South African new academics' experiences of precarity: Becoming and unbecoming the condition of coloniality through collective reflexivity

Nicole Miriam Daniels[1], Taahira Goolam Hoosen[2], Jaisubash Jayakumar[3], and Kasturi Behari-Leak[4]#

[1]*Adolescent Accelerate Hub, Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town, South Africa*
[2]*Faculty of Health Sciences Writing Lab, Department of Health Sciences Education, University of Cape Town, South Africa*
[3]*Department of Pathology, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town, South Africa*
[4]*Centre for Higher Education Development, University of Cape Town, South Africa*
#Corresponding author: kasturi.behari-leak@uct.ac.za
in Nicole Miriam Daniels, Taahira Goolam Hoosen, Jaisabash Jayakumar
𝕏 @beyond_thelab; @BehariLeak

Abstract

The transition into Higher Education can be complex with South African new academics expected to drive institutional change and social transformation. We examine precarity from our situated geopolitical positioning, as a condition of coloniality and neoliberal forces. Our focus on racially marginalised new academics straddling multiple pedagogical roles addresses the challenges of needing to become collective reflexive agents, yet also unbecome conditions of coloniality. Through autoethnography, lived experiences of precarity as affective states are shown to co-produce displaced estrangement, undermine a coherent sense of self, and reinscribe colonial modes of doing and being. We argue that knowledge rooted in African-centred epistemologies offers new academics' ways to collectively rally together to disrupt the status quo. This approach enriches the minimally understood concept of collective reflexivity. Our findings underscore the value of bringing decolonisation perspectives into conversation with reflexivity theories. We propose collective reflexivity can help new academics navigate their situational challenges.

Keywords: precarity, collective reflexivity, South Africa, new academics, coloniality, Ubuntu

Introduction

'In contemplating emancipatory action, decolonisation must entail a change in the form of reflexivity that drives agency within the institution' (Shaik & Kahn, 2021: 982).

Student educators transitioning into careers as full-time (permanent) educators are understudied (Mahon, et al., 2022), particularly understandings of reflexivity in their processes of becoming and unbecoming. While becoming an academic is an iterative, ongoing process of identity formation and agential choices, it is not simply an individualistic process. Rather, it occurs in relation to others and in response to the systemic challenges faced by many (Archer, 2013b). Unbecoming is a necessary process of unlearning that may lead to questioning things that have become normalised in academia. Reflexivity as a social process offers insights into the ways new academics adapt to teaching, assert their agency, and direct their careers amidst inchoate stages of opportunity and challenge (Behari-Leak, 2017; Hinostroza-Paredes, 2023; McNaughton & Billot, 2016). In consideration of whether new academics can become and resist becoming at the same time, we propose viewing the decolonial agenda as contingent on the ability to employ collective reflexivity. Our research question asks: How do new academics' experiences of precarity as a condition of coloniality inform their becoming and unbecoming and what role does collective reflexivity play?

Coloniality is the system of knowledge production, ideological and social order that sustains relations of exploitation, domination, and extraction in the present through 'patterns of power that resulted from European colonialism' (Tamale, 2020: xiii). The influence of coloniality as a power structure is rooted in neoliberal higher education practices, pedagogies, and social inequalities (Chantiluke, et al., 2018; McKinney & Christie, 2021). Present day coloniality may be understood as bound to geopolitical disadvantage and processes of exploitation within, and exclusion from, higher education (Wa Thiong'o, 1992). Decolonisation is a collective form of social action that requires 'delinking from the colonial matrix of power' embedded within the ideological structure of coloniality (Mignolo, 2011: xxvii). This is a multi-pronged process of liberation from the shackles of colonialism that roots itself within the hearts and minds of the individual and the collective (Tamale, 2020). Decolonisation of higher education therefore calls for the systemic disruption of power hierarchies, discrimination, and the critique of knowledge creation systems (Reiter, 2018). A decolonised academy needs new academics who can unbecome, undo and delink from the structural inequalities, standardised norms of established academic practices, and assumptions embedded within the hidden curriculum.

Precarity as social exclusion and alienation from academia was identified as catalysing the student movement in South Africa (Kapp & Bangeni, 2020; Kessi & Cornell, 2015). Student-led activism that called for free decolonised education has continued into the present with demands for the erasure of historical debt (Kessi, et al., 2021: 106). The #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements that began in South Africa gained solidarity amongst universities in America and the United Kingdom (UK), reflecting deep-rooted discontent with the racial and economic order within higher education (Chantiluke, et al., 2018). Precarity has also been the basis of mass, collective strike action and mobilisation amongst academic staff at UK universities (Andrews, 2016; Hazel, 2022). In other words, the systemic challenge presented by precarity has been associated with social justice action led by staff and students globally. International (Delgado, et

al., 2002; Miranda, 2021) and local literature (Khunou, et al., 2019; Maodzwa-Taruvinga & Divala, 2014) suggest the power of collective reflexivity in galvanising collective social action.

Academic precarity and its connection to casualisation and neoliberal practices within the university has been well documented (Bozzon, et al., 2019; Burton & Bowman, 2022; Docka-Filipek & Stone, 2021). Less is understood about precarity as tied to both race and coloniality, where histories of colonialism and geo-political marginalisation make precarity an intractable, subaltern reality (Spivak, 1988). Our paper, therefore, not only extends the international literature by analysing precarity as a condition of coloniality, but also as intractable, based on our African positionality. This validates and makes space for African-rooted philosophies and Ubuntu-centred pedagogies that foster collective praxis to contribute to Archer's Western theory of collective reflexivity. In so doing, we bring to the fore the affective and lived dimensions of the experience of precarity (Ahmed, 2010). Emphasising the affective, relational, and structural conditions of precarity, our reflexive stories of becoming and unbecoming deepen and complexify understandings of the dynamics of higher education generally and in South Africa specifically.

We are four black[1] South African academics, at a Historically White University (HWU); three identifying as women and one as male. One is located in the Faculty of Humanities, two in the Faculty of Health Sciences, and one in the Centre for Higher Education Development. Our collaborative research paper analyses the autoethnographic experiences of three new academics (ND, TGH, JJ) with a professional staff developer (KBL) fostering collective solidarity. At the time of writing, two of us were registered PhD candidates while in full-time academic positions, one of which was a contract position (ND), the other permanent (TGH), with the third having attained his PhD and a postdoctoral fellowship before gaining permanent employment (JJ). All of us started out in short-term or paid-on-claim, temporary positions, without access to pensions, labour unions, benefits, or formal processes reserved for permanent staff. Later, we were brought together through an induction programme that invited reflexivity on the common aspects of our transitions into academia and the structural barriers to transformation.

