologies with its non-linear connection of information sources. Constructivism is about knowledge building that leads to learning.

Connectivism, referred to by Siemens (2005) as a “learning theory for the digital age” emphasises the role of both social and cultural contexts in learning, as well as the impact of technology both as a knowledge store and as a learning node. While it shares some principles with other theories, its major point of departure is that the previous theories do not include the effect of technology on how we live, communicate and learn. Siemens (2004) defines learning as

a process that occurs within nebulous environments of shifting core elements – not entirely under the control of the individual. Learning (defined as actionable knowledge) can reside outside of ourselves (within an organisation or a database), is focused on connecting specialised information sets, and the connections that enable us to learn more are more important than our current state of knowing. (para. 22)

It is this last definition of learning that is adapted in this research. Learning from a connectivist perspective revolves around two key principles:

- *Learning is ‘actionable knowledge’.* This is distinct from definitions of learning based on other paradigms that tend to focus on a change in output (know what) or the process (know how) but is rather a value-view of learning and knowledge (know why or know where). Siemens (2004) argues that “chaos is a new reality for knowledge workers” and that it is within these chaotic environments, where there is no longer a scarcity of knowledge, but a ubiquity of knowledge that modern learners need to operate. Learning in these environments is therefore an intricate weave of both discerning what is worth knowing, and making sense of what is known.
- *Learning can reside outside of human agents.* Connectivism considers non-human nodes as important as human nodes.

So while there is no definition of learning that is universally accepted (Schunk, 1996), the following is the definition that was adopted in this research and which is consistent with the connectivist perspective of learning:

Learning

- (how) emerges through meaning making connections
- (what) between human and non-human nodes of an open network
- (who) who are autonomous, self-organising agents,
- (where) where knowledge stored internally within individuals and externally within the network
- (why) produces *actionable* knowledge.

This connectivist-based definition of learning is significantly different to traditional learning definitions that adopt more positivist-based views of outcomes. This definition emphasises the role of networked engagement in meaning-making between agents and the distributed nature of learning and knowledge across human and non-human nodes.

SEEING MORE CLEARLY

The dominant Western worldview is not based on seeing synergies and connections but on making distinctions and seeing differences. This is why we pin butterflies in separate boxes from beetles – and teach separate subjects in schools.

(Ken Robinson with Lou Aronica, 2009, p. 288)

My research set out to explore, using an affordance lens, how learning takes place in Facebook, currently the most impactful, by number of users, online environment. As McLoughlin and Lee (2007) say

An affordance is a ‘can do’ statement that does not have to be predefined by a particular functionality, and refers to any application that enables a user to undertake tasks in their environment, whether known or unknown to him/her. (p. 666)

Using this affordance lens, the research identified the affordances of Facebook, arising out of the students’ learning experience. These affordances provide valuable insights into the students’ perspective of learning, not only within Facebook, but within online spaces, whether these experiences and actions were intended or not (Appleseed, 2013).

Five key affordances were identified after analysing transcripts of the student learning experience in Facebook.

- *Accessibility affordance.* The central affordance, Accessibility, refers to the ability to gain access to the learning space. This is central to realising the other four affordances.
- *Connection affordance.* The connection affordance refers to action opportunities that tend towards solidifying the connections between actants¹ by either removing barriers to connecting or strengthening connections.
- *Communication affordance.* This affordance relates to action opportunities that allow the actants to expose or express themselves within the learning space.
- *Control affordance.* The control affordance is an affordance that relates to opportunities to control activities in the learning space by imposing or negotiating conformity and affecting changes to the space or other users.
- *Construction affordance.* This affordance relates to activities that open up the actant space through the construction of additional spaces.

Figure 16.3 depicts the relationship between these five affordances and the grouping of affordances within these main affordance categories.

The affordances are arranged around two axes, Activity (words-works) and Actants (solid-open). The Activity axis presents the tension between Words and Works. The Activity axis tends either towards the activity being word based or towards works/action based. In an online social space such as Facebook, most activity is around what is said, i.e. the words. ‘Words’ is used in a broad sense, not limited merely to text but includes the use of various word proxies such as emoticons, Like button,

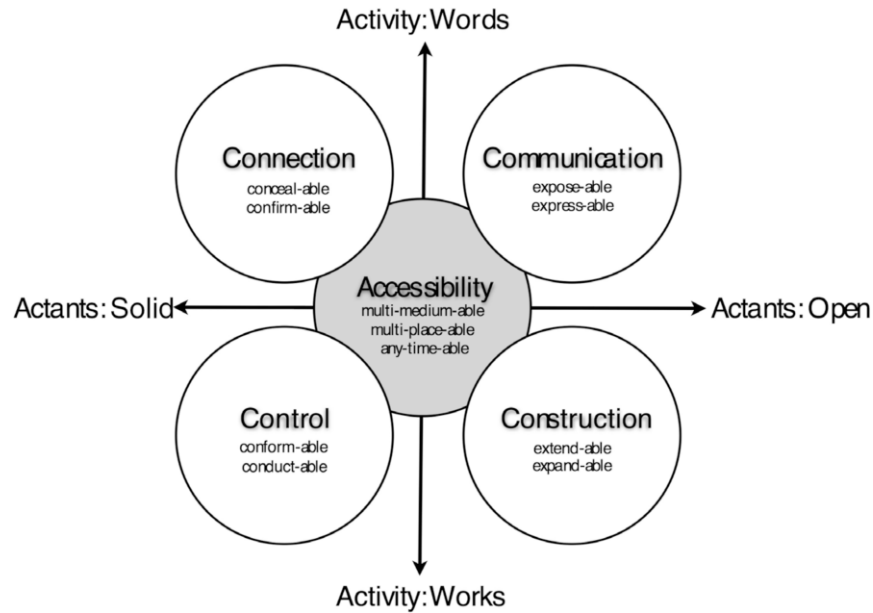


Figure 16.3. Actant-Activity affordance framing assemblage

images, etc. However, there is a lot that can be done (Works) in these spaces. The Works are the activities users undertake in online social spaces such as creating spaces, customising the environment, uploading content and other artefacts, etc.

The Actant axis presents the tension between Solidifying or Opening connections between actants. On the one hand there is a set of affordances that seeks to open actant connections and the learning space while on the other hand there is a set of affordances that seeks to solidify actant connections and the learning space. The first part of creating the actant connections is opening. These are activities that cause content to either be created (content created by the student) or curated (content sourced from other sites as indicated by the inclusion of links). Posting this content is an invitation for actant connections to be made that if acted upon will solidify the content and learning activity.

The second, and related part, to how the students learn in the Facebook environment, is through responding to posts. While there is evidence of learning through the opening of actant connections, both person-to-content and person-to-person, through posts, the solidifying of actant connections takes place through interaction (replies and likes) with the post. While posting and asking questions opens a conversation and opportunities for connections, the reciprocal actions of commenting and liking increase the density of the conversation and solidify the connections created by the conversation, and add density to the content unit itself.

So, on the one side are the set of opening affordances, *viz.* expose-able, express-able, extend-able, and expand-able, which are resisted on the other side by the set of solidifying affordances, *viz.* conceal-able, confirm-able, conform-able, and conduct-able. These tensions between affordances result either in resisting opening by solidifying content, and relationships, or alternatively encouraging opening by drawing in more comments and content. The interplay and movement between open and solid is central to learning in a Facebook environment.

The basic unit of the Facebook environment is the post and this is the axial point for opening in learning. However, once a post has been made, the basic unit of reaction is the comment, and this is the axial point for solidifying in learning. The combination of posts and comments (and associated Likes) creates conversation threads that in turn create actant connections, both between people and content. It is these negotiated actant connections that are the basis of learning in Facebook, in line with the connectivist notion of learning.

As Downes (2007) says:

Learning...is, in essence, a conversation undertaken between the learner and other members of the community. This conversation, in the web 2.0 era, consists not only of words but of images, video, multimedia and more. This conversation forms a rich tapestry of resources, dynamic and interconnected, created not only by experts, but by all members of the community, including learners. (p. 4)

This rich conversation, this need to navigate the interplay between competing affordances, to negotiate meaning in complex and chaotic environments requires us to reconsider the fundamental principles upon which we design and implement our online pedagogies. The next section considers these principles.

