

INAUGURAL LECTURE



Roots and Routes: A Dialogic ImagiNation of Literary-Linguistic-Cultural Representations **Muchativugwa Liberty Hove**

Langston Hughes A Dream Deferred

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore...
And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Re-searching and re-positioning in critical language and literary arts education: A quest for purpose and relevance

When a hyena wants to devour one of its own offspring, it first accuses it of smelling like a goat (chiShona proverb)

When one's goat gets missing, the aroma of a neighbour's soup gets suspicious...RGM

This inaugural lecture reflects on the "literary" in literature. Less ideologically construed, more affirmative of literary attachment, the lecture adopts a style of intimacy – its "tough love" – in a correlation between the creative work and the critical act. Instead of configuring literary works to "state-of-the-nation" issues – the usual approach to literature from Africa – the talk keeps alive a space for conversation, whether accented inwards to locality or outwards to the Anglophone world: the world to which literature in Africa continues to belong, albeit as a "problem child."

A postcolony that is not quite a postcolony, Africa is richly but frustratingly textured between Africa and the West, or the South and the North. There is the abiding challenge of measuring modernity and development relative to the European Industrial Revolution, which explains why 4IR has come into vogue in discursive spaces on identity and becoming, the panoply of roots and routes. Its literature – hovering

on the cusp of its locality and its global reach – raises peculiar questions of reader reception, epistemological and aesthetic frame, and archival use. Are the Nobel laureates from Africa Wole Soyinka, Abdularazak Gurnah, Nadine Gordimer and J.M. Coetzee local writers or global writers? Is the novel or the short story the more appropriate form at the edges of metropolitan cultures and the *dialogic imagiNation of literary-linguistic-cultural representations*? Given language, race, identity and culture contestation, how do we recover orality for contemporary use? How do we consider the aesthetic appeal of two contemporaneous works, one in English the other in isiXhosa, the one indebted to Bloomsbury modernism the other to African custom? How does Douglas Livingstone attach the Third World to the First World in both science and poetry? What has a "born free" novelist, Kopano Matlwa, got to do with the Bard of Avon? In a time of theorisation, is it permissible for Lewis Nkosi to embody literary criticism in an autobiographical journey? How do we read the rupturing event – the statue of Rhodes must fall and BlackLivesMatter# – through a literary sensibility?

Alert to the influence of critique, this lecture is equally alert to the "limits of critique." Reflecting on several writers, works, and events that do not feature in current publications, *this inaugural lecture* releases literature and languages pedagogy to speak to us today, within the contours of competing energies – a Southern epistemology and knowledges otherwise. I ask therefore, that pertinent question that stirs Langston Hughes into assessing the place of black presence in white America: *What happens to a dream deferred? Is there any hope for schooling systems in Africa when they are restructured according to the demands of corporate sectors and the market presents one of the most threatening assaults to the possibilities of schools and universities contributing to the creation and sustainment of more democratic solutions to the current problems of illiteracy, poverty, inequity and oppression?*

The sobriquet of globalisation

My research journey commenced in 1991 in a PGCE class. I watched one of the most remarkable and contemporary films on discipline and punishment, *Lean on Me*. In it, Joe Louis Clark is the principal of Eastside High School located in Paterson, New Jersey from 1982 to 1989. In a phenomenological viewing of this film, I strove to examine and interrogate 'Crazy Joe's leadership style as principal of Eastside High, and to investigate from the point of view of Mr. Clark's students, teachers, and administrators what, if any, effect his leadership style that, while controversial, was successful. Joe Clark, in the context of Eastside High, establishes an assemblage, following Deleuze and Guattari (2006). When I went back to teach English in high school, I was a new teacher, disabused of the innocence of childhood and the mundane chores of teaching. The classroom was a site of research and teaching, teaching and research, research and writing [CLIP –*Lean on Me*].

When Mr. Clark arrived as principal, Eastside High was characterized by large numbers of students living in the liminal spaces characterized by grim poverty, overcrowded classrooms, and outmoded resources. Additionally, there were significant challenges such as high dropout rates, drugs, prostitution, teenage pregnancy, violence towards students and teachers, and racial uproars. To raise the students' 'Minimum Basic Skills Test scores' as well as eliminate the violence at Eastside High, Mr. Clark was hired as the new principal. Mr. Clark used an approach and leadership style designed to augment discipline that emerges as a symbiosis and amalgam of the autocratic, dogmatic, immoral, directive, intimidating, charismatic and caring. I want to contend that Mr. Clark had a discipline and leadership style that, while controversial, was successful. His background and experience called for a specific normativity, transgressive though it was against other antecedent and privileged norms of school discipline. Joe Clark, in the context of Eastside High, establishes an assemblage, following Deleuze and Guattari (2006). Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that can function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within: grim poverty, overcrowded classrooms, high dropout rates, drugs, prostitution, teenage pregnancy, violence towards students and teachers, and intense racial antagonism. How then do we, amidst the machinations of globalization, enact curriculum and teaching and learning in such classroom spaces that repel dialogic imaginations of literary-linguistic-cultural representations?

In the same year, I was introduced to an array of scholars on critical pedagogy that was, then and now, a hotly debated term in the academy. Its proponents draw upon the important scholars (Freire, 1970; McLaren, 1994; Giroux, 2001; bell hooks, 2004; Darder, 1991; Kincheloe, 2004; Ivor Shor, 1992;) to argue for an approach to education that is rooted in the existential experience of marginalized peoples, that is centred on a critique of structural, economic and racial oppression, that is focused on dialogue instead of one-way transmission of knowledge, and that is structured to empower individuals and collectives as agents of social change. Increasingly, critical pedagogy has been discussed as a potential component of rural and urban school reform. Again, educators and researchers look to critical pedagogy as they consider ways to motivate students, to develop literacies and numeracies of power, and to employ students and their communities in the struggle for educational justice. We certainly applaud these goals, but we also feel as though the field at present insufficiently explores the applications of critical pedagogy to rural and urban education. For the past twenty years we have been dedicated to the enterprise of designing and investigating classroom interventions that are built upon the core principles of critical

pedagogy. In our collective efforts I have worked across multiple settings that range from English classrooms to debating teams to NRF- funded research programmes. My goal in this research has been to develop a grounded theory of practices (Strauss and Corbin ,1996); that is, a theory that begins with the core principles of critical pedagogy but uses empirical qualitative data from informed practices to develop a more nuanced and particular critical pedagogy as it applies to rural and urban education in 21st century schools in Africa.