In this paper we examine precarity, from our situated geopolitical positioning, as a condition of both coloniality and neoliberal forces. We focus on racially marginalised student educators who transition into new academics. This allows us to address the tensions and challenges facing new academics who need to become collective reflexive agents, yet also unbecome conditions of coloniality and the neoliberal structure and culture of higher education. Our autoethnographies highlight lived experiences of precarity as affective states that co-produce displaced estrangement, undermines a coherent sense of self, and reinscribes colonial modes of doing and being. We argue that knowledge rooted in African-centred values and epistemologies, encompassed by the concept of Ubuntu, offer new academics' ways to collectively rally together that can disrupt the status quo. Our approach elaborates on and deepens the minimally understood concept of collective reflexivity (Archer, 2013b). The findings

---

[1] We use the inclusive term 'black' to refer to the group of persons racially classified under apartheid as Black, coloured, Indian, and other.

thus underscore the value of bringing African decolonisation perspectives (Tamale, 2020) into conversation with reflexivity theories (Shaik & Kahn, 2021) and highlights the transformative potential of collective reflexivity in navigating the situational challenges facing new academics.

Literature Review

The literature review explores the challenges faced by South African new academics transitioning into the academy, homing in on specific processes that uphold the status quo at HWU's. We begin with the understanding of academic being-ness as unstable and in-flux to situate the concepts of academic becomings and unbecomings. Then we consider the precarious positionality of black staff and the situated dynamics, based on lived experiences that propelled us towards bottom-up understandings of the affective dimension of precarity. We explore the way powerlessness and vulnerability can create the pressure to conform and identify the need for adequate redress of the conditions of coloniality. This prompts us to consider decolonial approaches in other colonial contexts. We round off with discussion of the three main conceptual pillars of the paper, namely: African-centred decolonial paradigms; professional development; academic agency and collective reflexivity.

The process of acquiring academic being-ness is complicated in South Africa by the precarious vulnerabilities of the neoliberalist university, that are entangled with past and present inequities (Dick & Painter, 2020). Even amongst the historically advantaged, academic being-ness may not be achieved solely through permanent university employment (Herman, et al., 2020; Kerr, 2021). These may occur through unstable and inchoate processes of identity trans/formation, which are continuous, reflexive, and iterative (Giddens, 1991). In line with decolonial thinking, we further propose that South African new academic transitions be seen as becomings and unbecomings that make way for notions of stalled, unfinished, or nascent resistances to the colonial university. We consider assimilation into higher education alongside the problematic of equitable racial staff profiles.

Many have identified barriers that thwart the becomings of new academics (Dominguez-Whitehead & Moosa, 2014; Jawitz, 2007). Whilst significant strides towards racial equity have been made in the demographic profile of the student body, black academic staff remain under-represented, despite employment equity policies (Essop, 2020). Black staff, inclusive of Coloureds, Indians, and other ethnicities, only make up 53% of all university staff, with Black South Africans representing a meagre 36% of these (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2019). Institutional racism can be understood to precariously position black and other marginalised students and staff (Kessi, et al., 2021), and is a contributor to enduring, deep-rooted inequalities that hinder transformation in the higher education sector (Essop, 2020).

Specific processes have been identified by South African authors as working against transformation at HWU's, such as the stubbornly white and male profile of the staff, particularly in positions of power (Sadiq, et al., 2019; Steyn, 2007). Additionally, 'corridor talk' (Kessi, et al., 2021: 128) which operates alongside formal processes and policies (even overriding them) stands in the way of established black academic leaders asserting their power. 'Anglonormativity'

(McKinney cited in McKinney & Christie, 2021: 9) prioritises English proficiency, and presumes other languages and accented people are backward or inferior. In the international literature Burton's (2021) thesis on academic kindness adds further insights. She argues that academic kindness can both uphold dominant power relations *and* offer radical means of resistance, working either to reify or disrupt hierarchies. The idea of academic kindness as a double-edged sword draws our attention to the situated dynamics that disadvantage some people in certain circumstances, yet offer advantage to others in similar circumstances.

Our paper answers recent calls for nuanced accounts of the affective dimension of precarity. Burton and Bowman (2022) call for consideration of precarity as a state of being and understandings of the affective experience of living with precarity (Ivancheva, et al., 2019; Ivancheva, 2015). Precarity within our geopolitical contexts is more than a temporary, exploitative contract, but inclusive of socio-economic, political and cultural positioning within the academy (McKeown, 2022). South Africa has the world's highest income and consumption inequality with a Gini coefficient of 63 (Roberts, 2022) and an expanded unemployment rate at 44% (Stats South Africa, 2022). This means that precarious labour conditions are rampant, and precarity has permeated as an intractable socio-economic reality.

Dick and Painter (2020) drawing on Butler (2009) state that precariousness refers to the vulnerabilities and powerlessness of bodies and selves that are enacted through entrenched power hierarchies. This is true for black academics challenging the dominant academic discourse as well. Amidst the chutes and ladders of academia (Windsor, et al., 2021) feelings of powerlessness and vulnerability, contributes to diminishing numbers of women and people of colour higher up the academic career path (Miranda, 2021). Without redressing the conditions of coloniality, pressure to conform to the institutional culture has been a documented failing of the demographic transformation in higher education (Ratele, 2018). Movements towards decolonising higher education in South Africa have not been smooth; we therefore look to other geopolitical contexts facing similar challenges, next.

In South Africa, the inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems, values, and practices have been noted to create institutional tensions and uncomfortable confrontations (McKinney & Christie 2021; Adonis & Silinda, 2021). Leenen-Young, et al. (2021) and Kidman (2020) from New Zealand highlight, from the perspective of Māori early career academics, that universities cannot be transformed through inclusion alone. Rather a dramatic shattering of the Eurocentric colonial knowledge systems is needed. Naepi, et al. (2019) argue that systemic barriers thwart the academic progression of emerging Māori and Pasifika scholars. They propose alternative pathways into academia and a diversity of approaches to counter the entrenched marginalisation of Māori and Pasifika people and knowledge(s). Proposing a radical break from Western colonial systems of higher education, heteropatriarchy, race and capitalism, Leenen-Young, et al. (2021) assert that Pacific ideologies, knowledges, and praxis play an important role in seeding collective practices of resistance. It is on this basis that the following section considers the significance of African-centred perspectives to dismantling conditions of coloniality.

African-centred decolonial paradigms

African indigenous philosophies, practices, ideologies and knowledge systems have much to offer in the present decolonial turn. Ubuntu, which means that 'a person is a person because of other people' (Ntuli, 2013: xii) provides a conception of collective individuality. Sylvia Tamale (2020: 204) argues that Ubuntu requires an epistemic shift from a rights-bearing paradigm to a 'social paradigm based on reciprocity, solidarity and inclusiveness'. Ubuntu upholds the spirit of community by fostering an orientation towards communal interests and collective ideals grounded in African notions of social justice and emphasising the interdependence and interconnectedness of the entire collective (Tamale, 2020). This results in a prefacing of collective obligations and responsibilities and a reframing of relationships between self and others.

Because Ubuntu is based on relational forms of normative thought, it proposes a dynamic of human being-ness and becoming human as 'two inseparable aspects of a holistic view of reality' (Gädeke, 2018: 271). An example that foregrounds these Ubuntu-centric values is black tax. Black tax, which is a colloquial term for making direct and indirect financial transfers to families, is understood as a means of giving back that capacitates the whole alongside the individual (Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley, 2018). Human flourishing is seen in relation to others and is rooted within humane relationships. The liberatory potential of these communally oriented epistemologies is that they foster social justice action through the values of cooperation, co-existence, support, solidarity and the sharing of resources to achieve social transformation (Hlatshwayo, et al., 2020; Letseka, 2014).