NEW PRINCIPLES

Silicon coating existing pedagogies is not a viable approach to using technology for teaching and learning. Arising out of my research in the use of Facebook as a learning environment are a set of affordances that are applicable, not only to Facebook, but to the wider purview of online learning. What is required is an identification of the new principles these affordances signal, and then in turn the new pedagogies that are required to implement these principles, and finally a new approach to teaching and learning in the digital age. The following sections consider the new principles, new pedagogies and a new approach to online teaching and learning.

The previous sections have shown that learning in online environments involves key aspects that revolve around various tensions. These tensions arise out of a raft of affordances that students can act upon within the learning process. In order to move beyond a copy-paste implementation, it is necessary to define a set of underlying principles for a digital-based pedagogy.

These principles are based on two indissoluble elements – power and learning, as Habermas, says, “The formation of power and the formation of knowledge compose an indissoluble unity” (Kelly, 1994, p. 85). The previous section considered how the Facebook environment is a space of tensions, tensions between competing affordances that once enacted, open up potential tensions between actants. The strands of action opportunities weave together to create a web of possibilities whereby learning can be enacted. However, these tensions resolve into two main threads, a learning discourse and a power discourse, that are inextricably intertwined. It is the interplay and tensions, within and between these two discourses that form the basis of the two sets of principles that should guide digital pedagogy as depicted in [Figure 16.4](#) below.

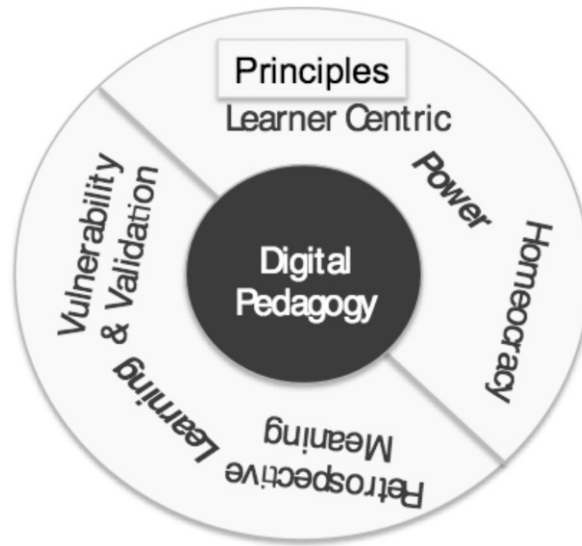


Figure 16.4. Digital pedagogy principles

The power principles relate firstly, to a move towards a learner-centric rather than a teacher-centric approach, and secondly, to a move away from autocracy, or even democracy, towards ‘homeocracy’. In online spaces, especially spaces that allow for anonymity, the role of the teacher as ‘sage on the stage’ moves quickly to that of a ‘guide on the side’. There is a *flattening of power structures* as students are empowered to comment, create, co-operate, and in some cases chart the course of the ‘what’ and ‘when’ of their learning.

The second aspect of this shift of power is the move away from decisions imposed in a top-down (autocratic) way. In traditional learning environments decisions are made by the teacher/lecturer regarding content, sequencing, and timing. While this may still exist to some extent, there is a shift towards decisions being made, not democratically, as online polls typically fail due to lack of respondents, but

homeocratically. This is where decisions and updates are enacted recursively, and then either sanctioned or rejected afterwards.

This is typically how environments such as Wikipedia operate. Changes are made and reflected for all to see without any consultation. These changes are then either accepted, indicated by no responses, or rejected, indicated by further changes and/or discussion. This power shift within online environments reflects the natural process of homeostasis, which “is the tendency towards a relatively stable equilibrium between interdependent elements” (Oxford, n.d.). As such the changes take into account the tensions between the various students using the space. This form of operation, or mode of power, is unlike traditional teaching and learning environments, and hence results in the need for a different set of pedagogic approaches.

The second set of principles is the *learning principles*. These need to reflect a move away from prospective sense to retrospective meaning and recognition of the importance of learning that is enacted in the interplay between vulnerability and validation. Traditional learning environments are built upon teleological, ordered paths that lead, normally through a series of organised steps, to a logical learning outcome. This is typically seen in outcomes-based approaches where the outcomes are clearly defined upfront, and the tasks lead in a sequenced manner towards achieving these learning outcomes. As such, meaning is prospective, where the steps and the knowledge to be learned are known beforehand.

However, digital environments, especially those based around conversation-centric models, have far less rigour and order attached to the learning process. The result is that themes and topics wax and wane. This can lead to a sense of confusion as topics are picked up and then discarded. This is further amplified by the concurrent threading of multiple conversation streams, rather than a single conversation stream that may happen in a classroom. In these online spaces meaning and meaning-making is a retrospective activity. Meaning arises inductively, after the fact. While confusion may reign during tasks and conversation, meaning arises as ideas coalesce, and themes solidify. This retrospective meaning-making also has important implications for the appropriate implementation of digital pedagogies as discussed below.

The other learning principle is the importance of the interplay between vulnerability and validation. While vulnerability’s role in learning is not unique to online environments, the affordances of these environments amplifies its role in learning. There are three facilitating mechanisms within an asynchronous, technologically mediated environment such as Facebook that facilitate vulnerability, *viz.* anonymity, temporal gap, and spatial gap. By posting anonymously the students can ‘save face’ when asking a ‘silly question’ or making a ‘silly comment’ and thereby limit their vulnerability while still making themselves open to learning. There is also a temporal gap between the time a post is made and the time of the responses. This gap provides students time to think about their response. In addition to being able to insert a temporal gap for thinking, there is also a physical spatial gap between people that also emboldens students, and hence encourages vulnerability.

While posting makes students vulnerable, it is vulnerability that enables the second element, validation to be activated. Validation takes place through comments, agreements, disagreements, and likes on posts. Validation is a response to the offer to engage, created by students posting and hence making themselves vulnerable. Offline spaces such as raked lecture theatres or classrooms are not traditionally designed to encourage either vulnerability or validation through dialogue but rather are designed to support instructional delivery. Online spaces provide a variety of mechanisms through which validation is enacted. These include replies to comments, Likes, hashtags such as #nice, #like, #great, and shares of posts; all of these help to validate the content of the post.

This is not only a mental validation, but also a technological validation, as posts that attract more comments, even if these comments are negative and/or debate, rise in the content stream of online environments, so becoming even more visible. This is important as these topics then attract even further discussion and hence validation. This interplay between posting, and the student making themselves vulnerable, and subsequent validation, is not only key to learning in online spaces, but is different to traditional, face-to-face learning spaces. In traditional learning spaces, vulnerability, as often indicated by question asking, is reduced, and validation is typically only from the teacher.

These principles, by necessity, need to give rise to appropriate digital pedagogies. As has already been discussed, simply copy-pasting offline approaches into online spaces will not only limit the effectiveness of technology-based teaching and learning, but it could also result in less effective teaching approaches. The next section explores some practical pedagogies that arise out of the digital learning principles discussed above.

NEW PEDAGOGIES

Arising out of these principles are four (and there may well be more) pedagogic approaches that are appropriate to a digital world (see [Figure 16.5](#)). The first is a move from *a pedagogy of consumption towards a pedagogy of creation*. The second is a move from *content to conversation*. The third is a move from *correct to correcting*. The fourth is a move from *control to chaos*. Each of these new pedagogic approaches interplays with the others to a lesser or greater extent depending on a teacher's adherence to the digital principles discussed above.

Consumption to Creation

The first pedagogic shift is the shift from a pedagogy of consumption to a pedagogy of creation. Traditional learning focuses on the consumption of content. Typically, a learner is given large chunks of content that they must learn and understand and then reproduce in a test and/or exam. As such, this pedagogy focuses on transference of facts and understanding, and remembering these facts, as is often seen in earlier theories and definitions of learning discussed above.

