CriSTaL
CRITICAL STUDIES IN TEACHING & LEARNING

2025, Volume 13, Issue 1
DOI: 10.14426/cristal.v13i1.2691

The effects of decolonial praxis on leaders of transformative movements: The case of Masivule in South Africa

Cliff Sekowe[1]#, Michael K. Okyere Asante[2], Jessica van den Brink[3] and Alexander Andrason[4]
[1] *Union Theological Seminary, USA*
[2] *University of Environment and Sustainable Development, Ghana | University of Cambridge, UK*
[3] *University of Pretoria, South Africa*
[4] *University of Cape Town, South Africa*
#Corresponding Author: sekowec@gmail.com

(Submitted: 20 February 2025; Accepted: 21 June 2025)

Abstract

While the effects experienced by the leaders of radical transformative movements at universities in South Africa and other countries have become evident over the last decades, the scholarly discussion and theorisation thereof, especially by those directly involved in these movements, has been scarce. This article addresses this knowledge gap and discusses the consequences suffered by the leaders of a small, albeit no less radically transformative, movement that took place at a middle-size department at a historically white South African university in 2022: #Masivule_i-Antieke_Studies. By exploring an auto-ethnographic method and couching their personal experiences within decolonial theory, the authors – who were among the six Masivule founders and activists – conclude that: contesting (post-/epi-)colonial powers at universities has both negative and positive effects on the architects/leaders of decolonial movements, which are visible in four domains: structural, epistemic, personal, and relational. While structural, epistemic, and relational effects gradually become mostly positive, personal effects remain profoundly (albeit not exclusively) negative. The authors propose that the most promising or effective way to deal with traumatic experiences and render them generative is to embrace decoloniality – not only as a method of transforming a particular department, university, or field, but as a philosophy governing one's professional career and life.

Keywords: activism, auto-ethnography, decoloniality, South Africa, tertiary education

Introduction

There are a wide range of effects experienced by the leaders of radical transformative movements at universities in South Africa (most notably, the #RhodesMustFall, #OpenStellenbosch, and #FeesMustFall movements), as well as across Africa and globally. That said, the scholarly discussion of such experiences and their theorisation is scarce (Buheji, 2024; Luescher, et al., 2020;

Morwe, 2020; Strong, 2013). This scarcity is particularly acute in analyses conducted by those directly involved in decolonial movements.

This article addresses this knowledge gap by discussing the effects of a small, albeit no less radically transformative, movement on its leaders: #Masivule_i-Antieke_Studies (Warren, et al., 2022). This movement took place in 2022 – some time after its #RhodesMustFall, #OpenStellenbosch, and #FeesMustFall predecessors – at a middle-size, humanities department at a historically white South African university. We, four of the six Masivule founders and activists, use an auto-ethnographic method and revisit our complex experiences, both inside and outside the educational institution at the time of the protest, as well as after the movement was suppressed. We evaluate these experiences within decolonial theory as formulated by Grosfoguel (2011; 2013), Maldonado-Torres (2016; 2017) and, especially, Kessi, et al. (2020), and answer the following research question: Which experiences associated with (post-/epi-)colonial violence and the counteractions to it – i.e., structural, epistemic, personal, and relational – and, thus, which negative and positive effects were experienced by leading activists of the Masivule movement; at what stages of the protest did they emerge; and to what degree did they operate?

We begin the article by describing the history of the Masivule movement. After that, we familiarise the reader with the scholarly literature dedicated to the experiences of leaders of radical transformative movements at universities in South Africa and worldwide, the methodology of our study, and the conceptual framework within which it is developed. Subsequently, we describe and evaluate our experiences. In the end, we answer the research question and offer some concluding remarks.