The founding principles and epistemic destinies

In 1991, I was coming from a university climate suffused with Marxist scholars and ideas and though I did not always agree with traditional definitions and measures of academic literacy, I remained first and foremost committed to facilitating academic skills and achievement in my classrooms. I understood the promotion of academic literacy development and achievement to be part of my mandate from the profession, from the students, and from the families. Without agreeing on much else, I could agree with my colleagues in the Department of English at Gokomere High School, our administrators, and national subject specialist (EOs) administrators that students needed to achieve academically in our schools. Regardless of my philosophical foundation, I understood that my students existed in a world where they would be expected to take and perform well on national examinations that served as gatekeepers to postsecondary education and, by consequence, professional membership.

I also understood that my students would need to understand, interpret, and produce in the Language of Wider Communication (LWC) (Smitherman,2001) or what others might refer to as Standard English; they needed to develop these linguistic competencies and literacy skills for academic advancement, employment, but also for civic participation. If students were going to acquire capacities and competencies required of critical citizens, they needed strong literacy skills, which would include the ability to read, reason and write in the LWC. Though critical literacy still existed as a goal of my pedagogy, I understood that critical literacy also demands a knowledge of and facility with the language of power. It is impossible to critique or refute texts that one does not understand; comprehension is an important prerequisite to critique. Through my reading of critical theory and my work with white and black students I came to understand the importance of studying dominant texts to the development and maintenance of a revolutionary consciousness for both teachers and the students in their classrooms (Freire 1997). I found it disturbing therefore that in South Africa we had a mega-subject called EHL or EFAL that cheated students by asking literature questions that elicited recall and application skills. Students were not

challenged to write extended essays, analyse and evaluate the tonalities and accents and privileges and marginalities in the literary and language texts prescribed for study.

As a teacher of English and former student of mathematics, language and literature at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, I also knew that my students would be expected to demonstrate knowledge of canonical literature to pass Junior Certificate, Ordinary and Advanced Level examinations or to succeed in university-level coursework in the discipline. Again, these literacies of power, though sometimes problematic, were important for our students and the development of critical consciousness. With respect to canonical literature, Nobel Laureate author and activist Toni Morrison reminds us that national literatures reflect what is on the national mind. Studying canonical texts is an important strategy for understanding the values and ideologies of dominant groups at various points in history.

The syllabus then was elastic and permissive, and I selected what to teach: *Macbeth*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Things Fall Apart* (and later Achebe's latest addition to the African literacy archive, *Anhills of the Savannah*), *A Grain of Wheat*, Thomas Hardy's *Selected Short Stories*, William Butler Yeats' *Collected Poems*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, and, joy of joys, Richard Wright's *Native Son*. I had worked in between as subject officer for the Zimbabwe School Examinations and knew intimately item writing, validity, discrimination indices and test reliability. I had rallied for localization of the examinations at Cambridge and getting into a classroom to teach these texts and the language curriculum at Peterhouse added to my gravitas. I developed a textbook for IGCSE English, *Crystal Clear* (2004) and multilingual, critical discourse units that prepared students for the Ordinary level and Advanced level examinations offered each Michaelmas. Further, I placed a premium on academic writing focusing on the genres of expository and discursive essays, research reports and academic speaking (or persuasive rhetoric) in the form of presentations and debates. I wanted my students to present themselves powerfully and persuasively across multiple written genres in addition to presentations that offered space for understanding their location within the architecture of globalisation. I goaded them into understanding that "the global market" has not delivered all the benefits its public defenders have promised.

It was this foundation that spurred my participatory action research and scrutiny of the following:

Cultural participation and development (drama, film and media, music, visual and arts)

1. 1986: Directed and produced *I will marry when I want* together with Micere Mugo, Ngugi wa Mirii and Kimani Geacu, starring as Geca'amba: Play by Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirii. ***I remember with hilarity getting into an open-space with the playwrights and using our panties as towels because none had cared to carry toiletries on the national tour!***
2. 1987: Acted in *Katsha'a: The sound of the AK* in South Africa in solidarity with the liberation movement in South Africa, Beit Hall, University of Zimbabwe. **Baleka Mbete (then besotted to poet Keorapitse Kgosiitsile), Xoliswa Sithole (of the famed documentary *Zimbabwe's Forgotten Children*), Sydney Mufumadi and Moeketsi Mbeki...all in exile during the struggle for South Africa...were in the audience. I do not lay claim to recognition, but here was a palpably tense collaboration on stage to liberate South Africa.**
3. 1985: Acted in *Seri kwesasa/Okusemsamo* Beit Hall, University of Zimbabwe (with Raymond Brown, an ex-Catholic priest who was ex-communicated when he fathered famed musician Andy Brown, SimbaYafele, now senior lecturer at UJ, Owen Seda, now Professor of Theatre Arts at TUT, Robert McLaren, aka Robert Kavanagh Mshengu, then fugitive in Zimbabwe fleeing from the tentacles of apartheid police)
4. 1994/2004: Directed, acted and produced *Sizwe Banzi is Dead*, starring in role as Styles; a play scripted by Athol Fugard, Winston Ntshona and John Kani, Fieldsend Hall, Peterhouse.
5. 2005: Directed and produced *Master Harold... and the Boys*, by Athol Fugard, Winston Ntshona and John Kani: winner for the RAPS Independent Schools Competition, Harare.
6. 2007: Directed and produced *This time tomorrow* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o for the South African RAPS Festival, Witwatersrand University Theatre.
7. 2009/2016: Directed and produced *A Raisin in the Sun* by acclaimed Afro-American playwright, Lorraine Hansberry, ISSA Theatre/Mmabana Theatre, Mafikeng. **We would have performed A Raisin in the Great Hall and Mmabana Theatre had the students not burnt the A1 Rectorate on the same night!**
8. 2011: Acted in starring role as Morocco in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, by William Shakespeare ISSA theatre/Mmabana Theatre, Mafikeng.