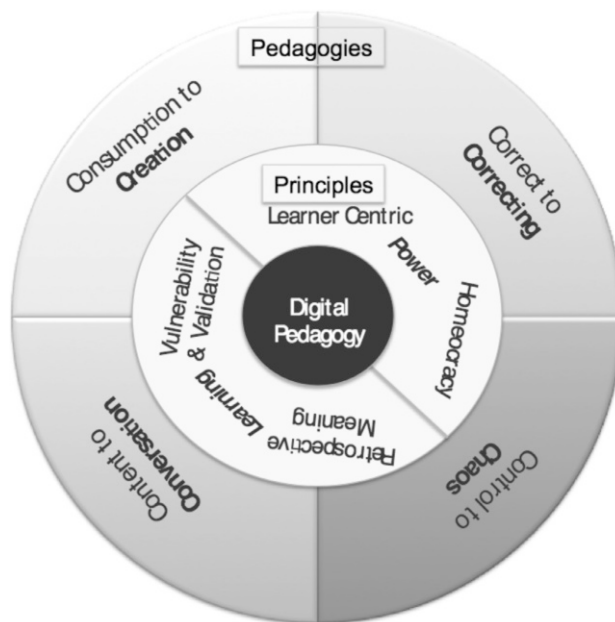


Figure 16.5. Digital pedagogy shifts

However, digital environments provide multiple opportunities to not only consume content, but to also create content. This opens up a whole new range of opportunities to teach and learn through creation. Using video creation, or wikis, or animation software, or simply content curation through social networks, users are easily able to create content.

This shifts the pedagogy away from simply consuming content that has already been created, to creating content around the learning material. The above content consumption approach around learning chemistry could be replaced by students creating a video that teaches the same content.

This is in line with the underlying power principle where there is a shift from teacher-centric to learner-centric learning. The students become co-creators of content, rather than passive consumers of instructor created/curated content.

Correct to Correcting

The second shift in pedagogy is a shift from correct to correcting. Traditional teaching approaches focus on content being correct. This means that teaching is focused on students learning a process to come up with the correct answer.

A correcting pedagogy is not focused *a priori* on the correct answer but rather on a process whereby content is in a state of correcting. This is illustrated by spaces such

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as Wikipedia (and wikis in general), where content is the negotiated result of many contributing individuals, all who are attempting to continually improve and correct the content. This pedagogy links closely with the underlying principle of vulnerability, where learners are prepared to make themselves vulnerable to learning opportunities as learning is not about the content being correct but in a state of correcting.

Content to Conversation

The third shift in pedagogy is a shift from a content focus to a conversation-centric approach. Learning has undergone a number of phases that have to a large extent been impacted by technological developments. Originally learning took place through conversation, in what was termed the Socratic method. However, after the invention of the printing press, learning began to centre increasingly around content and content consumption. This method of learning has dominated teaching and learning for over 500 years. However, once again technological innovations are impacting teaching and learning. This time development around web 2.0 and social media are causing a shift from content-based pedagogies to conversation-based approaches, to what could now be called ‘a Socratic 2.0 method’.

Unlike content-based approaches that centre around the reading, remembering and reproducing of content, conversation-based approaches focus on learning through discourse. Conversation pedagogies are reliant on the key underlying principles of vulnerability, validation, and correcting. Additionally, conversation pedagogies are based on micro-chunking of content, as is often the case in social media spaces such as Twitter, where multiple streams of content weave together in the learning process.

Control to Chaos

The fourth shift in pedagogy is a shift from a control pedagogy to a pedagogy of chaos. Traditional approaches to learning tend to focus on order, sequence and control, where the control is teacher-centric. A control-based pedagogy therefore sees most decisions, from content choice, to how the content is engaged, being determined by the teacher. Typically, in a control pedagogy the learner is given a set of facts and is controlled in how they solve the problem.

However, digital pedagogies need to encourage a shift away from control towards chaos. “The teacher must intentionally cause enough chaos to motivate the student to re-organise” (Doll, 1986, p. 15). Chaos is not normally associated with learning as chaos is equated with disorder. However, modern learning environments are built around ‘noise’ and chaos. Shifting from the realm of the ordered, understood, controlled, to the realm of the un-ordered, confusing and *laissez faire* is challenging to teacher and (to a lesser extent) student alike.

Education has been forged for centuries in the ordered, controlled sanctums of academia. It is no trivial thing to venture into what is not only a new space, but

also a new approach, and most disconcertingly, a new paradigm located on the very edge of chaos. Yet this chaotic learning is not learning without order, where chaos is the opposite of order, but rather learning where patterns and paths cannot be pre-determined. This promotes a pedagogy where learning cannot be reduced to simple practices (behaviourism) or to models (cognitivism) or motivations (humanism) or activities (constructivism). Rather learning takes place in an emergent sense, where order, when it exists, is retrospective, where correcting is ongoing and not a state. Learning is a process, a process born of connections (connectivism) between actants, human and non-human. A process that may unfold in a plethora of ways, where each path creates a multiplicity of opportunities for new connections, and new learning encounters.

In contrast to the control approach, Meyer (2010) discusses the use of a noisy, chaotic environment to engage students in learning. He discusses an example where his class is asked to predict how long it would take to fill a container with water. Obviously there are formulae that could be used (control), and as he says we have a generation of students who are

impatient with things that don't resolve quickly. (They) expect sitcom-sized problems that wrap up in 22 minutes, three commercial breaks and a laugh track. And I'll put it to all of you...that no problem worth solving is that simple. (Meyer, 2010, para. 5)

He adds that these controlled formulations of problems and solutions are not only artificial but do not represent problems that are really worth solving.

What problem have you solved, ever, that was worth solving where you knew all of the given information in advance; where you didn't have a surplus of information and you had to filter it out, or you didn't have sufficient information and had to go find some. I'm sure we all agree that no problem worth solving is like that. (Meyer, 2010, para.5)

His solution is to present his students with an uncontrolled video which shows a cylinder slowly being filled with water. He asks them to predict how long it will take to fill up the cylinder, and this is where, not only is a pedagogy of conversation exhibited, but also a pedagogy of chaos.

We put names on the board, attach them to guesses...and the best part here...is that we don't get our answer from the answer key in the back of the teacher's edition. We, instead, just watch the end of the movie. And that's terrifying, because the theoretical models that always work out in the answer key in the back of a teacher's edition, that's great, but it's scary to talk about sources of error when the theoretical does not match up with the practical. But those conversations have been so valuable, among the most valuable. (Meyer, 2010, para. 13)

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These pedagogic shifts signal the need for teaching approaches that are different to approaches that would normally be followed in traditional classroom-based spaces. It is the recognition of this need that has resulted in several models arising that attempt to explore and explicate the issues of technology diffusion and integration in the classroom.

THE @CTIVATED CLASSROOM MODEL

The first set of models focused on factors impacting technology acceptance, such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000), the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology model (UTAUT) (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003) and the Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) model (Rogers, 2010). However, while these models identify factors that need to be addressed to encourage technology adoption in general, they do not specifically address the effective integration of technology in education.

TPACK (Technological, Pedagogical And Content Knowledge) goes a step further by considering the forms of knowledge that teachers need to integrate technology into their teaching (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). However, while this model points to the need for teachers to have a confluence of technological, pedagogical and content knowledge to effectively use technology in teaching, it still does not make it clear how they should go about effectively using technology in their teaching.

The Substitution Augmentation Modification Redefinition (SAMR) framework (Puentedura, 2013) goes yet another step further by providing a framework for teachers to assess the effectiveness of their use of technology in the classroom. The SAMR model presents four levels of technology integration, *viz.* substitution, augmentation, modification and redefinition. Substitution (technology acts as a direct tool substitute with no functional change) and Augmentation (technology acts as a direct tool substitute with functional improvement) are considered to be enhancement stages. Modification (technology allows for significant task redesign) and Redefinition (technology allows for the creation of new tasks) are considered to be transformative stages.

However, as Phillips (2015) points out “by itself, the SAMR model provides little direction to guide teachers in the ways in which they might ‘transform’ the learning activities in their classrooms” (p. 325).

In addition to this, all these models assume that the use “of digital technology represents a distinctively new and improved set of social arrangements in relation to preceding ‘pre-digital’ times” (Selwyn, 2010, p. 7).

This digital evangelism is often seen where education institutes are both enticed and guided by technology companies to use new technology solutions, with little or no regard to how the technology should be used within an effective digital pedagogy.

This chapter has argued for a focus on the development of a digital pedagogy that arises out of the affordances of technology. Simply using technology in new transformative ways, as the SAMR model suggests, does not necessarily imply an

improved and appropriate pedagogy. As Kathy Schrock (2015) suggests, there is a need for teachers to be “planning for technology tasks, activities, and assessments that include both the higher levels of Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy and the transformation area of SAMR model” (para. 6).