We understand decolonising pedagogy and praxis as ongoing processes, never to be completed or finished (Zembylas, 2018) which is why they require incremental as well as sea change. Movements to decolonise higher education need educators to 'question the assumptions, policies, and worldviews that underlie' research and teaching (Keane, 2021: 24), while simultaneously cultivating and restoring 'African indigenous values and cultures' (Ngubane & Makua, 2021: 1). This transformative approach inscribes the social values of Ubuntu not only amongst students, but staff as well. The inculcation of decolonial values and pedagogies could help transitioning new academics establish their authenticity within non-competitive spaces for rehearsal (Wilmot & McKenna, 2019) that allow for comfort and discomfort to exist side-by-side, becoming and unbecoming occurring simultaneously.

Professional Development

New academics come into contexts that pre-date them. An area of contestation for new South African academics is the transformation of the staff workforce in relation to decolonisation. Given South Africa's colonial and apartheid histories the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and higher education institutions have funded interventions to level the playing field. Transformative recruitment strategies aim not only for demographic change, but to make the academic workforce commensurate with student profiles. Academics who represent students' cultural and social realities, especially black and female academics (Higher Education South Africa, 2011), who have made it through the institutional ranks, are important role models for students.

These academics should embody the desirable attributes of critical thinking, technical and literary excellence, social consciousness and responsiveness that is mandated by the institution. To this end, professional development programmes have been provided funding to support the smooth transition and orientation of new scholars into the academy.

At the national level, DHET introduced a *Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework* to redress inequality and catapult the progression of black early career academics. An initiative under that Framework is the *New Generation of Academics Programme* (nGAP) that provides academics permanent employment based on equity considerations with a staggered workload (20% to 100%) to assist them becoming part of the academic workforce (DHET, 2015). However, what is not made explicit in these strategic interventions are the collective accountabilities of academics to address their conditioned coloniality.

At our institution, the New Academics Practitioners' Programme (NAPP) has been introduced for full-time, permanent academics. NAPP is an example of a professional development programme that provides opportunities for new academics to reflect, learn, network, and thrive in a supportive community that builds their confidence to tackle the challenges of diverse university classrooms. NAPP enables new academics to develop their scholarship of teaching and learning with the support of professional staff developers. Through their own transformation as individuals in a cross-disciplinary community, new academics participating in NAPP are better able to understand and respond to the collective challenges they and their students face. While NAPP is a strong model of critical induction at our university, it is designed to cater for the majority. The experiences of new academics recorded in this paper included constraints and dissonances with the structural and cultural aspects of the university that NAPP could not directly address. Interventions in the field of professional development, must create conditions for new academics to exercise their agency, while also providing them with the means to address and talk back to the structural limitations that impinge on their becoming(s) and unbecoming(s).

Academic Agency and Collective Reflexivity

Social realism theory (Archer, 1995), underpinned by critical realist philosophy (Bhaskar, 1994), explains the exercise of agency among new academics transitioning into the institutional contexts of their universities. Arriving in contexts that predate them, nascent academics must navigate terrains textured by social, cultural, economic, and political constraints. Their own powers as primary agents are influenced by their vulnerability and fragility in entering a space that is clearly favoured towards those already established in academia. Innumerable challenges thwart a smooth transitioning from industry, research, or other contexts into heterogeneous disciplinary and institutional contexts. How new academics make sense of their circumstance, weigh the opportunity costs, negotiate their identity and roles are influenced by their motivations, choices, and their engagement with enabling and constraining conditions. This social realist account adopts analytical dualism to disaggregate and nuance how new academics engage with structure, culture, and their own agency.

Agents make sense of their world and make choices in it by engaging in what Archer (2003) refers to as reflexivity through internal deliberations. Reflexivity mediates between the objective structural and cultural contexts confronting agents, who activate their properties as constraints and enablements as they pursue reflexively defined 'projects based on their concerns' (Archer, 2013a: 1). Archer (2010) developed a widely known typology that incorporated four modes of reflexivity, namely communicative, autonomous, fractured, and meta reflexivity. However, other than in communicative reflexivity, this theory offers scant insight into the interactional dynamics that either stimulate reflexivity or enable the mediation of structure and agency through social interactions (Caetano, 2015). She addresses this in her later work, which develops a notion of collective reflexivity orientated towards mutuality and constructed in relation to a multiplicity of others (Archer, 2013b).

Donati (2011: 355), on the other hand, explains collective reflexivity as 'the mental ability, shared by all people, to consider the influence of their relation(s) with others on to themselves and vice versa'. Donati and Archer (2015) explain how social identity and social meanings develop into collective reflexivity when there is a common purpose and collective dynamic within the network. It should be noted that because communicative reflexivity requires confirmation from others and occurs through conformity to the views held by others (Caetano, 2015), collective reflexivity is an entirely different mode of reflexivity that offers recognition and respect for the pluriverse (Reiter, 2018). For this reason, we connect collective modes of reflexive agency to the scholarship on decolonisation. We thus digress from the interpretation of Chilean teacher educators offered by Hinostroza-Paredes (2023) that identifies collective agency, the collectivist nature of the society, community belonging, and collaboration as communicative reflexivity. In-line with Archer's (2013b) and others' (Kariippanon, et al., 2020) presentation of collective reflexivity, we would argue that these are qualities associated with collective reflexivity.

The importance of the self and the collective as mutually instantiated has been re-emphasised by the decolonisation movement as a critical gesture in embodiment and re-membering (Wa Thiong'o, 1992). A further limitation of Archer's concept of collective reflexivity is therefore that the relationship between reflexivity and social action is underdeveloped and minimally understood within different cultural contexts (Caetano, 2015). In relation to our study, Archer's articulation of collective reflexivity precludes African notions of the individual as interlinked with the collective in ways that make it difficult to conceive them as separate from one another.

In our view collective reflexivity is a mode of reflexivity that must be attuned to social justice ideals and sensitive to systemic challenges. This attunement means we are concerned with collective reflexivity that expresses solidarity – a mutually beneficial strengthening of the social ties between community members – and subsidiarity – heightened member goodwill through acts of devotion or service to the community (Dann & Dann, 2016). Both are significant in indigenous communities and can lead to social justice action (Johansson, et al., 2018). The limited literature on collective reflexivity is therefore enriched by the philosophical basis and practical understandings of Ubuntu and black tax. Both are rooted in African indigenous ideologies that

emphasise the relational, non-hierarchical, and collective basis of human thriving (Hlatshwayo, et al., 2020; Letseka, 2014).