For the plays and theatre performances, that first score from the Soweto String Quartet was a haunting presence, **crystalising all the dreams deferred**. Additionally, I was able to honour the existential

experience of my students and work toward the development of critical academic literacies by merging the canonical literature with popular cultural texts from music, film, mass media, and sports. More importantly, as a Department of English we were able to situate all texts and curricula within a critical pedagogy that was explicitly aware of issues of power, oppression, and transformation, and that honoured the non-school cultural practices of the students and included the student's authentic dialogues about inequity and advocacy for justice. When we rehearsed and produced *Master Harold...and the Boys* in a largely white-dominated Fieldsend Hall at Peterhouse at the height of the land invasions in Zimbabwe in 2006, the production won the RAPS Festival. It was a tampered play addressing raw issues of land and racialised and marginalised identities reclaiming visibility. The tension in the Fieldsend Hall was palpable.

In no way, shape, or form did my focus on academic literacies compromise my commitment to critical pedagogy and to literacy education for individual freedom, identity constructions and social change. In fact, I felt that it was only within a pedagogy firmly committed to freedom and social justice that I was able to motivate students to develop sophisticated and critical academic literacies. I read Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery*, a monograph he wrote for his PhD and later banned as a history book because of the subversive ideas it disseminated. I read CLR James' *The Black Jacobins*. I made the newest testament out of Lisa Delpit's *Teaching Other People's Children*. I was a connoisseur of Michael Apple's (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum* and Henry Giroux's *Theory and resistance in education: Towards a pedagogy for the opposition*, and bell hooks' (1994) *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practices of freedom* and Jonathan Kozol's (1991) *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools*. I found time to watch a Warner Brothers production of Schumacher, John's (1996) *A Time to Kill*. That film, and my entanglement with *Lean on Me*, changed the ways in which I perceive and practice teaching and research.

When I too got 'evicted and jettisoned' to South Africa, the core foundational philosophical principles to classroom pedagogy and practices included a belief that multiculturalism was more related to a pedagogy of hope than it was to the static curriculum. Although I was a firm believer of foregrounding popular cultural texts in the school curricula, I did not shy away from the "classics." I registered for my PhD and strove to explore auto/biography and re/presentation. I have since co-written that journey, its entries and exits in *Representations in auto/biography* with Kgomotso Masemola (2014) [1 903 reads on ResearchGate] and co-authored with Paul Nkamta *Two students, one supervisor* (2017) [1 202 reads on ResearchGate]. *Strategies of Representation in Auto/biography* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) interrogates autobiographical writings from Southern Africa, a space whose scribes have many-a-time been elided and omitted from scholarly interrogations of the subject. Constructs of identities, spanning familial bonds, group identities and national cleavages are foregrounded in order to locate the anguished public

memories and the silenced inconsistencies of selves re-membered in autobiographical writings to convey exemplar selves. This is a critical text that contributes to the interstitial selves carved in auto/biography, where the nexus of histories and cultures and re-formation becomes an important moment of self-reflexivity and identity formation. Its investigation of how selves are represented and *de* and *re* constructed serves to confirm, validate and privilege certain identities, histories of significant selves in the political, social and economic performances of the respective nation states from whence the writers emerge. For cultural and A/B studies, this is a seminal first addition to the discourse.

Both *Strategies of representation* (Palgrave) and *One supervisor, two students* (*The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, 2016) have **an i10 index of 16**.

My disappointment in that PhD research project led to a new and practical engagement with emancipatory literacies pitted against hegemonic standards, culminating in *Quality Education* (2021) with Martha Matashu. With only a year in circulation, the research-based book published by AOSIS in open access has already been cited 6 times. **The Clarivate Analytics Book Citation Index, Social Sciences & Humanities shows in graphic form the book has been downloaded by 218 individuals and/or institutions. There is certainly bound to be more.**

Then in 2008, and again in 2016, waves of xenophobia in my adopted home spurred me to research that poignant article, a testament to the angst of belonging 'otherwise', ***When tears become a language* (2017). It is an article to which I have a very personal attachment, published in *Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration* 1 (1), 117-135. It has an i10 index of 16 and 1 924 reads on ResearchGate.** Here is an article inspired by Italian Marxist social theorist Antonio Gramsci's (1965) assertion that the goal of research and teaching is to help make the students and society more critical producers and consumers of all information that they encounter in their daily lives, and to develop in them the skills to become more capable producers of counter information.

A sample from my 2018-2019 archive reflects the issues of identity, languaging and becoming that I have troubled and interrogated in my research:

2018: Africa in Brathwaite: The matrix of cultural quest, identity and history as poetic vision (**i12, 914 reads** *Literator: Journal of Literary Criticism, Comparative Linguistics*).