To this end, the @CTIVATED Classroom Model (@CM) is proposed. The @CM seeks to leverage the key affordances arising out of technology (outlined in the previous section) combined with a focus on higher order thinking skills, and higher levels of engagement and activity, which is inherent in the technology affordances.

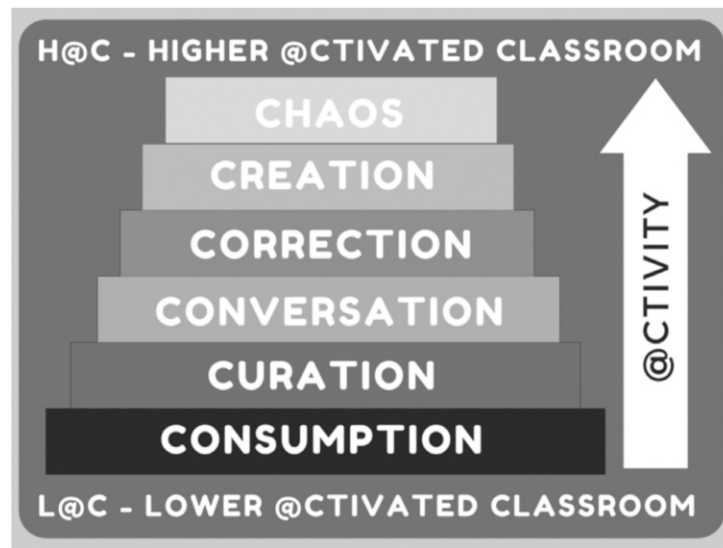


Figure 16.6. @CTIVATED classroom model

Combining active learning approaches (Mello & Less, 2013), higher order thinking skills, and the affordances of technology, the @CM provides a series of pedagogic approaches teachers can use to integrate technology into the classroom. The lowest layer, Consumption, aligns with many of the enhancement layer applications of the SAMR model, where much of the use of technology is simply a copy/paste of traditional offline consumption-focused pedagogies. However, the @CM seeks to exploit the activating impacts of technology in the pursuit of higher order thinking skills as categorised in Bloom’s taxonomy, and higher levels of activity as supported by active learning approaches.

The five active layers of the @CTIVATED Classroom are Curation, Conversation, Correction, Creation and Chaos, where each layer represents a potentially higher level of both activity and cognitive function. These five layers are all about organising, connecting, refining, communicating, creating, etc. They are about active engagement rather than passive consumption.

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While the model presents the layers as discrete, they are often interconnected. For example, many online tools that support curation will have conversation elements built in, or tools that support correcting will allow creating too. So the @CTIVATED Classroom involves a continual interplay and blending of multiple layers.

Technology provides tools that encourage a shift from passive content consumption, and related augmented digital equivalents, to new approaches. By using technology to shift teaching into new spaces that use an appropriate digital pedagogy, teachers can leverage the affordances of technology in new and meaningful ways in teaching and learning.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This research set out to determine how learning takes place in online learning spaces. While Facebook, as the most prolific instantiation of modern social media, was used, the conclusions derived from the study extend to online learning and social media spaces in general. The research argued for the need for a new approach to teaching and learning.

Unsurprisingly, this need has led many institutions to grasp the obvious tool to support this reform – technology. However, undoing the impact of hundreds of years of industrial, didactic pedagogies is not simply a matter of replacing one technology – chalkboards and textbooks, with another – smartboards and tablets.

In this chapter we looked at the challenge of shifting to an online teaching space. The challenge is exacerbated by our natural inclination to prefer skeuomorphic transitions that attempt to replicate principles and pedagogies of offline spaces into online learning environments. However, these approaches limit the affordances of online spaces for teaching and learning. Using an affordance-based lens, the chapter discussed how the research points to changes in how students are learning, from consumption-based learning to creation-based learning, from correct to correcting, from content-centric approaches to conversation-centric, and from controlled content and pedagogies to chaotic pedagogies that seek to embed learning in real-world situations.

While various models help identify issues with the adoption of technology (TAM, UTAUT, DOI), or the personal attributes a teacher requires to use technology effectively (TPACK), or a technology integration continuum (SAMR), these models assume that technology integration equates to more effective teaching. The @CTIVATED Classroom Model presents a series of pedagogic layers, ranging from lower activated approaches to higher activated approaches that combine both active learning and higher order thinking with the affordances of technology.

The move from a traditional pedagogy to a digital pedagogy is both as nuanced and undefined as the technology world upon which it is based. Distilling this complexity to a simple model is fraught with issues. However, in order to undo the damage caused both by traditional pedagogies of consumption, and new copy/paste approaches to digital pedagogies, a new model is required – one that preferences affordances over features and pedagogy over technology. It is this first tentative

step that the @CTIVATED Classroom Model hopes to make. Its applicability is however, not confined to the use of technology within the teaching-learning spaces. Instead, it offers insight more broadly about how pedagogical choices are being designed, selected and negotiated to activate enriched teaching-learning spaces. The promotion of an @CTIVATED Classroom is a strategic possibility for shifting away from ritualistic pedagogy towards deeper quality pedagogical opportunities, recasting our curriculum choices not simply to embrace seemingly more advanced media, but directed towards deeper cognitive development, wider, more socially just interactivity and affirmatory, interactive knowledge-making.

NOTE

- ¹ The term ‘actants’ is used instead of ‘students’ as this is more in line with the underlying connectivist theory that argues that learning and knowledge reside not only in humans (students) but also on technology. The term therefore refers to both human and non-human nodes in the learning network.

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FROM TRADITIONAL PEDAGOGY TO DIGITAL PEDAGOGY

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Craig Blewett
Discipline of Information Technology
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

PART THREE
(MIS)DIRECTIONS?

NYNA AMIN

17. CURRICULUM WITHOUT BORDERS?

From time to time, it is worth wandering around the fuzzy border regions of what you do, if only to remind yourself that no human activity is an island.

(Julian Baggini, 2008, online)

INTRODUCTION

In the early seventies, a band of highly trained doctors decided to provide medical care to deprived, dispossessed and marginalised groups of individuals ravaged by war, poverty, political strife and inadequate health provisioning. Calling themselves *Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders*, they took their medical craft to the forgotten parts of the world, to the frontlines of war and into the midst of havoc caused by natural or human disasters. Medical assistance these doctors demonstrated, could be offered where and whenever it was needed, beyond state lines, in the face of political impediments or cultural politics, as a post political enterprise, and yet, engaged in a political enterprise. All it required was not a shifting of borders but a crossing of borders, albeit by philanthropic intruders and trespassers. Simultaneously desired and derided (Al Jazeera, 2014), uninvited yet indispensable (Buchholz, 2015), grudgingly acknowledged and victims of violence too (see e.g. Taylor, 2010), Doctors Without Borders ruptured the norms and recuperated medical practice in situations of conflict and suffering. The mixed receptions to its humanitarian purposes are, unsurprisingly, both bewildering and comprehensible (Bortolotti, 2010); undoubtedly, though, its good effects have not gone unnoticed by its beneficiaries.

Since then, the trope *without borders* has become a useful category or descriptor for contemporary social justice endeavours¹ and in this instance, deployed for expanding possibilities, introspecting existing practices and conjuring future curricula interpretation and implementation. The mobilisation of *curriculum without borders* is meant to capture the conditions and practices of a transgressive attitude that is risky, necessary and worthwhile within the enterprise of higher education. In relation to curriculum design, interpretation and implementation, it could diversify the horizons of teaching (e.g. opportunistic insertions of content) and learning (intended and unanticipated) which are nevertheless, coupled with uncertainty of outcomes. Uncertainty, I want to argue, should not be received as dangerous or repulsive. In fact, uncertainty courts all teaching endeavours: who can predict,

with certainty, the learning outcomes of any teaching intervention? However, consciousness of uncertainty, that is, the deliberate designing of curricula within a framework of uncertainty and organising teaching around principles of uncertainty may serve purposes beyond the borders of higher education. In other words, learning *for* higher education must be distinguished from learning *from* higher education. The former refers to limiting the boundaries of learning for credentialing purposes while the latter refers to expansion of the formal curriculum and unfettered application of learning beyond the pathways prescribed or anticipated by the academy. In effect, a curriculum without borders implies intellectual freedom (not just of expression/belief) and responsible choices for teaching and learning purposes. Indeed, a curriculum without borders implies unrestricted “insertions of various kinds that characterize each context. It is flexible and makes space for the unexpected, the uncertain and the extraordinary” (Amin & Campbell, 2014, p. 167).