Methodology

Autoethnographic methodologies are well established as a form of inquiry into academic identity (trans)formation (Hunter, 2020; Wilkinson, 2020). South African authors Pillay, et al. (2016) offer instructions for how to use autoethnography as a self-reflexive tool to generate rich, nuanced narratives of lived experience grounded in current social, political, and cultural realities. Utilising an autoethnographic form of enquiry, which is an approach to research and writing that draws from personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno), we wrote retrospective narratives of our experiences of transitioning into new academics (Ellis, et al., 2011). In our understanding, becoming(s) are open-ended and emergent, so each participant defined the start of their academic journeys in their own way. It was thus through our autoethnographic process that we stumbled upon our shared trajectory as student educators transitioning into full-time, permanent educators. In discerning shared patterns of experience, we settled on a narrative sequence as follows: The commencement of our academic journeys that began in part-time educator roles and concluded with our participation in NAPP when we met the senior academic developer who initiated the research process.

Procedurally following the advice of McKinney and Christie (2021), the three new academics in this study set about disrupting normalised modes of academic knowledge production (coloniality) through creative modes of data generation. Using a guided creative session we symbolically represented the idea of academic (un)becoming(s) through drawings. We reflected on the meanings of the symbols that emerged (a pendulum, tree and house) which provided the basis for our three autoethnographic narratives.

Drawing on feminist self-interview methods (Crawley, 2014), we used an iterative, informal interview process to refine and distil the core narratives. For example, we asked ourselves 'in thinking back over your academic trajectory what were the inflection points in your career?' Focussing on these points we wrote descriptions of what those points-in-time consisted of; the feelings and emotions that accompanied those moments, accounting for them in relation to wider contextual issues. We also used reflexive blogs as field notes where we documented our theoretical orientation, interpretive choices, key concepts and probing questions.

Surfacing 'small stories as sites of identity work' (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008: 377), we analysed the data emerging from our autoethnographies (images, compiled narratives and reflexive blogs) to the extent that they displayed common conundrums that were dealt with through an orientation to collective understandings. By applying a narrative analysis that enquired into the 'taken for granted discourses and values circulating within a particular culture' (Riessman, 2008: 3), we established the contribution of African epistemologies to Western theories of reflexivity.

Collective reflexivity, which occurs in relation to systemic challenges and the broader socio-cultural environment (Archer, 2013b), is predisposed to affect theory. In our analytical framework

we, therefore, applied an understanding of affect as an emergent property of individuals, relationships and collectives to act and be acted upon as well as the relationship between these two forces (Clough, 2007). Focussing on key moments in our academic transitions, we analysed these in relation to demographic, cultural, political and structural circumstances. This was important because as Afro-feminists warn, conditions of coloniality are internalised and hidden-from-view, fundamentally shaping our experiences (Tamale, 2020). Thus, while interested in the narrative construction of selves (Ochs & Capps, 1996) we were attuned to the 'importance of the affective domain' in catalysing a decolonial disposition (Behari-Leak, et al., 2019: 559).

We worked with visual, web-based collaborative tools like Miro, word clouds, and word trees to connect narrative themes arising within an individual account, and across all three accounts. Visual methods were therefore part of our process of writing and developing the autoethnographies, while also emerging as a product of analysis that illustrated the contours of different storylines (Ellis, et al., 2011). The findings highlight the need to take better institutional care and responsibility for informally positioned, precarious academics, in addition to formally transitioning new academics, as the lines between these two states of academic beingness are porous.

Findings

We consider precarity as both a set of structural and cultural conditions, and an affective, lived experience that both enables and constrains the emergence of reflexive selves and agencies. Emerging out of stability and change, precarity interacts with new academic (un)becomings in ways that either support or deny the conditions that give rise to mutual flourishing. Specifically for precarious, temporary, or contract staff roles, these conditions are constantly in flux. Therefore, the findings below consider precarity as displaced estrangement, colonial modes of doing and being, and as undermining a coherent sense of self.

Precarity as displaced estrangement

Students as casual workers include those seconded to lecture on behalf of more senior, permanent staff (Kerr, 2021). This well-established pattern occurs when permanent staff members' entitlement to sabbaticals, parental leave or research obligations mean they are unable to fulfil their teaching obligations. This is what occurred in ND's case when she accepted a full-time assistant lecturer position that fulfilled the teaching obligations of a senior lecturer in the department. We explore the subjective tensions and situational challenge of this arrangement in ND's narrative. Firstly, by considering the impacts at a personal level and later by moving to consider the conscious and more deliberate actioning of collective reflexivity woven into pedagogy.

The substitute role meant there was no staff induction, little opportunity for career advancement and few external signs that validated the shift from her primary student identity. This alongside the temporary fulfilment of this contract, co-produced with ND's internal and internalised conversation, the displaced estrangement that is discussed here:

The nature of this non-permanent and temporary arrangement meant that I was never given an induction or made an official member of staff in ways that marked my transition from student to staff member. (ND)

Having only ever been a student in the department, transitioning to staff was not easy to accomplish. In practice, ND remained in the shared office she occupied as a student; she remained in the throes of ethnographic fieldwork for her PhD, and she remained a candidate supervised by colleagues in the department. Inclusion was not easy for the department either as the senior member of staff remained physically present. This cemented the affective experience of being neither fully staff nor fully student. While some academic appointments are made on the basis that staff acquire their PhD's while fulfilling their academic obligations, ND's experience was not formalised as such:

I found that there was little oversight or input into my teaching – either through department level mechanisms or the personal channels through which I was recruited. I felt adjunct, out of place, without help, or support. (ND)

Within sociological theory, bodies in place operate as a proxy for one's position within a social hierarchy. For ND, the affective dimension of precarity gave rise to feelings of (dis)placed estrangement; of being neither fully one, nor the other. Her displacement was compounded by the precarity of her position, which advantages her over other students, but only for a limited time. Working as quasi-members of staff in the same faculty where they were students, ND and JJ (see below) experienced estrangement from the ideal educators they aspired to be:

I was privileged to teach a cohort of undergraduate students from their first year all the way through till their third (but) my almost, or amputated journey in academia is not a happily-ever-after … I leave feeling used and discarded with my passion for teaching dashed. (ND)

The contractual agreement that changed the basis of ND's relationship to the department, her peers, supervisors and colleagues, makes it difficult to express her emotions and ask for the help she feels she needs. Mixed emotions render her grateful for the opportunity and for the confidence shown in her, but internalised doubt means she second-guesses her capabilities. Affectively experiencing herself in a double bind where she was expected to take on her new role capably despite experiencing a lack of support, she also felt unable to confess any dissatisfaction with her position, for fear of being a killjoy (Ahmed, 2010).

Collective reflexivity (as an act of consideration in relation to the whole) gave rise to new forms of agency that helped make sense of these dilemmas, even if they did not resolve them. Confiding in an "old labour rights stalwart" with insider knowledge of dynamics within the department helped ND negotiate a teaching contract that became the basis of negotiations

within the wider university to access the teaching support she needed. JJ departed completely from his primary disciplinary identity to reimagine himself as an educator more broadly.

> *The mere exploitation of me to facilitate the building of students' higher order cognitive learning activities for less remuneration of R65 ($3.50) per hour frustrated me. Pushing me further to expand my skill set by equipping myself with the relevant skills and qualifications in the field of education so that I could pursue my vision of becoming an educator.* (JJ)

Importantly, these were moves ND and JJ were not able to accomplish on their own; they did so with the assistance of others. This does not mean that their mode of reflexivity was communicative, as they did not seek validation from others, but acquired insider information that they used to better equip themselves with the system they were in. These insights ignited new academic reflexivity based on collectively acquired knowledge. TGH reflects on the challenges that her peers with contract positions faced in their bid to secure permanent employment.