2018: Mission statements: Deficit and surplus messages in two universities' strategic development plans in South Africa in a co-edited book, *Dynamics in research-based teacher education* (DHET accredited and subsidy; **1 382 reads on ResearchGate**)

2018: Learning to teach in a global context from a local perspective, in a book, *A Scholarly Compendium for Teaching and Learning (DHET accredited and subsidy; 1 461reads on ResearchGate)*

2019: "Kaka" country: An intertextual reading of national dysfunction in selected Zimbabwean fictional narratives. **This is co-authored with my PhD student, Esther Mavengano and has 1 284 reads.** (*Literator* 40(1), a1595. <https://doi.org/10.4102/lit.v40i1>)

In 2017, in recognition of its expertise in the broad field of life studies, the English Department of Stellenbosch University was mandated by the International Auto/Biography Association to establish the official Africa Chapter. To celebrate this occasion, on 19-20 October 2017 the department hosted a regional colloquium, at which I presented the "Plenary Address on Textual Lives" focusing on the emplacement of Africanness and auto/biography in conversation. For example: 'self,' 'documentary,' 're-telling,' 'celebrity,' 'anonymity,' 'selfie,' 'queer,' 'visibility,' 'memory,' 'rebooting identity,' 'first person plural', 'otherwise,' 'trans' allowed me to complicate the visual, sonic and kinetic.

In 2018, I gave a plenary at WiCDS, the **Wits Centre for Diversity Studies, entitled *Archives of remembrance: Imagined triumphalist narratives of the self*. The focus was on conventional biography that has been framed as a monolithic "narrative of internal homogeneity and cross-temporal consistency" constructed with a "Cartesian self-transparency" (Hove 2014).** In such works, lives were presumed structures by "objective life markers", reflecting key, critical points about the life in question. Through these markers, the lives of 'real' persons could be "mapped", charted" and given meaning. In the studies and critique of biography, the trend has been to see biographers as "historians of life, dwell[ing] on the death-bed scene" posing a paradoxical connection between biography and death (Svenson, 2007; Hitchens; 1998). Biographers exploited the tension between posthumous memorialization and the attempt to 'grasp' the life as lived, expressed in a language of monuments, statues and epitaphs. Here, the biographic and the funeral were intermeshed, with the biographical subject identical to the dead. In the first part of the 20th century, the focus has been an unprecedented set of the drawbacks of the biography boom in the popular literary market and the dangers of biography, which sells itself by sensation and what happens in bedrooms. In Hollywood, the genre of the feature film biography, or the 'biopic' has reared its head from time to time, to provide epic visual spectacles in the form of stories of remarkable lives of moral greatness, or to provide a platform for the recovery of a life of leadership, previously obscured by controversy, and to project it into the mainstream. There is an uncanny connection between biography and commodity fetishism - investing in the slippery, inconstant, and ever-changing project iconography of the 'selfie' (Christopher Hitchens, 1998). Perhaps the more

pertinent question in A/B is to establish how many voices are represented and reconfigured in the textualisation of the I/eye.

The bent in this presentation steers away from the reading, focusing on A/B as the relationship between the subject/s and the discursive process such as the subject recurring in the 'articulation of processes and questions of identification' (Shahid, 2004:12). At the core, the contention is that life histories are *productions* - neither chronological narratives nor empirical archives of memories, made permanent in the wor(l)d rather than the lived. A/B narratives are interpellations of self-narration, gender, politics, histories, familial nexuses - always *idealized approximations* to ways in which selves are forged and spoken about for *dissemi-Nation*. A/B offers a forum for exploring the imbrications between self and culture - the interstitial - which is a symbiosis of experience, memory, languaging and narrative (Shahid 2004:13). The stylization of daily life through an aesthetic of existence (Shahid, 2004:14) privileges the eye/I of the narrator as omniscient. A distinction is made between the life as lived, supposedly in an unmediated way, and the life as told through a subsequent process of narration and re-mediation. However, according to Paul Ricoeur (1998:23), the process of *selection and narration*, the insertion of the 'I' at a present juncture to re-mediate the past, begins "in life itself, with attention and planned activity", energized by what Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari projected in the formation and rupture of *A thousand plateaus*. Life is experienced in a temporal way. For Ricoeur, temporality and narrativity are mutually imbricated. A/B then becomes the production of history, in which history is understood as "the processing of the past in societies and historical settings...and the *struggles of control of voices and texts* in innumerable settings which animate this processing of the past" (Appiah, 2007:6). As a "field of practice", the production of history encompasses, inter alia, "the organizing sociologies" of historicizing projects, commemorative events, "the structuring of frames of record-keeping" as well as "the contentions and struggles which evoke and produce texts and which also produce historical literatures" (Laura Marcus, 2008). The grand point in all this is that "[the] self does not pre-exist the text but is constructed by it" (Birgitta Svenson, 2009). A long quotation from Rassool (2004:48) should suffice to anchor this argument on the constituents and constituencies of the auto/ biographical mode:

In the narrativisation of the self, identities need to be understood as constituted within and through representation and, as Stuart Hall (2007) puts it, is as "produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies." Following Lawrence Grossberg, it is the process by which each plane of identification and belonging - the subject, the self and the agent - is produced and then "articulated into structures of individuality" that need to be understood. In the process of becoming, such identities emerge out of the productive use of the resources of language, culture and history in the

articulation of the subject to discursive formations. These identities, while not corresponding exactly to agency, may influence questions of power and the possibilities of agency. The question of agency, as a vector of identification and belonging is a *strategic installation* for fields of activity...on *socially constructed territory* (my italics).