In this chapter, the notion of *curriculum border* is interpreted as restricted and circumscribed with prescribed objectives, content, practices, activities and assessments for narrow regulatory purposes (passing a module or acquiring a qualification). Power, vested stakes and hegemony are exercised in higher education through curricula design and choices, which are imposed on students. It is often an inward looking (at the prescribed content, objectives and outcomes), decontextualised, ahistorical and perhaps, irrelevant preparation for post institutional intents. To clarify the point, let me use the example of student unrest since October 2015 in South Africa.

Student unrest and activism, which include demands to cleanse institutions of their Eurocentric heritage and to decolonise the curriculum are expressions of resistance to the traditional academic authority of higher education institutions. The students are not only questioning the content they are taught by challenging the underlying assumptions, epistemological roots, intentions and outcomes of university curricula, they are also calling for affordable higher education and transformation of institutions which continue to reflect apartheid-era values. To coerce institutions and the state to succumb to their demands, students have resorted to arson and recent reports suggest that R145m of fire damage was caused in just three months (Tandwa, 2016). Another R100m of damage was caused at the University of Johannesburg in May (Gernetzky, 2016). Consistent with Kristeva’s (2000) call to provide those who are alienated from mainstream society with the educational, artistic and literary means to ‘revolt’, that is, to ‘return to or re-find themselves’ in creative ways, the question we should be posing is: Does our curriculum provide students with the skills to resist and to act in non-violent ways? I am not suggesting that curriculum is responsible for the ways in which students have chosen to express their anger and demands; indeed, the issues are far too complex and clarification and explanation are beyond the scope of the chapter. Instead, I want to argue that curriculum can provide the space and the potential to engage with issues that are of concern to students, that impact on the quality of their present living conditions and their future aspirations. Student concerns, largely invisible, envelop our work as teachers in higher education; we

need tools to make the invisible visible and to actualise change as well. Students have become more politically perceptive while higher education has withdrawn deeper into neoliberal tendencies (Maistry, 2014). Even though solutions are not immediately available, a start can be made by moving towards a *curriculum without borders*, which will be explained in detail later. It might be prudent at this juncture to clarify that a *curriculum without borders* is *not* synonymous to an *open* curriculum, which was defined way back in 1974 by Kelly as, “designed to accommodate the learning needs and career goals of students by providing flexible opportunities for entry into and exit from the educational program, and by capitalizing on their previous relevant education and experience” (p. 2232). Open curricula do not challenge the content: instead, it is a loosening of the systems that regulate choice of courses and transfer of credits (Kelly, 1974). A *curriculum without borders* is different because principles of uncertainty can be factored into its design at either macro or micro levels.

The notion of *borderlessness* is not new. In nature, it can be seen to be the essence of living, survival and thriving. For example, our planet was once a giant piece of land, Pangaea, drifting in water. Over time, through tectonic movements, earthquakes and cosmic accidents, the island ruptured and splintered into smaller landmasses. The partition of the landmasses into continents and nation states – artificially created borders – was, by contrast, an outcome of human design as was the categorisation and labelling of oceans, rivers and everything else on the planet. Presumably, the creatures living in the oceans, moving freely (without having to produce identity papers and passports), do not similarly comprehend it. The same logic applies to animals in the wild, birds in the sky and plant life. However, when humans interfere to *border* nature then catastrophic consequences are unleashed: for example, a plant can attain a status of *alien* or *weed*, meaning its worth is diminished and its destruction becomes mandatory. So too, the sacredness of animal life is erased, and apart from facing confinement or extinction, an animal’s life, perhaps one of just a few hundred, is sacrificed when it is perceived that a human life, one amongst billions, is in danger (Reuters, 2016). One could argue that while nature is insensate (in the way humans are) and without borders, human culture on the contrary, displays a conscious and deliberate penchant for territorialisation, dissection and demarcation. Hence, the dominance of curricula *within* borders: the border, a margin of error! And, therefore, the need for curricula *without* borders, which resonate with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) notion of ‘deterritorialisation’ and its cognate concepts, like ‘lines of flight’ and ‘the war machine’.

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF SOME ASPECTS OF CURRICULUM

This section provides a brief exposition of selected aspects of curriculum. There are tomes written on, for example, curriculum history, curriculum design, curriculum approaches and models, far too many for detailed description and analyses. Instead, I begin with a quote that captures the interpretation of curriculum as it applies to

the volatile, unpredictable and precarious situation in South Africa (and elsewhere too where student unrest is on the rise), that is, “no matter what context we are in, curriculum is the manifestation of the power distribution in society” (Lau, 2001, p. 29). From a Foucaultian perspective, power is not possessed; instead, it is a relation based on an unequal distribution, which can be repressive, productive or resisted (Foucault, 2006). At present, we are witnessing the dilution of the power of curriculum designers and implementers as students resist, in their opinion, *colonising* content and assessment practices that do not accommodate the special circumstances of poor, disadvantaged, digital immigrants who have to negotiate the cultural capital of higher education institutions. The dynamics can change at any given moment, as power is elusive, constantly shifting, giving the illusion of possession, but always circulating and vacillating between oppositional parties. It seems that new paradigms *must* emerge to reconcile growing student discontent with higher education and their alienation from formal curricula by reviewing curriculum assumptions, the nature of subject matter, the nature of society and the nature of the individual.

Various descriptions of curriculum hint at the assumptions underpinning the nature and structure of knowledge from Plato’s (2000) explication of idealism in the 4th century BCE to the 20th century social reconstructionist viewpoints of Maria Montessori (1912) and the pragmatist perspectives of John Dewey. Dewey’s propagation of education was considered radical for that period (100 years ago) when access to formal education for a few transitioned to education for the masses. However, his sentiments regarding curriculum as the means for “social continuity of life” (Dewey, 1916, p. 3) could not be more discordant with the aspirations of contemporary students. Millennial students, in fact, are demanding rupturing and discontinuation of pre-determined norms and constructions of the subject (individual) as well as the subject matter of education, and, more importantly, the making of an educated subject. Similarly, Bobbitt’s perspective that curriculum “is the entire range of experiences, both directed and non-directed, concerned in unfolding the abilities of the individual” (1918, p. 42) seems unreasonable in the 21st century, especially within a context in which experiences have been politicised by damaging ideological structures and practices (racial, psychological, emotional, social, economic and cultural in nature). Increasingly, students are mobilising as a pressure group, not as individuals. Now the rhetoric has shifted from individual rights to group rights (of those who have been excluded from curriculum decisions) and are applicable to other contexts as well (see e.g. O’Malley, 2016). Furthermore, fifty years after the publications by Dewey and Bobbitt, the scholar, William Pilder (1969) asserted that the nature of curriculum constituted two poles, “the subject pole (knower) and the object pole (what is known). Characteristics of design vary depending on which of these two poles is given primacy in curriculum thinking” (1969, p. 593). The binary nature (subject-object) of curriculum may be debatable today as notions of what constitutes the object of knowledge are in dispute while *what is known* is also subjective. Furthermore, *what is known* is a function of power (Foucault 2003) to subjugate knowledge. Entire histories have been revised and indigenous knowledge

has been marginalised (Kraak, 1999). Curriculum design is not neutral; it is a construction based on the choice of subjects interpellated by hegemonic discourses. Despite a lineage that is traceable to the 4th century BCE, western curricula are increasingly under scrutiny in spaces where it was imported by colonialists and then extended and consolidated over time. Although colonialism ended officially, its effects, colonised minds, or to use Spivak's conceptualisation, *cognitive damage*, are still visible in everyday life. Postcolonial thought (see e.g. Bhabha, 2004; Fanon, 1952, 2004; Nkrumah, 1964; Mohanty, 1986; Said, 1979, 1994; Spivak, 1990), which instigated a rejection of western norms, standards and values, framed political rhetoric and opportunism but was largely contained for decades within academic networks. Now, however, it has entered mainstream discourse, and the language of postcolonialism forms part of the arsenal that is powering resistance in South Africa. At the same time, we need to remember that postcolonialism is not uncontroversial. The postcolonial turn was predicated on western thought. Critical theory and later, poststructuralism and deconstruction provided the lenses, the language and legitimacy to critique colonialism. For example, for a critique of colonialism, Spivak drew on Nietzsche, Freud and Derrida while Fanon appropriated Freud, Marx and Sartre. The trope, without borders is useful in this regard to describe the paradigmatic shifts, which are entanglements of sorts, perhaps, *paradigms without borders*.