Background: Masivule's story

#Masivule_i-Antieke_Studies [Let's open the Ancient Studies (Department)] (in short, 'Masivule') is a group of postgraduate students, alumni, PhD candidates, and staff who at the beginning of 2022 created 'a safe platform for all those who ha[d] been marginalised, othered, and/or traumatised during their studies and work at the Department of Ancient Studies' at Stellenbosch University in South Africa (Warren, et al., 2022: 1). The collective aimed to establish a space where all such persons could 'reflect on their past and present in the environment that they ha[d] perceived as oppressive' and 'experienced as white-centred, patriarchal, hierarchical, and heteronormative' (Warren, et al., 2022: 1).[1] Members did not fall within the perceived canon of a Stellenbosch University student: a white, middle-to-upper-class (affluent), cisgender heterosexual Afrikaner. Instead, the collective included persons who identified with or belonged in three (or more) of the following categories: Black, gender nonconforming, bi-/homosexual,

[1] Our perceptions generally agreed with the maladies identified in literature as endemic to Stellenbosch University (Francis, 2021; Graziano, 2004; Lesch, et al., 2017, Robertson and Pattman, 2018). The most explicit identification of these problems may be found in the report prepared by the Khampepe Commission of Inquiry (Khampepe, 2022) and can be summarised by the following quote from an article published by Prof. Denis Francis a year before the Masivule protest: 'Racism, heterosexism, and gender oppression pervade S[tellenbosch]U[niversity]' (Francis, 2021: 283).

woman, economically precarious, and foreigner. The group was imagined as an academic research project as well as a social and emotional support system for its members – it would 'allow [them] to overcome [their] past and current trauma emerging from and related to the systemic issues inbuilt in the structures and institutions of the Department of Ancient Studies' (Warren, et al., 2022: 1). The aspirations of the collective were quite innocuous: the members primarily wished to share their individual experiences, reflect on them, and jointly analyse them, holding space for each other. Initially, Masivule was comprised of six people. Meetings were conducted frequently, in person or online. Additional input was gained from people outside of the group, as well as unaffiliated sympathisers.

When the collective launched its activity in March 2022, the posters announcing its aims and a short 'manifesto' (Warren, at al., 2022) were removed by senior departmental staff. The management of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences sanctioned the actions of the department and stated that the dissemination of the material pertaining to the Masivule project should be stopped because it had (had) an adverse impact on the other colleagues and the department.[2] Concurrent responses received from offices well acquainted with institutional power dynamics and inequalities were radically different from the managerial reactions mentioned above. In an email, the Transformation Office – a body that had been created to help the university to work towards the elimination of inequalities and marginalisation of minorities and previously disadvantaged peoples (Transformation Office, n.d.) – noted the actions of the department with concern and stated that these actions did not resonate with the aspirations of the university and its values. In response, in a meeting, the Equality Unit – an institutional entity that deals with 'unfair discrimination and harassment [⋯] and social injustice' (Equality Unit, n.d.) – viewed Masivule as a radically necessary platform for profiling the voice of staff and students, especially those who had been systematically silenced. According to this unit, the Masivule movement should have been celebrated as a pioneering flagship programme of the department and used as a bold illustration of critical engagement, diversity, transformation, and inclusivity.

A little later, in a meeting with the Dean of the faculty, the chair of the department, and a Masivule representative, the Transformation Office was of the view that the reaction of the department and the faculty's management to Masivule constituted a 'very textbook' and 'typical [⋯] response to people who raise these [types of] issues in [higher-education] spaces'.[3] The Transformation Office emphasised that 'it [was] recommended that [⋯] the department [⋯ should] create [⋯] spaces for [⋯] people who are marginal', like those of the Masivule collective. The meeting concluded with the Transformation Office 'embracing Masivule as a space for engagement'. We were told that Masivule 'resonates very well with high[er] education [⋯] because academic institutions by their very nature are spaces for engagement and [⋯] discourse' (Transformation Office, 2022).

---

[2] All such responses are documented and stored as data. They can be consulted to substantiate the factuality of the history of the Masivule movement presented in this section.

[3] That is, issues related to diversity, transformation, and inclusivity, as well as the critique of whiteness, patriarchy/sexism, heteronormativity, and hierarchical structures.