Auto/biography is haunted by the caesura between the *autre* and the *bio*. I insist on reading this tension-filled hyphen in the manner of retrospect and prospect. To speak on behalf of self and family and to represent a multiplicity of perspectives that accurately represent a generation's beliefs, goals and values will always be contested space. Each auto/biographical text is apparently constructed with a specific political and personal agenda in its very effort to define a self and a generation's identity. In assuming the prerogative of narration, the author offers a story and testimony the defies marginalization and even the traumatic accounts are rendered in such a way that fortitude and courage become the hallmarks of individual and familial identity to invigorate continuity. As Wertsch (1991) argues, the writer 'chooses, on particular occasions, to use one or more resources from a cultural toolkit to appropriate 'ideological belonging' because writing is always a particular way of viewing the world, one that strives for social significance. By 2016, I considered myself ripe for promotion to AP, but that did not succeed. Prophets are hardly recognised as such in their little constituencies! I had under my arm **6 Master's and 4 PhD postgraduate examination from UP, UKZN, UNISA and UCT.**

In 2017, I compiled my contributions to the academy and submitted my application for rating with the National Research Foundation. The outcome was **C3**, meaning all of the reviewers are firmly convinced that the applicant is an established researcher. **The overriding majority of reviewers rate the applicant as being a scholar who has attained a sound/solid international standing in their field. On the basis of the high quality and impact of my recent research I am regarded by some reviewers as already enjoying considerable international recognition.**

It was therefore quite refreshing for me to write a chapter that I called **"Spectacles of transition"** (published in a DHET accredited book, full subsidy, ***Cultures of Change in Contemporary Zimbabwe***) because in it, I strove to show how a generation's hopes in Africa are dashed when those that ascend into positions of power arrogantly disregard the enormous amount of data denouncing the increased pathological mixture of social inequalities. The research-based book is also **a testament to my network of international scholars, the actualization of international collaboration in the effort to generate new knowledges. It has been visited (and read) by 679 scholars and academics, including Brian Raftopoulos who wrote back to me to say, 'we have been silenced by freedom, but this contribution sparks us into new conversations about home.'**

These are critical studies and research that emerge in the everyday lives of national and global citizens and that serve to limit, constrain, or control actions or thought. These are studies of practices and texts that need to be critiqued, contextualized, and ultimately re-written by critically empowered and critically literate citizens, which is what we want our students to become and how we want them to act. These research practices are also instantiations of critical pedagogy in that they encourage readings that are themselves critical of traditional approaches to multicultural readings where students are spurred to find commonalities across multiple cultural contexts instead of solely highlighting differences that can be primarily ascribed to ethnic or class affiliation.

I move from this cultural perspective in *Strategies* and engage with issues of the English Language curriculum, especially the concepts of the transactional and the hidden curriculum. In *Epistemic Hazards (Journal of Educational Studies (2015, Impact Factor 2.298; 2 021 reads))*, for instance, I take on a polemic stance towards the urgency of re-calibrating the English Language curriculum in South Africa. The paper identifies a systemic avoidance by curriculum designers to consult published research in the social sciences and in education which does not support the curriculum changes that have been made from the National Curriculum Statements in 1996, the Revised National Curriculum Statements in 2007 and the current Curriculum and Assessment Policy in 2012. The article analyses and critiques the English Language curriculum specifications across the years and identifies critical gaps that have generated both epistemic hazards and general inequalities. *Inequality is a word that makes populist and conservative politicians feel uncomfortable because addressing and arresting inequality invokes the spectre of equality, which has redistributive connotations offensive to free market ideologies.* Equality implies reworking the epistemic deficiencies of the curriculum, with an urgent call to create enduring opportunities for successful matriculants. The article connects learner under-achievement to curriculum content deficits and how such inadequate content is unsatisfactorily taught and assessed in South African schools. Both content and pedagogical approaches need re-calibration in order to break the cycles of underachievement, especially in multiply deprived rural and township schools.

Examinations and their overbearing influence on curriculum transactions are taken further in a co-authored article (Hove & Maruma, 2015, [Mediocrity and the fraud called education: The case of South Africa's curriculum statements in English](#), *International Journal of Educational Sciences* 7 (3), 587-593, Impact Factor =2.92), where the principal argument is anchored on a critical perspective on the uses and abuses of language and academic tests. University education has been massified in South Africa and this has disrupted conventions and practices of assessment. Universities are perceived as promoting complex achievements and complex skills through rigorous curriculum specifications and assessment instruments. Due to experiences in high school and the novelty of university education,

students have begun to enquire about the 'scope of the paper.' This quest to get the answers to the examination before students write has tended to destabilise the reliability of assessments and judgments in universities in South Africa. Grades and symbols certified by some universities have become both indeterminate and ambiguous. A mixed methods design was adopted to identify and interrogate university research participants' views on experiences about examinations at university level. In the process, the meanings that first-year degree-level test-takers ascribed to the concept of 'the scope of the paper' were unpacked. It was determined which aspects of the test scope students had studied to prepare for tests. Inferences were made about the concepts that the students marginalised because they were perceived to be 'out of the scope' of the examination. A holistic and broad educational experience for university students is recommended in spite of the daunting numbers enrolled in certain university courses where lecturers have to teach 200 students and more in one course while at the same time criticizing the 'unteachable and overcrowded' classrooms in secondary schools across South Africa.

I shift attention to literary and material matters in the next engaging article, **Dialogues of Memory, Heritage and Transformation (i10 index =19; *Journal of Literary Studies*, 2016, Impact Factor, 0.193)** where I examine white South African and white Zimbabwean writings. The article contends that the protean and contested symbols of Zimbabwean literature remain the land and invented heroes, including a hagiographic iconisation of shrines, best seen in the Zimbabwe ruins, the Zimbabwe Bird and the national heroes' acre. In South African white writings, the symbolic topos has been dominated by prison walls, the hangman's noose, Robben Island and, in the post-apartheid era, Saartjie Baartman and the imagined rainbow generated through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The horrors of apartheid are ideographically embodied in Coetzee's tongueless protagonist, *Foe*. In both locales, white writings – fictive renditions and auto/biographical – have invited critically legitimated constructs of coherence. This article contends that answers to our present postcolonial crises are enunciated in the multiplicity of voices, not monological narratives. Diversity, and therefore polyphony, is valued for its ability to suggest multiple ways of seeing and belonging to national imaginaries; its ability to suggest answers to the postcolonial problematic related to memory, heritage and transformation. The article explores how the meanings of cultural objects often display shifting appropriations that garner either symbolic or ephemeral qualities, demonstrating the ability of those in power at different historical junctures to determine and confer convenient and minted meanings. In turn, this anxiety and remembering of space and symbol has a bearing on ownership claims, and gives rise to a choreographed heritage discourse.