The scale and depth of student resistance is unprecedented and unexpected. Existing curriculum approaches (transmission, product, process, praxis, managerial, behavioural or humanist) have neither prepared nor provided the cognitive tools to deal with the range of student discontent. Perhaps it has to do with the incompatibilities of Tyler's (1949) behaviourist model – organised around objectives – to the changed landscape of higher education at present. Seemingly open, it is prescriptive as it is imprisoned within the doxa of mainstream western ideology, philosophy, values and knowledge, which can be described as unsupportive of *cognitive justice* (Visvanathan, 1997). Although the behaviourist approach to curriculum was regarded as ground breaking at the time, Tyler, like those before him, has fallen foul of presentism: reading the past through the values and conditions of the present in developing contexts. The “*upside of presentism*”, the title of an article on historiography by Fendler (2008, p. 677), is its strategic presentistic value to read the past against the interests of the present as an opportunity to interrupt harmful practices and beliefs based on philosophical foundations that are not justifiably universal. By the same token, every curriculum model, design and approach be it linear (Taba, 1962), spiral (Bruner, 1960), cyclical (Wheeler, 1967) or dynamic (Walker, 1971), delivers, engenders or generates limitations depending on application in context. Of particular interest are the consequences of the hidden and the null curriculum.

The hidden curriculum, a phrase coined by Jackson (1968), refers to that which students learn “because of the ways in which the work of the school is planned and organized but which are not in themselves overtly included in the planning or even in the consciousness of those responsible for the school arrangements” (Kelly, 1999, p. 8). Interestingly, Dewey (1938, p. 48) described it as “*collateral learning*”. The

latter description, seemingly, captures the parallel universes of teaching and learning which occur within the same space. The hidden curriculum (also referred to as covert curriculum) is a manifestation of uncertainty in practice: who can predict with certainty what students learn? Equally troubling, though not for its uncertainty value, but for deliberately omitting that which is of value to the recipients of education is the null curriculum which Eisner (1984) explained thus:

There is something of a paradox involved in writing about a curriculum that does not exist. Yet, if we are concerned with the consequences of school programs and the role of curriculum in shaping those consequences, then it seems to me that we are well advised to consider not only the explicit and implicit curricula of schools but also what schools do not teach. It is my thesis that what schools do not teach may be as important as what they do teach. Ignorance is not simply a neutral void; it has important effects on the kinds of options one is able to consider, the alternatives that one can examine, and the perspectives from which one can view a situation or problems. (p. 97)

Exclusions in the official curriculum are serious indictments of curriculum decision-making. To illustrate the point, the exclusion of indigenous knowledge or a vernacular language, especially in developing contexts, is not only insensitive and unfair; it pathologises the values dear to communities on whom the formal curriculum is imposed. The recipients of education, by implication, learn that excluded knowledge or language is inferior, tainted, unimportant or worthless.

In concluding this section, it is important to note that the scholarship on curriculum development, design, models and theorisation is largely located in primary and secondary education research. Higher education has yet to seriously develop its own approaches. Those that do exist, and even the one proposed in this chapter, build on non-higher education curriculum scholarship (see e.g. Irlbeck, Kays, Jones, & Sims, 2006).

CURRICULUM WITHOUT BORDERS

Two studies, located in different fields are drawn on to demonstrate, explain and theorise curriculum without borders. The primary study was located in the field of education (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009) and then re-imagined for palliative care application (Amin & Campbell, 2014). First, I present a brief outline of the two studies (objectives, contexts, disciplines and worldviews) and the ways in which borderlessness was approached followed by the overarching assumptions influencing the conception of curriculum without borders as derived from these examples.

The only significant similarity between both studies is the preparation and skilling of individuals for the workplace (schools and home-based care). The participants in the education study (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009) comprised first year Bachelor of Education students. The majority of the students were new graduates of high school, and their experiences of teaching to date were as learners, immersed in

school contexts for approximately twelve years. They were recipients of education and observers (consciously and unconsciously) of teaching roles, functions and practices. However, South African schools are diverse (e.g. multiple cultures, languages, races, religions and social classes) and range from poorly resourced to technologically advanced, world class contexts. Few students would have experienced the entire range with most, likely to have experienced no more than three or four school contexts, probably similar in nature. The concern for teacher education was placement of student teachers in schools for about two months in each year of study (the practicum), which is usually based on student preference. The schools selected by students for the practicum resembled the schools they attended as schoolchildren with very few of them inspired to risk placement in an unfamiliar environment. Furthermore, the curriculum was designed for ideal school conditions (for instance, good leadership and administration, good resources, strong culture of teaching and learning); it did not prepare future teachers for the realities of the South African schooling system, which has been described as “frail, failed and fraught with complications” (Amin & Vandeyar, 2014, p. 17). Once qualified, those opting to work in state schools apply for permanent tenure, not to a school, but to the Department of Education, which decides where they take up a position. The chances are that students could be employed in an unfamiliar, less than ideal school context and thus, unprepared to work in such conditions. The challenge we faced was how to prepare students for an uncertain future – in other words, preparation for an assortment of situations as the literature indicated that attrition rates of early career teachers was high and, for the stressed education sector in South Africa, it was untenable. The response of one institution was to reconceptualise teaching practice in the first year as a four-stage intervention, which placed contextual diversity and contextual inequalities at the centre to undergird the design. One outcome of the reconceptualisation was the exclusion of placement of students in schools for eight weeks. [Table 17.1](#), revised from Amin and Ramrathan (2009, p. 73), outlines the interventions, intentions and foci of each stage:

Table 17.1. A curriculum without borders for teaching practice

<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Intention</i>	<i>Focus</i>
Reframing memory	Shift thinking from learning to teaching	Contextual diversities and contextual inequalities
Disrupting experience	Insert additional frames of reference	Experience diversity and inequality
Destabilising learning	Trigger creative responses to lack of resources	Improvised and creative thinking
Reconstructing uncertainty	Practice teaching to peers instead of schoolchildren	Provide opportunities to teach in diverse contexts

(Source: Amin & Ramrathan, 2009, revised)

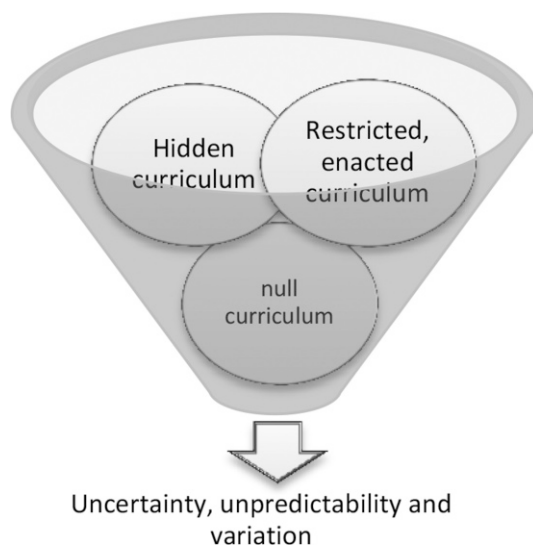
Reframing memory was actioned during lectures, by providing students with a theoretical lens to read teaching contexts as objective, subjective or manufactured reality and, crucially, through the design of questionnaires, observation and interview schedules, which we hoped would force them to view schools on empirical evidence rather than students' reminiscences of schools. Undertaking physical tours of schools that reflected diversity and inequality followed by discussions of the implications for teaching, working and serving practicums in different kinds of schools disrupted their experiences (or memories thereof). Learning was destabilised by developing materials development skills (e.g. using mud as ink and newsprint as chart paper to make a poster for teaching; using a Smartboard). The final intervention phase involved deliberately reconstructing uncertainty. The student teachers had to teach, to their peers, the same lesson in three different ways that tested their abilities to adapt to diverse school contexts. Teaching peers is not the same as teaching children in schools. Peers know the concepts and the content, and can answer complex questions without the need to probe. The efficacy of teaching could resultantly, not be assessed, because the teaching took place in an inauthentic space (at the university, to small groups of post-school youth). Uncertainty, they realised, could not be avoided.