> *This educational trajectory was not easy and it required perseverance (waiting for a permanent position) or moving on like many of my colleagues who wanted to stay in academia, but the opportunity never came for them.* (TGH)

Precarity interacts with new academics becoming adept at teaching, making agential choices and directing their careers. In our institution corridor talk has been identified as working against transformation (Kessi, et al., 2021). Whereas, in our study, we identified the same trend towards 'corridor talk' as having positive effects. Corridor talk, which has been identified as occurring in informal, haphazard ways, provided alternative spaces for collectivism. Precariously positioned academics, as well as more established ones, could rally together through informal networks and temporary arrangements brought about by such corridor talk. In our autoethnographies, this helped us establish in-roads into academic becoming(s). Our data thus highlights that the situational dynamics of corridor talk, which operates in 'parallel to formal structures', could work to our advantage (Kessi, et al., 2021: 117). Of course, its disadvantage has been identified amongst senior black staff in leadership positions, and here we point to it being advantageous to a very differently positioned group: precarious part-time, paid-on-claim students, yet-to-become permanent staff. Further research is needed into the conditions produced by informality that either detrimentally or effectively mediate the barriers to transformation.

In relation to teaching and the conscious actioning of collective reflexivity, the student uprisings showed the necessity for and cultivation of collective reflexivity within the body politic. Rink, et al., (2020) discuss their shifting allegiances during the messy process of curriculum transformation. ND similarly experienced tensions and contradictions arising inside and outside the classroom, based on her straddling student and staff roles. The student movement emphasised the transgression of identity markers through allegiances with under-paid,

outsourced cleaning and maintenance staff (Petersen, 2016). One of the movement's greatest successes was achieved through such collective solidarity.

In the segment below, ND was called upon to display a collective mode of reflexivity that drew on a mentality of collectivism. Embracing Ubuntu-centred philosophies that lay at the heart of the movement, ND's approach to teaching emphasised that benefit to the whole superseded individuals.

Speaking to students about our political and ideological alignment with the student movement that was disrupting classes, forbidding access to the libraries and other much needed resources, was difficult. First years had seen and heard about RMF and FMF in the media and through their parents as school kids. Their often-polarised viewpoints saw the movement only as good or bad, right or wrong, but we wanted them to consider what was at stake. (ND)

Collective reflexivity proved useful for troubling binary opposites and offered up new ways of thinking with and about the disruptions that took place. These ways of thinking engendered empathy, as the self was considered in relation to others, and thus surfaced collective understandings and approaches to wellbeing. The vulnerability and discomfort of these events brought into stark relief the need for sustained, ethical responses to the systemic and continuous harms of colonialism and racial apartheid. The collective solidarity that emerged in its wake, benefitted the university's most needy.

Precarity as colonial modes of being and doing

Institutional culture can reproduce exclusionary, colonial practices (Adonis & Silinda, 2021). Such exclusionary practices can work against the dual student and staff roles encouraged by the DHET. Focusing on these roles separately or exclusively ignores the realities of many academics. For instance, in adopting a new student residence policy, thought was not given into the range of roles students occupy on campus that might extend the duration of their qualification. TGH experienced this when forced out of student residence due to taking longer than the assigned maximum period to complete her master's degree. Prior to this, students could stay until they completed their qualifications. At the time she held several part-time academic positions to meet her collective obligations. The majority of South Africans live within heterogeneous households and intergenerational families who depend on remittances from wider kin (Budlender & Lund, 2001). As a South African Indian and first born, TGH had financial obligations to her family. As a result of this cultural insensitivity, she adopted a short-term, survivalist strategy. Completing her master's became an end in itself that would see her returning home to support her family, rather than a means to an end.

At one stage I was working three jobs just to put food on the table so the short term was the priority. It was during this time that I was also kicked out of student residence because

of a new policy, so my only focus was surviving and completing my master's degree and then to go back home to KZN and take care of my family. (TGH)

Despite policy imperatives towards transformation, we found that institutional culture privileges homogeneity and perpetuates a singular notion of academic selves and nuclear family forms. This negates the opportunity to acknowledge multiple identities and the additional responsibilities that black tax imposes on black individuals. Existing social inequalities are exacerbated by such practices that limit opportunities for academic advancement.

Casualisation and precarity can become barriers to permanent employment for students hired as contract staff, whose goal is merely survival. Although teaching and learning are central to the values of the institution, its actual value depreciates when remunerated at an hourly rate. Short-term contracts, such as the small group facilitation role fulfilled by JJ, and the three part-time teaching roles TGH occupied are a core part of the university's teaching function but are often fulfilled by students. Postgraduates as an expendable workforce face massive pay inequalities and insecure job prospects that reproduce colonial modes of being, doing and knowing. Academic developers and policymakers looking to retain talented black academics should prioritise an understanding of the instability out of which a stable, long-term passion for academia might emerge.

When I started working as a paid-on-claim staff member, the appreciation was that I was earning a salary, one was passing through the system and it wasn't leading to any career path. (TGH)

TGH becomes part of a community of practice when working at the Writing Centre (WC) that she credits with the successful negotiation of setbacks and challenges. The transformative and supportive space of the WC (Muna, et al., 2019) gave her a sense of belonging to a collective interested in and committed to education. While at the WC, TGH was able to scaffold her medical science training with an educational lens. Understanding, through collective reflexivity, the thread that education played in her life helped bring to bear her religious ideology on circumstances she could then interpret as a sign guiding her towards becoming an academic.

It was during my time working at the WC where there was a moment that made me feel like I could be more than a scientist. I started supporting academic literacies development [in biomedical sciences] ... and realised that was always my passion - this was reignited and it opened my mind to possibilities of career paths. I had previously completed a Postgraduate Certificate in Education ... but needed a breakthrough or a sign to guide what was meant for me. (TGH)

The caring space of the WC foregrounded a community of practice where collective interests and ideologies honed TGH's career interests. This non-hierarchical, egalitarian space

provided opportunities to engage consciously, and navigate academia in ways that were absent from regular department discussions. She was made to understand that multiple parts of her identity could co-exist in harmony and was able to integrate her internal dialogue in ways that made sense of changing external circumstances. The values shared by her colleagues at the WC facilitated collective modes of reflexivity that brought conflicts to the surface and offered new ways of perceiving the situation holistically to enable a balancing of interests.

Even when TGH becomes a permanent academic on nGAP she experiences her own deviation from the norm of white, Anglo-saxon as alienating. Here, on an acclaimed programme focused on challenging this dominant discourse and power dynamic, there was resistance to a young (hijabi) Muslim. Religious (in)tolerance and gender (in)equitable practices threatened to deny important aspects of her identity and her voice. This impacted her teaching too as her ability to showcase a holistic academic self was necessary to undertake the work of transforming student support services in the faculty. She needed to feel confident deviating from the institutional norm, if she was to pave the way for others to do the same. The findings from this autoethnography point to the need for institutional change. For so long as the university is set in their colonial ways, new black academics will internalise their deviance from the norm, which stabilises their precarious positionality and gets carried with them into permanent positions. Unbecoming and unlearning colonial practices that have been internalised and normalised as universal ways of being in academia is therefore a never-ending process.