This research is a development from an earlier investigation, *The Sentence(d) Story-Teller: Forged and Legitimated Constructions* in Lewis Nkosi's *Mating Birds* and Pepetela's *Mayombe* (*Journal of Pan-*

African Studies, 2013). In this paper I invoke Paul Gilroy's notions of black Atlantic culture, mimicry and hybridity and also Bhabha's related notions of third space. I question how these scholars insert themselves in the discourse of modernity and counter-culture to understand how their re-conceptualisations of culture alter our understanding of history and the development of ideas. Simply put, what happens to culture in the contact zones and transitions between Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Middle East? What forms of subjectivity, culture and community emerge? There is a growing need for a reconceptualisation of bicultural politics that draws on an inclusionary and multifaceted identity, an urgent need for a third space that negates the limitations of a dichotomous and essentialised self/other, us/them, liberator/terrorist/ American/Arab, black/white, coloniser/colonised configuration. To examine these complications, in 2022 I wrote an article on Nobel Laureate J.M. Coetzee, assessing ***Memory, spectacle and menace in Disgrace***. Twenty years after its publication, *Disgrace* remains a disquieting narrative, one that justifies a re-examination of its reception and interpretation in the wake of both literary, corporeal and political developments in the post-imperial vision. For Coetzee, as for Gilroy (2004), there is disruptive energy embedded in multiculturalism in respect of postcolonial possibilities and racial categories as political enactments. This article privileges the insights of Frenkel & MacKenzie (2004), challenging the speculative postcolonial configurations that Achille Mbembe (1998) proposes. The postcolonial relationship that Mbembe posits is one of 'conviviality', where, as in South Africa's case, the colonised and coloniser, the victim and the oppressor must share the same cartographical space. I describe this new framework as one of 'illicit cohabitation' between oppressors and oppressed, resulting in a conception of postcolonial identities as coeval rather than hierarchical. These adversarial polarities are premised on exclusion and purity and such a bifurcated structure offers little to the emergent relationships where there are multiple subject positions and aspirations. Gender, race, class, ethnicity, geographical location and sexual orientation are some of the many categories that generate vexed interactions and exchanges in this paper.

In closing: Humanising pedagogy in postgraduate education

Research is both an individual and collaborative undertaking seeking to provide answers to significant challenges in the everyday problems of society. In seeking answers to these problems, we participate in generating new worlds and knowledges. Writing about the task of the African writer, Chinua Achebe (1976:1) boldly declared that his writing was driven by a desire to 'establish where the rain began to beat us', and he sagely contended that 'art for art's sake is just another form of deodorised dogshit.' Research cannot be research if it is just for the sake of it if it is designed to accumulate points and spreadsheet tallies of publications. Research is practical, oriented to provide solutions. In what I consider the doyen of problem-posing education and research, Paulo Freire (2005:101) advises that '*it is as transforming*

and creative beings that humans, in their permanent [and dynamic] relations with reality, produce not only material goods – tangible objects – but also social institutions, ideas, and concepts.’ During the 2020 BlackLivesMatter# protests, demonstrators across the world held placards carrying the slogan “silence is violence”. Two years after, in 2022, I noted that it is through silence that the destructive legacy of empire is perpetuated. When the victim speaks, points to where they are in pain and indicates who has caused it, they find space for healing. My article on James Baldwin ***Intersections of masculinity, sexuality, nationality and racial identity in James Baldwin, teases the complicit silences to foreground the conglomeration of forces that deplete our humanity.*** James Baldwin stands as an enigma: the fiery, race-conscious sculptor of *Go Tell It, The Fire Next Time*, and the homosexual creator of *Giovanni’s Room, Another Country* and *Just Above My Head*. His essays on racial, and national identities are archived in *Nobody Knows My Name* and *Notes on a Native Son*. In life and death, Baldwin’s quest for an inclusive humanism has been received both negatively and positively by black and white audiences. Baldwin has also become the subject of a revisionist impeachment for his unending provocativeness. This ambivalence in reading Baldwin defies an epistemological and ontological centre on intersectionality and questions of gay and queer literature, migrants, civil rights, politics and the role of the artist in the African-American archive. **This article contributes to critical conversations on periodising Baldwin and racial identities at a time when America in 2021 glowers under telling dramaturgy embedded in #BlackLivesMatter and #ICan’tBreathe.**

Researching these conflictual and conflicted spaces has been a solitary and sore process. There is no balance at all between re-searching, teaching, marking, and attending inaugural lectures. There are moments of celebration when an article and book chapter get accepted for publication. There are moments when I get suicidal when the article comes back with a bold ‘reject’ because I have not followed the journal house-style referencing. It means dropping all that is at hand to attend to the mechanics of the journal. There are moments when one feels recognized by peers, national and global, as on my rating as a NRF researcher. Not the prize, but the recognition that what I have re-searched upon is current, relevant and re-positions the discipline to which I am a member of the community of practice.