The palliative care study draws on Campbell's (2012) doctoral thesis in the field of paramedical care. The need for palliative care in South Africa has grown due to the rapid rise in the numbers of HIV/AIDS infected individuals and drug resistant tuberculosis patients. Simultaneous to the rise of dreaded diseases has been an acute shortage of human, medical, pharmaceutical, therapeutic and psychiatric resources for treatment. In some spaces, resources are scarce or non-existent. The problem is exacerbated in remote areas as few medical, professional and paramedical services are available there. The number of palliative care patients is disproportionately high in rural areas as many patients return home to be cared for by family (often elderly relatives). In the absence of qualified palliative caregivers, the healthcare system is dependent on non-medical volunteers to fulfil the service.

The volunteers were trained by a non-governmental organisation using a curriculum borrowed from the west, which was neither adapted for local needs nor conscious of alternative (indigenous) worldviews. The volunteers were required to prepare patients and families for death, and assist with bedcare and bathing; however, they could not dispense medicines for pain relief. The selection of members of the community to be trained as caregivers provided a false sense of meeting local needs. When the volunteers visited homes they were seen as harbingers of death, and their overtures to prepare for death were met with derision and threats of bodily harm. The families and patients were particularly angry that the caregivers were unable to ameliorate pain (as unqualified paramedicals they could not dispense drugs) and that indigenous approaches to care and their belief in 'miracles' (making a total recovery) were disregarded. Neither patient nor caregiver was satisfied. Key findings included a mismatch between the written and enacted curriculum, the implication of hidden

and null curricula, and that the dilemmas and conflicts the caregivers endured were peculiar to the rural context they served.

Following much despair at and rumination of the findings, we were inspired to rethink the preparation of palliative caregivers that would be appropriate for rural contexts. The article we wrote (Amin & Campbell, 2014), theorised an imagined curriculum (without borders) for palliative care. The four stage intervention approach of the teacher education curriculum was appropriated toward that end. The stages we offer as reconceptualised categories are reframing memory of care, disrupting experience of care, destabilising learning to care and reconstructing uncertainty of care. The four stages, we surmised, should factor in the limitations of the existing curriculum (restricted, hidden and null) and prepare caregivers to be responsive to contextual peculiarities. A critical departure from its origins (Amin & Ramrathan, 2009) was to make explicit the deployment of a poststructural framing of practice.



*Figure 17.1. A curriculum without borders: The space of unknowns
(Revision based on Amin & Campbell, 2014, p. 167)*

In [Figure 17.1](#), “the funnel represents the post-structural framework to influence the curriculum with contextual specificities and complexities. As the circles filter through the post-structural frame, they lose their borders at the narrow base and are released into a post-structural space making a curriculum without borders” (Amin & Campbell, 2014, p. 167). We speculated that when a practice is situated within a poststructuralist paradigm, then uncertainty, unpredictability and variation will not impede success, in fact, it could have the opposite effect. A poststructural worldview,

inspired by Nietzschean philosophy, challenges ideas based on fixed notions about the nature of human beings and entails a rejection of meta-narratives (Nietzsche, 1956, 1957) like *successful* teaching or *spiritual* needs, which were, arguably, the misguided goals perpetrated by inflexible theories about teaching practice and palliative care. Indeed, undecidability is characteristic of a poststructural attitude. Presumably then, a key to success may be to prepare individuals for uncertainty by avoiding a solution-based approach because teachers/trainers can neither predict the complexities that will need to be faced in the workplace nor fully comprehend the alternative worldviews valued by communities/individuals that will need to be served. Based on the two examples (teaching practice and palliative care), some general conclusions may be drawn about the assumptions that probably underpin an approach to a curriculum without borders:

Cognitive structures, like memory, work in interconnected, complex and unpredictable ways so outcomes can vary; contexts impact on practice, understanding, curriculum implementation and enactment; working in context is experienced in multiple ways and can produce anxieties of various sorts with regard to realities that are contradictory and paradoxical; and, context is a space in which multiple realities can be in conflict or complementarity.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This chapter argued for a *curriculum without borders* as an eventual outcome. It means that one begins with a curriculum with borders followed by a systematic and careful scrutiny of the curriculum to identify the hidden curriculum at work (the practices that are unintentionally communicated), the restrictions within the curriculum (that are counter-productive in actual situations) and the null curriculum (which omits the essentials that are of local, context and cultural relevance). Furthermore, contemporary issues brought to the attention of teachers by students can be integrated to re-evaluate or enrich the curriculum. The importance of a borderless curriculum cannot be overemphasised. There is unprecedented conflict in local and global spaces. The frontlines of wars have become borderless, instead of conflict in a battlefield, all spaces, anywhere and everywhere have the potential to become a warzone. We have witnessed in the past few months the eruption of conflict on higher education campuses, in parliament, on the freeways and in townships. There is anger about erased histories, marginalisation, inaccessible structures and services and there is a demand for curricula that reflect local values and indigenous knowledge.

We have moved beyond the point where curriculum is accepted as an attempt to fix a body of knowledge to be mastered and presented as a set of outcomes. Instead, curriculum can be approached as dynamic, open, flexible and without borders. It need not be imposed and it certainly is more effective when recipients can influence its contents, approaches and practices. As can be noted from changes in the higher education arena in South Africa, inflexibility, the use of curricula borrowed from

the west and marginalisation of indigenous knowledges are fuelling unrest among students and communities. If we are to undo cognitive damage then there has to be a concerted effort to shape curricula by inserting local knowledge, conditions, beliefs and concerns. The examples offered in this chapter show that it did not necessitate much cost or time to integrate these into a curriculum. It required sensitivity and commitment to uncover restrictive practices and to identify the hidden curriculum and make explicit the null curriculum. The four stage interventions can provide a framework to uncover, identify and to make explicit the limitations of curricula in use. We must remember that higher education teaching is a complex endeavour. It is also an important producer of the next generation of thinkers and practitioners. More than that, those who exit institutions of learning must leave with competencies that are relevant, with attitudes that are appropriate, with sensitivities that are responsible and responsive to work and society's needs, and must be people who can embrace uncertainty in a world that is glocal, polyvalent, unpredictable and undecidable.

NOTE

- ¹ Some examples of the appropriation of the trope without borders: Clowns Without Borders; Education Without Borders; Engineers Without Borders; Feminists Without Borders; Lawyers Without Borders; Libraries Without Borders; Musicians Without Borders; Nurses Without Borders; Reporters Without Borders; Rhinos Without Borders; Teachers Without Borders; Translators Without Borders.

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Nyna Amin
School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Nyna Amin is associate professor and distinguished teacher at UKZN. A former Fulbright scholar, she teaches discourses and research methodologies in education to postgraduate students. Her intellectual work derives its inspiration from Ernesto Laclau, Giorgio Agamben, Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci and Slavoj Žižek. She has published papers in the fields of higher education, medical education, teacher education and gender and co-edits a special issue on teaching and learning in higher education in *Alternation* each year. Currently, Nyna is the principal investigator of an NRF-funded project on teacher work. amin@ukzn.ac.za

Craig Blewett's mission 'Innovatively inspiring' is one that has driven him to explore the limits of body and mind, from the arduous trials of over 50 marathons to the ultimate marathon of the mind – a PhD in educational technology. Driven by a mission to innovatively inspire teachers and students, Craig has spent over 15 years researching, at UKZN, how to effectively and practically transform classrooms with technology. blewett@ukzn.ac.za

Chatradari 'Chats' Devroop is the Academic Leader for the Performing Arts Cluster at UKZN. Having grown up in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, Devroop was exposed to the multitude of genres and musical life in and around the province. His initial interests were in music performance, which ranged from western art music through to commercial and popular music. Recently, his focus shifted towards academia and mores especially diaspora, media and technology studies. devroop who is well known in both music performance and scholarly circles seeks to balance his artist-academic life through constant engagement with the arts. Devroopc@ukzn.ac.za

Rubby Dhunpath is the current Director of Teaching & Learning at UKZN, providing leadership in various teaching and learning support initiatives aimed at promoting the scholarship of teaching and learning and institutional research. He holds a PhD in Education from the University of Durban-Westville as well a TESOL qualification from Cambridge University. A Spencer Fellow and Rockefeller Scholar, Rubby has researched published in education policy, language policy, life history research, organisational ethnographies and Doctoral Education. His current focus is on the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning. dhunpath@ukzn.ac.za