Precarity as undermining a coherent sense of self

According to Standing (2011:16), without a 'secure identity or sense of development achieved through work' precarity undermines a coherent sense of self. We discuss the affective dimensions of precarity as arising from the peripherality of invisibilised labour. Processes of peripherality occur through exclusion from decision-making. One of the authors felt that his ideas were dismissed, and his voice muted by his academic department.

> *I was not included in most of the key decision-making processes related to the courses as it was mainly a top-down approach where the decisions were pre-made by the convenors and were just relayed to the facilitators. There were many instances where I felt that my voice was not heard, and I was just instructed to carry out most academic activities.* (JJ)

Excluding contract staff from the core business of the institution, faculty or department reinforces their marginality and erases their contributions. As contract staff, precarity limits their ability to adopt a reflexive stance on their positionality within academia. Even though contract positions propelled them into academic roles, limited timeframes, remuneration, and low status counteracted the possibilities for new academics' becoming(s). Precarity as an invisibilising affective force thus hindered the formation and actualisation of a coherent academic self. Persistent invisibility impedes their agency and stifles their dreams of becoming an academic.

Two full-time teaching applications later; that I was not even shortlisted for, has left me feeling even more dismayed at my academic prospects. If two and a half years' teaching experience is not enough, then what is? (ND)

Importantly, the implications of precarious staff employment also impacted student learning. Several impediments frustrated JJ's teaching capacity and responsiveness. Firstly, there were limited opportunities for JJ to develop into a full-fledged academic. Secondly, the limited institutional support available for contract staff deprived him of reflexivity regarding his teaching practice. Lastly, job instability was a stressor leading to internal conversations questioning his worthiness.

…this also impacted on my self-confidence at times as my working space made me feel that I was not qualified or worthy enough to lecture in these courses. (JJ)

The effects of being precariously positioned, as shared earlier, were negative emotions and a lack of self-confidence that affected his teaching. He discusses being met with resistance by 'some of the students [who] challenged the logistics and relevance of the course'. As the interface between students and the department, JJ was denied the power to facilitate change on behalf of the students. JJ's example allows us to see the interplay of structural issues constraining agency and opportunities that transform those constraints.

Through self-introspection and reflexivity JJ demonstrates a long-term desire to move from a precarious position to permanency by developing himself as an educator. His agency conformed to the academic pipeline as a post-doctoral researcher pursuing an academic career. The turning point transpired when he took up a position as a part-time lecturer in the MBChB first-year (extended degree) programme while continuing as a facilitator. This extended degree contribution, which is better orientated to transformative educational experiences, provided JJ the platform 'to experiment and deploy new teaching practices':

I had to innovate my teaching practice utilizing context-specific, novel teaching strategies and utilizing novel technology and tools. This had promoted active student learning and engagement with the content as they were asked to carry out activities such as collaborative discussion with their peers and video making … [that] sparked a greater interest in the discipline … I was also given the due recognition of being awarded a first prize for this innovation in my faculty at the Education Research Day. (JJ)

When his teaching innovation was recognised by a faculty award, it motivated him to seek further qualifications outside the medical faculty. Having embarked on postgraduate training as an educator, JJ now envisions his academic career as having two pathways: one as a medical scientist and one as an educator. His autoethnography was titled 'my success story of becoming and being a lecturer' because he finally gained a permanent position as a lecturer in medical

education after ten years of temporary employment in the same faculty. The other authors also occupied long-term contract positions and instigated agencies that catalysed their academic becoming(s). Their collective reflexivity emanating from precarity thus served as a catalyst for the becoming *and* unbecoming of these new academics.

Conclusion

As we conclude, we return to our research question: How do new academics' experiences of precarity as a condition of coloniality inform their becoming and unbecoming and what role does collective reflexivity play? We argue that collective reflexivity is responsive to the common challenges that new academics experience as they transition into and through the academy. The transformative potential of decolonisation can only be realised collectively; it is not an individualistic process. Therefore, in the current "decolonial turn" there is a pressing need for collective action to realise the transformative potential of decoloniality. By drawing on situational, relational, Ubuntu-centred paradigms (like black tax) we established the communal basis of collective social action that advances the needs of the whole. In this way, our paper expands and enriches the limited literature on collective reflexivity in higher education contexts.

We are not naive about the danger of romanticising the notion of collective reflexivity. Working with coloniality and its resilient presence in our lives, we acknowledge that different dimensions of our positionalities can clash with each other. Even when common struggles and challenges are experienced by members of the collective, gender, race, ethnicity, class and age can surface tensions and contestation. Addressing these requires ongoing vigilance, humility, and a commitment to centring the voices and perspectives of those most impacted by colonial legacies and ongoing forms of oppression. It also involves actively working to dismantle power imbalances, fostering genuine dialogue and collaboration and translating insights into actionable strategies for decolonisation and social justice.

Becoming and unbecoming takes place in parallel to and may overlap with other collective identity shifts that can stand in the way of collective social action. Structural forces at the university compromised our ability to act, affecting our sense of self, our interactions with peers and students, and our sense of belonging. We conceptualised the push and pull of precarity as sets of structures which reproduce marginalisation and exclusion among black students and staff. By considering the self holistically, we argued for a more situationally resonant mode of reflexivity that could account for the collective nature of social change. We therefore contribute to theorisation and postulation on collective reflexivity that develops this concept through practices and principles rooted in African values and perspectives.

Autoethnographic narratives show the messy, uneven and discomforting work of challenging hegemonic power relations. Colonial practices get internalised and normalised, making unbecoming and relearning authentic ways of being a never-ending process. In our view, collective forms of agency and reflexivity enable new academics to push back against the colonial institution - although not in any definitive way. We highlighted the need for further research to better understand the ways informal arrangements of power hinder or help transformation. Our

paper validates and affirms the contribution of African epistemologies to Western theories of reflexivity and a decolonial disposition.

Author Biographies

Nicole Miriam Daniels is a qualitative sociologist specialising in childbirth, sexual and reproductive justice. Her research and teaching examine the relationship between gender, care, and health and prioritise feminist, qualitative research methodologies. She is the maternity lead at Percept, which is a transdisciplinary social action advisory firm. iD

Taahira Goolam Hoosen is an academic literacies practitioner supporting student and research writers' authorial voice development at the Faculty of Health Sciences' Writing Lab at the University of Cape Town (UCT). She is also a writing mentor, facilitator and coach on a wide range of UCT postgraduate short courses. iD

Jaisubash Jayakumar is a senior lecturer in medical education at the University of Cape Town (UCT). He serves as the co-chairperson for the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences Transformation and Equity Committee. His key research interests include technology in medical education, student-centred pedagogies, transformation and decolonisation in higher education. iD

Kasturi Behari-Leak is Associate Professor in the Centre for Higher Education Development at UCT. She leads a national collaborative project on academic staff development. She publishes and teaches in the field of decolonial curriculum and pedagogies in higher education studies. She was President of the HELTASA and convenes its University Staff Doctoral Programme. She is past President of ICED. iD

References

Adonis, C.K. & Silinda, F. 2021. Institutional culture and transformation in higher education in post-1994 South Africa: a critical race theory analysis. *Critical African Studies,* 13(1): 73-94.