In a recent course on ***Strengthening Postgraduate Supervision***, facilitators Sioux McKenna and Chrissie Boughey focused on models of supervision, the impact of globalisation and the knowledge economy on postgraduate supervision. They tapped into the effect of disciplinary homes in terms of supervision and equally sought to integrate individual participants’ experiences of supervision into an understanding of doctoral education as an emergent field. In reflecting on this course, it was clear that the main problem is the low quality of many postgraduates in South Africa. This is compounded and complicated by the poor quality of supervision where there is evidence of a mismatch in responsiveness

to national, social, and economic imperatives in higher education (Cloete, Mouton & Sheppard, 2015:12). The course strove to engage participants in rethinking access strategies, improved supervision, the structural evaluation of systems and how some universities grow into flagships with characteristic centres of excellence while others remain mired in equity and access debates. My reflections limn the spaces between postgraduate supervision and the application for rating and recognition in South Africa. There are significant intersections in this space where mentoring, advice, recommendations, and the development of researcher identities coalesce into a project that cannot be characterised by hasty prescriptions. In this **postgraduate supervision and research space**, I have contributed the following studies:

Adedayo, PhD 2022 An Evaluation of Shifting Gender Constructions in Selected Works of Achebe, Adichie and Emecheta

Motlatjo, PhD 2022 Contestations for power, sexuality and self-definition in Sindiwe Magona's selected narratives: A black feminist critique

Mokgadi, PhD 2021 The contribution of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge towards reading competence amongst intermediate phase English first additional language learners

Mavengano, PhD 2020 A Comparative Stylistic Analysis of Selected Zimbabwean and South African Fiction (2000–2015)

Marutla, PhD 2019 Reading challenges in English: Towards a reading model for Grade 8 learners in Mafikeng district

Morule, PhD 2017 Approximating and Ideal South African woman of the 21st Century through Postcolonial Fiction by South African Women Writers

Dlamini, PhD 2016 Changing Men in Contemporary South African Fiction?

Mose, MA 2019 Process writing approach as intervention to first-year students' essay writing challenges at North-West University

Fayose, MA 2022 The menace of rape and reconstruction of identities in selected works of Coetzee, Mda and Tlhabi

Perhaps after overcoming the hurdle of formulating simple, deep, and researchable questions, the next step is distinguishing between research methods: quantitative (outsider/etic perspective), qualitative (insider/emic perspective) and participatory (change agent perspective). The research design can be an elastic concept, but we need specifics here with regards *the gaps in the field*. It must be evident in the

documenting of data how the research questions lead seamlessly to the data generation techniques. Bernard and Ryan (2008) could be getting a dated resource, but they make lucid contributions on deductive and inductive studies, especially the conceptualisations surrounding context, decontextualisation, recontextualisation and co-contextualisation. The data generation methods need to be significant enablers for what I see as a major hiatus between *triangulation* and *data crystallisation*. For Patton, (1999) and Carter *et al.*, (2014) triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena. Triangulation is also a qualitative research strategy to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources. Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) identified four types of triangulation: (a) *method triangulation*, (b) *investigator triangulation*, (c) *theory triangulation*, and (d) *data source triangulation*. Posthuman (2019), taking cue from Maree & Van der Westhuizen, (2009) offers an exciting definition of the crystal: crystallisation refers to the practice of 'validating' results by using multiple methods of data [generation] and analysis. Different perspectives that all reflect the unique reality and identity of participants are necessary to provide for a complex and deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Nieuwenhuis, 2010). It is in this light that Richardson (2005: 963) proposes the use of the term 'crystallisation' rather than 'triangulation' in qualitative research, asserting that ***the central image for qualitative inquiry should be the crystal, not the triangle, because crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic.***

I strive to generate new thoughts tracing the shifting contours of the "imagined community" that is South Africa and Zimbabwe. This necessarily leads us to more generalised discourses on nation, nationalism, nationhood and identities while also privileging the roots and routes the citizens have taken into the future/s. Following the British Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm, we need to ask ourselves about how South Africa and Zimbabwe are imagined; how, in literary-cultural texts, the cartographical territory of the country is peopled with characters that occupy specific times-and-spaces, chronotopes in Bakhtinian terms, through history; in what "affective" ways human beings are related to each other or implicated in each other's lives; and, finally, how these representations, in turn, forge an emotional connection between the nation/s and people living in it. Are they indeed the "national allegories" Fredric Jameson argued they were? And what about the imaginations of the South African and the Zimbabwean in global popular industries like Hollywood and Bollywood, Google, and MS Teams? Why do they often generate so much outrage in South Africa and Zimbabwe? Also, I strive to establish what to think of the representation of the country as an emerging model for "development" in the international media. Nationalism, we understand now in hindsight, constructs exclusive identities, so, as we begin to traverse the new millennium, it is urgent for a more inclusive vision of future South Africa and Zimbabwe to examine the

historical and developmental narratives the nations have woven for themselves and created, to use Rob Nixon's term, "unimagined communities" in the process. As with any other metanarratives, the story/history that the state tells its people or teaches its youngsters at schools is likely to be teleological, exclusive, and selective. We will be particularly interested in the consequences of these stories for emergent and ever-fluid identities and what negotiations authors, poets, artists, cartoonists, performers, musicians, filmmakers and others have to do with the nationalist metanarrative. Relevant here is also the non-representation - linguistic, gender, political and otherwise - of different ethnic identities in popular cultural practices and indeed the day-to-day public life at large. In my efforts to limn my research profile and emplacing this university in the intensive research space, I have delivered papers at the following selected global networks:

National and International Conferences attended and at which papers were presented

1. July 23-28, 2008 International Linguistics Conference, University of Botswana, Gaborone

Paper: Polyphony and polygraphy: African first-language speakers as learner-writers at a private school in South Africa

2. June 24-29, 2009 Worlds in Dialogue Language and Literature Conference, University of Potchefstroom, South Africa

Paper 1: Reversions and revisions: Displacement, heritage and (hi)story in Chenjerai Hove's Ancestors (1996)

Paper 2: Vortex of violence: The apocalyptic imagination in Peter Godwin's The Fear

3. July 22-27, 2010 SAALA/SAALT Conference, University of South Africa, Pretoria

Roots and Routes: The State of Theory in African writing of English expression

4. July 26-31, 2011 LSSA/SAALA/SAALT Conference, Rhodes University, South Africa

Colloquium on teaching languages as 2nd or additional languages in a multilingual context

On the cusp of quality teaching-learning of English in rural schools in South Africa

Strand: Practices in the teaching of 2nd and additional languages

August 21-28, 2011. AILA Congress, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing, China

Paper: Hyphenated validity: Comparability of assessment protocols in English language between two examination boards

5. July 21-26, 2012 “Diversity and Complexity” Literature and Language Conference, University of the Free State (UFS), Bloemfontein, South Africa

Paper: The sentence(d) story-teller: Forged and legitimated constructions in Lewis Nkosi’s *Mating Birds* and Pepetela’s *Mayombe*

Sessional Chairperson at the “Diversity and Complexity” Literature and Language Conference, Bloemfontein, 24 July 2012.