Franco Frescura read Architecture at the University of the Witwatersrand where he was bestowed a BArch in 1977, a MArch cum laude in 1981, and a PhD in 1986.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Between 1976 and 1989 he documented the self-built architecture of indigenous communities living in rural Southern Africa. Since 1978 his research has focussed primarily upon indigenous knowledge systems and he has since published widely on the subject. In 2002 he was appointed Professor and Chair of Architecture at UKZN where he is currently Senior Research Associate in the Centre for Communications and Media Studies. frescuraf64@gmail.com

Langa Khumalo is the Director of Language Planning and Development at UKZN. He holds a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Oslo (Norway), and an MPhil in Linguistics from Cambridge University (UK). He has been an invited speaker at various conferences and colloquia. He is a Fellow of the Cambridge Commonwealth Society (FCCS), a Language Champion in the Oxford Global Languages programme (OGL) for Oxford University Press (UK), an Associate of the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), a Board member of the African Association for Lexicography (Afrilex), and a member of the inaugural Executive Committee of the Digital Humanities in Southern Africa (DHASA), after serving for a year as its steering committee member. He is also a member of the Language Policy Review Working Group appointed by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). khumalol@ukzn.ac.za

Hyleen Mariaye holds a position as Associate Professor at the Mauritius Institute of Education. She is the Higher Studies Coordinator at the Mauritius Institute of Education, leading the Masters and Doctoral Programs run in collaboration with the University of Brighton, UK and UKZN. Her research interests are in the field of teacher education, identity studies and narrative inquiry. She has acted as a lead for various national education research projects in Mauritius. h.mariaye@mieonline.org

Thabo Msibi is associate professor in curriculum studies in the School of Education at UKZN. He teaches in the area of curriculum and human rights education. His research work focuses on curriculum as it relates to gender and sexuality issues. His work has been published in both local and international scholarly platforms. His upcoming book (Routledge) explores the hidden sexualities of South African rural and township male teachers who engage in same-sex relations. msibi@ukzn.ac.za

Sarojini Nadar (PhD) is a full professor and leader of the Gender and Religion Programme at UKZN. As a trans-disciplinary researcher, she has researched and published widely in the field of feminist biblical hermeneutics with a special focus on HIV and AIDS, gender-based violence, masculinity and sexuality. She has also published on theories of feminism in Africa, and has more recently been engaged in research on social justice and Higher Education systems. She was the recipient of the UKZN Distinguished Teachers Award in 2013 and the National Commendation Award for Teaching Excellence from HELTASA [Higher

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Education Learning and Teaching Association of South Africa] (2014). In 2012 she was the winner of the National Department of Science and Technology Distinguished Young Woman in Science Award: Human and Social Sciences. nadars@ukzn.ac.za

Bert Olivier works as Senior Research Fellow in Philosophy at the University of the Free State, South Africa, and is an adjunct professor in the School of Education, of UKZN. He has published academic articles and books across a wide variety of disciplines such as philosophy, architecture, literature, psychoanalysis, cinema and social theory. He was awarded the Stals Prize for Philosophy by the South African Akademie vir Kuns en Wetenskap in 2004, and a Distinguished Professorship by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa, in 2012. olivierg1@ufs.ac.za

Kriben Pillay is the Dean of Teaching and Learning in the College of Law and Management Studies and an associate professor in the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN, and is a writer across many genres. His poems appear in four South African anthologies, and his short stories appear in two. He was a finalist for three national literary awards for his works. His latest creative output is *Three Poisons – greed, ill will and delusion*, which features three stories published in the UK by Non-Duality Press. In 2014, Kriben co-edited the first volume of its kind, *Teaching and Learning in the College of Law and Management Studies: Shared Approaches, Lessons and Good Practices*. He was awarded the Distinguished Teacher's Award in 2008. pillaykri@ukzn.ac.za

Mershen Pillay is an audiologist and a speech therapist, working for approximately 25 years across South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates. He has mostly practiced in the acute care hospitals and community settings with persons with swallowing disabilities (dysphagia) and hearing impairment due to occupational noise/chemical exposures. Currently, he is an associate professor and Academic Leader (Research) in the School of Health Sciences (UKZN) and a Visiting Research Fellow at Manchester Metropolitan University (United Kingdom). He has a keen interest in metamorphosing health care education, research and policy within a decolonisation, population-based framework. pillaym1@ukzn.ac.za

William Pinar before moving to the University of British Columbia in 2005, where he holds a Canada Research Chair, taught curriculum theory at Louisiana State University, where he served as the St. Bernard Parish Alumni Endowed Professor. He has also served as the Frank Talbott Professor at the University of Virginia and the A. Lindsay O'Connor Professor of American Institutions at Colgate University. In 2015 Pinar was awarded the Ted T. Aoki Award for Distinguished Service by the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies. He is the author, most recently, of

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Educational Experience as Lived: Knowledge, History, Alterity (Routledge, 2015).
william.pinar@ubc.ca

Julia Preece is Professor of Adult Education at the Durban University of Technology and was formerly Professor of Adult Education at UKZN. Her main areas of research interest are in adult education, lifelong learning and community engagement. Recent book publications include a co-edited book called *African Universities and Community Engagement: Perspectives, Prospects and Challenges* (published by NIACE) and an authored book *Lifelong Learning and Development: A Southern Perspective* (published by Continuum). preecej@ukzn.ac.za

Sarasvathie Reddy (PhD) is a Senior Lecturer at Higher Education Training Development, UKZN. She is the Academic Coordinator of the PhD in Higher Education and the University Extended Learning Induction Programme. She spent the first decade of her academic life at the Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine as the Head of the Skills Laboratory where she was involved in teaching the clinical aspects of the medical curriculum. Her current research interests include gender in higher education, medical education, postgraduate education, academic monitoring and support of students in higher education, assessing and teaching and learning in higher education. She is also involved in an international research project with a focus on gender, religion and health. [reddys15@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:red dys15@ukzn.ac.za)

Michael Anthony Samuel is a Professor in the School of Education, UKZN. He has served as a curriculum designer of innovative masters and collaborative doctoral cohort programmes locally and internationally. He has also been a member of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education assisting the development of national teacher education policy in South Africa. He has served as former Deputy Dean: Initial Teacher Education and Dean (Faculty of Education, UKZN). His research interest focuses on teacher professional development, higher education, life history and narrative inquiry. His book, *Life history research: Epistemology, methodology and representation* (2009) has inspired several studies of professional development in education and the health sciences. *Continuity, complexity and change: Teacher education in Mauritius* (2016) explores the challenges and possibilities facing a small island in negotiating its presence in global and international discourse of comparative higher education and teacher education. He is the recipient of the Turquoise Harmony Institute's National Ubuntu Award for Contribution to Education. samuelm@ukzn.ac.za

Dennis Schaffer was born on 12 March 1943 to a Catholic mother and a Jewish father, Dennis started life as something of a maverick and he has continued to live up to this label in his subsequent varied and adventurous life. He found a natural home in the theatre becoming an award-winning actor and a controversial stage director. He has been a Professor of Drama, an Associate Professor of Visual

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Arts and Design, Director of Arts for the City of Durban, University Orator, and the proud father of five extraordinary, fiercely independent-minded children.
profds@mweb.co.za

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is Professor and a founding member of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society. Her fields of study span from 19th and 20th century literature; politics of culture; feminism; Marx and Derrida; to globalisation. Her most recent publications include the 2016 fortieth-anniversary edition of *Jacques Derrida's Grammatology, Readings* (2014), and an *Aesthetic Education in the Age of Globalization* (2012). Spivak has written numerous books and articles, including *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987; Routledge Classic 2002), *Thinking Academic Freedom in Gendered Post-Coloniality* (1993; 2d ed forthcoming), *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (1993; Routledge Classic 2003), *Imperatives to Re-Imagine the Planet / Imperative zur Neuerfindung des Planeten* (ed. Willi Goetschel, 1999; 2d ed. forthcoming), *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999), *Death of a Discipline* (2003) and *Other Asias* (2005). She has translated and introduced several texts by Mahasweta Devi and Ramproshad Sen. Her book *Du Bois and the General Strike* is forthcoming. Spivak has been an activist in rural education and feminist and ecological social movements since 1986. gcsniv@gmail.com