Ahmed, S. 2010. *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Andrews, K. 2016. Universities are using casual contracts to put profit before people. *The Guardian*, 17 November, Available at https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/17/universities-casual-contracts-casualised-work-profit-academia-staff-student (Accessed: 3 March 2022).

Archer, M. 1995. *Realist Social Theory: The Morphogenetic Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Archer, M. 2003. *Structure, Agency and the Internal Conversation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Archer, M. 2010. Routine, reflexivity and realism. *Sociological Theory,* 28(3): 272–303.

Archer, M. 2013a. Reflexivity. *Sociopedia.isa*: 1-14.

Archer, M., 2013b. Collective reflexivity: A relational case for it. In Powel, C. & Dépelteau, F. (Eds.). *Conceptualizing Relational Sociology: Ontological and theoretical issues*. London: Springer Link, 145-161.

Bamberg, M. & Georgakopoulou, A. 2008. Small stories as a new perspective in narrative and identity analysis. *Text & Talk*, 28(3): 377-396.

Behari-Leak, K., Josephy, S., Potts, M., Muresherwa, G., Corbishley, J., Petersen T. & Borges, G. 2019. Using vulnerability as a decolonial catalyst to re-cast the teacher as human(e). *Teaching in Higher Education,* 26(4): 557-572.

Behari-Leak, K. 2017. New academics, new higher education contexts: a critical perspective on professional development. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 22(5): 485-500.

Bhaskar, R. 1994. *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom.* London: Verso.

Bozzon, R., Murgia, A. & Poggio, B. 2019. Gender and precarious careers in academia and research. In Murgia, A. & Poggio, B. (Eds.) *Gender and Precarious Research Careers: A Comparative Analysis*. Oxford and New York: Routledge.

Budlender, D. & Lund, F. 2011. South Africa: A legacy of family disruption. *Development and Change,* 42(4): 925-946.

Burton, S. 2021. Solidarity, now! Care, collegiality, and comprehending the power relations of 'academic kindness' in the Neoliberal Academy. *Performance Paradigm,* 16: 20–39.

Burton, S. & Bowman, B., 2022. The academic precariat: understanding life and labour in the neoliberal academy. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 43(4): 497-512.

Caetano, A. 2014. Defining personal reflexivity: A critical reading of Archer's approach. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 18(1): 60-75.

Chantiluke, R., Kwoba, B. & Nkopo, A. (Eds.). 2018. *Rhodes Must Fall: The Struggle to Decolonise the Racist Heart of Empire*. London: Zed Books.

Clough, P.T 2007. *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*. Duke University Press: Durham & London.

Comaroff, J. & Comaroff, J.L. 2012. Theory from the South: Or, how Euro-America is evolving toward Africa. *Anthropological Forum*, 22(2): 113-131.

Crawley, S.L. 2014. Autoethnography as feminist self-interview. In Gubrium, J.F., Holstein, J.A., Marvasti A.B. & McKinney, K.D. (Eds.). *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of The Craft:* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dann S. & Dann S. 2016. Exploring Catholic social teaching in a social marketing context: History, lessons and future directions. *Journal of Macromarketing,* 36(4): 412-424.

Delgado Bernal, D. & Villalpando, O. 2002. An apartheid of knowledge in academia: the struggle over the "legitimate" knowledge of faculty of color. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35(2): 169-180.

Department of Higher Education & Training. 2015. The New Generation of Academics Programme. Available at: http://www.ssauf.dhet.gov.za/ngap.html (Accessed: 15 February 2022).

Department of Higher Education & Training. 2019. Report of the Ministerial Task Team on the Recruitment, Retention and Progression of Black South African Academics. Available at: https://www.dst.gov.za/images/2020/02/Report_MTT_RRP_of_Black_Academics_web_final 1.pdf (Accessed: 5 May 2023)

Docka Filipek, D. & Stone, L.B., 2021. Twice a "housewife": On academic precarity, "hysterical" women, faculty mental health, and service as gendered care work for the "university family" in pandemic times. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 28(6): 2158-2179.

Dominguez-Whitehead, Y. & Moosa, M. 2014. New academics in the South African research-oriented academy: a critical review of challenges and support structures. *Alternation*, 12: 260-282.

Donati, P. 2011. *Relational Sociology: A New Paradigm for the Social Sciences*. London: Routledge.

Donati, P. & Archer, M.S., 2015. *The Relational Subject*. Cambridge University Press.

Ellis, C. Adams, T.C. & Bochner, A.P. 2011. Autoethnography: An Overview. *FQS Forum Qualitative Social Research*, 12 (1): Article 10.

Essop, A. 2020. The Changing Size and Shape of the Higher Education System in South Africa, 2005-2017. Ali Mazrui Centre For Higher Education Studies. Available at: https://sanrc.co.za/content/2020/09/Size%20and%20Shape%20of%20the%20HE%20System% 202005-2017.pdf (Accessed: 11 November 2022).

Gädeke, D. 2018. Relational normative thought in Ubuntu and Neo-republicanism. *Debating African Philosophy: Perspectives on Identity, Decolonial Ethics and Comparative Philosophy*. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Giddens, A. 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Hazel, W. 2022. UCU strike dates: Full list of universities, how long strikes will last and why staff are taking action. *Inews,* 15 February. Available at https://inews.co.uk/news/education/ucu-strike-dates-university-list-which-universities-how-long-staff-action-1459697 (Accessed: 15 February 2022).

Herman, N., Jose, M., Katiya, M., Kemp, M., Le Roux, N., Swart-Jansen van Vuuren, C. & Van der Merwe, C .2021. 'Entering the world of academia is like starting a new life': A trio of reflections from Health Professionals joining academia as second career academics. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 26(1): 69-81.

Higher Education South Africa (HESA) 2011. A Generation of Growth: proposal for a National Programme to Develop the Next Generation of Academics for South African Higher Education. Pretoria: HESA.

Hinostroza-Paredes, Y. 2023. Reflexivity and agency in university-based teacher educators: a critical realist analysis. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 28(8): 1918-1936.

Hlatshwayo, M.N., Shawa, L.B. & Nxumalo, S.A. 2020. Ubuntu currere in the academy: A case study from the South African experience. *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 5(1-2): 120-136.

Hunter, A. 2020. Snapshots of selfhood: curating academic identity through visual autoethnography. *International Journal for Academic Development,* 25(4): 310-323.

Ivancheva, M. 2015. The age of precarity and the new challenges to the academic profession. *Studia Europaea,* 1: 39-47.

Ivancheva, M., Lynch, K. & Keating, K. 2019. Precarity, gender and care in the Neoliberal Academy. *Gender, Work & Organization,* 26(4): 448-462.

Jawitz, J., 2007. New academics negotiating communities of practice: learning to swim with the big fish. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12(2): 185-197.