6. September 26-28, 2013, 40th Annual Congress of Southern African Association of Educators (SASE), North-West University, Mafikeng Campus

7. 10-11 October, 2013 UNISA School of Arts: “Glamourising tragedy; Re-victimising the victim.”

8. 10-15 August 2014, Brisbane, Australia: 17th (International Association of Applied Linguists Congress) AILA

Congress theme: One world, Many languages

Paper 1: 15-19 July, Auckland, Australia, Linguistic b/orders: Intra-national linguistic possibilities for South Africa and Zimbabwe (OR2758)

Paper 2: On the cusp of quality teaching of English in rural schools in South Africa (OR2762) (subsequently published in *Current Issues in the Second/Foreign Language Teaching: Research and Practice*. Edited by Christina Gitsaki and Thomai Alexiou. Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle Upon Tyne

22-2 June 2014 SAALA/SAALT Joint Conference, North-West University, Potchefstroom

Paper presented: 150121_10

(O)mission statements: Deficit and surplus messages in two universities’ strategic development plans in South Africa.

10. 2017. “Epistemic hazards: The festering stigma of educationally unfulfilled lives.” Paper presented at the **Innovations and Epistemological Challenges in Applied Linguistics Conference, AILA, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Windsor Barra Convention Centre. Strand 8: Language and Education in Multilingual Settings, 23-28 July, 2017.**

11. 2018. The rhetoric and language of decolonisation in Africa: challenges and prospects, The African Association of Rhetoric, Durban.

12. **2018. March 22-23.** Decolonial Turns, Postcolonial Shifts and Cultural Connections, Cape Town
13. **2018.** January 19-21. Rapporteur at **The Decolonization of Teacher Education @ North-West University: Campus discussions and inter-campus task team**
14. 6-8 August 2018. Wits International Conference on Critical Diversity Studies and Journal Launch
Conference title: (Re) Imagining liberations: Institutionalised Despair*Critical Hope
Paper presented: Polyvalent intensities and archives of remembrance
14. **2019: ACLALS July 24-29, 2019 – Auckland, New Zealand “The Uncommon Commonwealth” – Paper presented - ‘Continuities, disruptions and critiques of African politics through the lens of African poetry.**
15. **2020: *Languaging and disseminating tears: Re-victimizing the victim through social media and indigenous semiotics***
16. **2021 January 28: Panel 27B Leiden University, I presented a plenary paper at the Africa Knows Symposium, entitled *Alter/natives and im/perfect futures: Education sites and communication for transformative democracy.* This plenary set the tone and parameters for the entire set of papers and received significant recognition as moving the frontiers in a decolonial agenda.**
17. **2021: July 22 - July 23 - Indigenous Language Media in Africa (ILMA) Virtual Conference, Faculty of Humanities, North-West University, South Africa, *Theme: Social media, fake news & hate speech.***
18. **2022, July, 11-15, Ontario, Canada, Lakehead University, The Ruptured Commons - Phoenixes of splendour from the ashes of imperialism: Rupture and suture as modes of literary representation in Magona, Ngugi and Soyinka, Toronto, Ontario, Canada**
19. **2022, June 27-30, SALALS International Conference, Potchefstroom - Conference theme: Bridging the gaps - Paper: Discourses of intrusion and narratives of entitlement**

In my field, literature, tends to be marginalised against more utilitarian disciplines not only in the hard sciences, but also in the humanities, where law, economics, history, sociology and political science usually command more respect than literature. On reflection, an appreciation that the HSRC has recognised that literature has value. In a society, indeed, in a world, of debased public discourse - them and us; make America great again; or, here, white monopoly capital - literature's value is that it is suspicious of cliché, binary oppositions, authoritarian populism. Our writers, our literary critics, seek to

move beyond simplifications to open experience to complexity, whether in the individual or the societal life. In this respect, I find citizenship (academic and professional), in the following professional associations:

International Association of Applied Linguists; Editorial board member, *Transitions*; Editorial board review member, *Reading & Writing*; Editorial review consultant, *Literator*; Editorial review consultant, *Language Matters*; Editorial review consultant, *Imbizo*; Editorial review consultant, *Journal of Literary Studies*; Editorial review consultant, *Journal of Black Studies*; Editorial review consultant, *Social Dynamics*; Editorial review consultant, *African Identities Journal*.

Perhaps, as I grapple with the new title, my teaching, learning and research efforts are summed up in this painting: examining the complex and contradictory histories of personal and collective struggle which have contributed to and benefited from redistributive policies. I propose examining the unholy alliance with informational society that has catapulted democracy onto the brink of an abyss, commodifying its logic and transforming it into an “authorized” language of neocapitalist technoculture, bureaucratic high-tech developmentalism, infotainment, and teledemocracy. It is a mammoth struggle in the face of the historical resiliency of the ruling class, when democracy has become reduced to spray-painted slogans on decaying buildings, or airbrushed sentiments invoked in public by stern-faced corporate leaders in partnership with government initiatives to privatize the lifeworld of Africa and its academic research space.

Asante sana...Nashukuru sana...namangwana...Keitumetse...Thank you to the following:

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Lean On Me (1989)
Full Movie.mp4



30 N. Andry. *L'orthopédie ou l'art de prévenir et de corriger dans les enfants les difformités du corps*, 1749.

Perseverance. Relevance. Tenacity. These three, I reckon, provide succor to the research process. And the greatest of them all, no sacrilege intended, is perseverance.

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