The above diagnostics and evaluations were reiterated in the final report prepared a month later by the Transformation Office together with the Equality Unit, as well as Employee Wellness, and the division dedicated to employment equity and diversity promotion. According to this document, 'the department's inability to respond to the Masivule Collective [was] a case in point' that demonstrated 'systemic and cultural issues within the department' (Stellenbosch University, 2022: 2). The report also noted three important facts: (a) 'there is a [···] disconnect in how the majority of staff and [···] the Masivule Collective experience the Department'; (b) 'the Masivule Collective experience the department in line with the experiences of many marginal staff and students (most notably black and queer) at Stellenbosch University and historically white institutions of higher learning in South Africa'; (c) 'the disconnect is evident [···] in the language that colleagues use to narrate their experiences [i.e.,] the [···] collective understand and narrate their experiences through a decolonial lens and the commensurate language' (Stellenbosch University, 2022: 2).

This report was collectively designed by a number of experts from several divisions and units 'with the purpose of aligning the practices of the department to that of the values of the university, and in so doing create a thriving space of work and learning for everyone'. The document proposed a series of specific and concrete interventions to help the department 'address [···] cultural issues [that exist] within [it]' and offered the help of the various structures found at the university because 'the resources and expertise to [do this] do not exist within the department' (Stellenbosch University, 2022: 2). The systemic issues permeating the Department of Ancient Studies were pointed out as the source of the problems. The overarching conclusion was that Masivule should be celebrated; the disciplinary charges against any person involved in Masivule should be dropped; the department should transform; and to help it with this task, a set of strategies should be implemented (Stellenbosch University, 2022).

However, when the report was released, the deanery claimed its structural authority. The report was considered a mere recommendation and treated as such. Eventually, the Transformation Office was excluded from efforts to change the culture of the department and nothing of what it had planned was implemented. Masivule was not given any space and the department voted not to allow it any online presence. The disciplinary charges were not dropped – the process of incompatibility against a staff member which eventually led to their dismissal continued. The transformatory strategies were not implemented – the deanery replaced them with its own two-hour long facilitation session and two interviews with us that were condescending and humiliating. The movement was squashed and its members faced severe retaliations: the employment of the abovementioned staff member was terminated, and two students had to interrupt their studies without completing their degrees.

After this tragic end in late 2022, Masivule did not cease to exist. The collective continued to engage with academia through several articles published in scholarly journals (see further below). More importantly, united by their exclusion and struggle, the members still meet and support each other.

Literature review

The experiences of leaders of radical transformative movements at universities in South Africa and worldwide are highly diverse, ranging from negative to positive. The analysis of (very limited) scholarly literature highlights significant professional and personal sacrifices and reveals a consistent pattern of academic and social exclusion, physical injuries, incarcerations, economic hardships, and mental health challenges. Nevertheless, the same literature also delves into the transformative impact of activism on the personal trajectories of prominent protesters, with regards to their careers and ideologies. Similarly, the effects reported in scholarship, whether negative or positive, may range from being immediate (i.e. limited to the duration of a particular movement) to long-lasting (i.e. spanning over the remaining course of people's lives). Below, we review the documented negative and positive effects of university activism, first in South Africa and then in other countries.

The above-mentioned duality of the activist experience is well attested in South Africa. On the one hand, several leaders involved in #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall, and #OpenStellenbosoch (the three most impactful student movements between 2015 and 2016) were suspended or expelled from their respective institutions (Morwe, 2020). Like many students, leading activists suffered injuries from physical altercations with members of law enforcement and private security forces; in certain cases, requiring emergency medical attention due to rubber bullet wounds and tear gas burns (Haffejee, 2015). Some leaders were arrested and went through extensive trials (Maromo, 2016; Matlala, 2020; Morwe, 2020). Few of them had access to appropriate legal counselling, which resulted in unequal sentencing periods, lasting up to eight years in prison (Sobuwa, 2018; 2020). All of this resulted in severe mental health problems, especially depression, which drew some activists to unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse, self-harm, and suicide (Eskell-Blokland, as cited in Morwe, 2020).