Johansson, C., Bedggood, R., Farquharson, K. & Perenyi, A., 2018. Shared leadership as a vehicle to healthy service eco-systems: practical or fanciful? *Journal of Social Marketing*, 8(2): 159–81.

Kapp, R. & Bangeni, B., 2020. Black working-class students' negotiation of boundaries across time and space: a longitudinal analysis. *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning*, 8(1): 81-95.

Kariippanon, K., Gordon, R., Jayasinghe, L. & Gurruwiwi, G. 2020. Collective reflexivity in social marketing through ethnographic film-making: The Yolngu story of tobacco in Yirrkala, Australia. *Marketing Theory*, 20(1): 123-143.

Keane, M. 2021. Research ethics and diversity of worldviews: Integrated worlds and Ubuntu. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the South*, 5(2): 22-35.

Kessi, S., Boonzaier, F. & Gekeler, B.S. 2021. *Pan-Africanism and Psychology in Decolonial Times*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kessi, S. & Cornell, J., 2015. Coming to UCT: Black students, transformation and discourses of race. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 3(2): 1-16.

Kerr, P. 2021. Are we in a parallel pipeline? Bringing the casualisation of academic work onto the South African higher education agenda. *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa,* 105(1): 26-51.

Khunou, G., Phaswana, E., Khoza-Shangase, K. & Canham, H. 2019. *Black Academic Voices: The South African Experience*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Kidman, J., 2020. Whither decolonisation? Indigenous scholars and the problem of inclusion in the neoliberal university. *Journal of Sociology*, 56(2): 247-262.

Leenen-Young, M., Naepi, S., Thomsen, P.S., Fa'avae, D.T.M., Keil, M. & Matapo, J. 2021. 'Pillars of the colonial institution are like a knowledge prison': The significance of decolonizing knowledge and pedagogical practice for Pacific early career academics in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 26(7-8): 986-1001.

Letseka, M. 2015. Ubuntu and Justice as Fairness. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences,* 5 (9): 544-551.

Maodzwa-Taruvinga, M. & Divala, J. 2004. Experiences of black women teacher educators in the South African higher education system. *South African Journal of Higher Education,* 28(6): 1961–1971.

Mangoma, A. & Wilson-Prangley, A. 2019. Black Tax: Understanding the financial transfers of the emerging black middle class. *Development Southern Africa*, 36(4): 443-460.

McKeown, M. 2022. The view from below: How the Neoliberal Academy is shaping contemporary political theory. *Society,* 59(2): 99–109.

McKinney, C. & Christie, P. (Eds.). 2021. *Decoloniality, Language and Literacy: Conversations with Teacher Educators*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters

McNaughton, S.M. & Billot, J. 2016. Negotiating academic teacher identity shifts during higher education contextual change. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 21(6): 644-658.

Mignolo, W.D. 2011. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity. Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Miranda, E.A. 2021. Actions and behaviors that thwart the advancement of women and people of color in academe (opinion). *Inside Higher Ed*, 13 August. Available at https://www.insidehighered.com/print/advice/2021/08/13/actions-and-behaviors-thwart-advancement-women-and-people-color-academe-opinion (Accessed: 22 February 2022).

Muna, N., Hoosen, T.G., Moxley, K. & Van Pletzen, E. 2019. Establishing a Health Sciences writing centre in the changing landscape of South African Higher Education. *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning,* 7(1): 19-41.

Naepi, S., McAllister, T.G., Thomsen, P., Leenen-Young, M., Walker, L.A., McAllister, A.L., Theodore, R., Kidman, J. & Suaaliia, T. 2020. The Pakaru 'pipeline': Māori and Pasifika pathways within the academy. *New Zealand Annual Review of Education,* 24: 142-159*.*

Ngubane, N. & Makua, M. 2021. Ubuntu pedagogy–transforming educational practices in South Africa through an African philosophy: from theory to practice. Inkanyiso: *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 13(1): 1-12.

Ntuli, P. 2013. Preamble: Personhood an African perspective, in Nhlapo, T., Arogundade, E. & Garuba H. (Eds.). *Celebrating Africa Series: African Culture, Human Rights and Modern Constitutions*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

Ochs, E. & Capps, L. 1996. Narrating the self. *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 25: 19-43.

Petersen, C. 2016. Alliance in jobs victory for UCT cleaners, *IOL,* 23 August. Available at: https://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news/alliance-in-jobs-victory-for-uct-cleaners-2059877 (Accessed: 3 July 2022).

Pillay, D., Naicker, I. & Pithouse-Morgan, K. (Eds.). 2016. *Academic Autoethnographies*. Leiden: Brill.

Ratele, K. 2018. Is university transformation about assimilation into slightly tweaked traditions?" In Pattman, R. & Corolissen, R. (Eds.). *Transforming Transformation in Research and Teaching at South African Universities*. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media, 51-72.

Reiter, B. (Ed.). 2018. *Constructing the Pluriverse. The Geopolitics of Knowledge*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Riessman, C.K. 2008. *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. London: Sage Publications.

Rink, B., Mohamed, K., Ngoasheng, A. & Behari-Leak, K. 2020. Crossing borders as 'new' academics in contested times: Reflexive narratives of curriculum change and transformation. *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning*, 8(1): 1-20.

Roberts, L. 2022. "More could be done": Combating South Africa's record-high unemployment. *Forbes Africa,* 25 November. Available at https://www.forbesafrica.com/current-affairs/2022/04/06/more-could-be-done-combating-south-africas-record-high-unemployment (Accessed: 23 December 2023).

Sadiq, H., Barnes, K.I., Price, M., Gumedze, F. & Morrell, R.G. 2019. Academic promotions at a South African university: questions of bias, politics and transformation. *Higher Education*, 78(3): 423-442.

Shaik, A. & Kahn, P. 2021. Understanding the challenges entailed in decolonising a Higher Education institution: an organisational case study of a research-intensive South African university. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 26(7-8): 969-985.

Soudien, C. 2008. The intersection of race and class in the South African university: student experiences. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 22(3): 662-678.

Spivak, G.C. 1988. Can the subaltern speak? In *Imperialism.* London: Routledge, 171-219.

Standing, G. 2011. *Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Statistics South Africa. 2022. *Quarterly Labour Force Survey*. Q2.

Sutherland, K.A. 2018. Holistic academic development: Is it time to think more broadly about the academic development project? *International Journal for Academic Development,* 23(4): 261-273.

Tamale, S. 2020. *Decolonization and Afro-Feminism*. Ottawa: Daraja Press.

Wa Thiong'o, Ngugi. 1992. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. East African Publishers.

Wilmot, K. & McKenna, S. 2018. Writing groups as transformative spaces. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 37(4): 868-882.

Windsor, L.C., Crawford, K.F. & Breuning, M. 2021. Not a leaky pipeline! Academic success is a game of chutes and ladders. *PS: Political Science & Politics,* 54 (3): 509-512.

Zembylas, M. 2018. Decolonial possibilities in South African higher education: Reconfiguring humanising pedagogies as/with decolonising pedagogies. *South African Journal of Education*, 38(4): 1-11.