On the other hand, many student leaders harnessed their painful experiences into positive outcomes. They remained in student leadership positions, continuing to fight for decolonised education; they entered careers as social-justice lawyers and legal representatives; they moved into party politics and/or parliamentary positions often linked to education (Hotz, 2015); or they embarked on publishing careers, recounting their experiences in the movement (Kunene, 2018) and contributing to the conversation about decoloniality and social justice on campuses across South Africa (Abba Omar & Basson, 2022). Zukiswa Mqolomba illustrates such a dual experience by describing how her involvement in student activism sharpened her understanding of systemic injustices and fuelled her commitment to social change, despite facing severe academic, social, and personal challenges (Luescher et al., 2020).

Similar twofold effects have been experienced by leaders of radical transformative movements taking place at universities outside of South Africa. Activists met severe academic repercussions, faced disciplinary actions from university administrations, and suffered various forms of academic exclusion. These include suspensions, expulsions, administrative pushback through bureaucratic hurdles, increased surveillance of activities in classrooms, on campus and outside of it, as well as peer harassment (Buheji, 2024). These acts undertaken by the institutions

often lead to the academic and social isolation of student leaders (Buheji, 2024). Activists faced economic difficulties due to the loss of scholarships and jobs, the inability to secure employment given protest-related stigmatisation and/or expulsion from educational programmes, the need for costly security measures following incidents of doxxing and public harassment, and the legal fees incurred because of arrests and court trials (Rossouw, 2020; Strong, 2013). All of this, in turn, commonly results in profound and multifaceted mental-health problems: high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Buheji, 2024; Rossouw, 2020; Strong, 2013). Again, despite these hardships, activism may also foster a deep sense of purpose and community among leaders and participants. It ignites a passion for social justice and drives several individuals to pursue careers aligned with their activist values (Gusfield, 1971; Strong, 2013).[4]

Theoretical background

Methodology

As announced at the beginning of our article, to examine the effects experienced by persons leading a radical student movement, we draw on our own experiences as members of Masivule. To collect our experiences as empirical data, we explore a qualitative method particularly suited to the decolonial and praxis-oriented topic of our study: auto-ethnography. We revisit our personal and professional lives at the time of protest, as well as after the movement was squashed.

It is not often that the 'objects' of a study in the field of social sciences can claim agency and become authors who analyse their own experiences. In our view, such an agentive methodological approach is highly advantageous. Perhaps, it offers a unique perspective which is both etic (an outsider/observer's view) and emic (an experiencer/insider's view) at the same time (Feleppa, 1986; Headland, et al., 1990; Mostowlansky and Rota, 2020), and allows us to occupy a privileged position in scholarship as both the analysts (those who theorise) and the analysed (those about whom one theorises). Certainly, as we draw on our subjective introspections as researcher-protagonists – our feelings and passions, fears and vulnerabilities, as well as bodies and bodily reactions – we do not aim to provide robust generalisations applicable to large populations. We rather want to stimulate further debates and inspire others to reflect on their decolonial activism and praxis, as well as theorisations thereof (Ellis, 2008).

Nevertheless, in line with reflexive and reflective scholarship, the inclusion of our subjectivities adds critical depth to our analysis which would not be accessible otherwise. That is, the inclusion of our biographical experiences and the events and emotions we have had to live through in order to address broader decolonial issues, allows us to navigate between the particular and the general, contributing to a better understanding of both and ultimately expanding the complexity of our study. In other words, by disclosing our experiences to the

[4] One must remember that such 'positive' stories are often the only stories we have access to. There are many stories that remain untold and are likely much less positive and reassuring. It is stories like these that should make us wonder about the impact that waves of protest have on the individuals who participate in them, especially those occupying leadership positions (Ntombana et al., 2023).

reader and allowing them to relive some moments of our lives, our experiences become shared knowledge, both transferrable and challengeable (Holman-Jones, 2005). Similarly, our conclusions may confirm trends observed elsewhere and/or expand them by new observations, thus contributing to broader scholarly debates (Holman-Jones, 2005). Furthermore, and perhaps even more importantly, our agentive approach is empowering. It allows us to narrate *our* story. Accordingly, we not only 'interpret [···] our social, cultural, political, and personal lives', but also, by re-experiencing and recreating them, we remake our past, present, and – we hope – future (Holman-Jones, 2005: 767).[5]

As we explained above, each Masivule member, including the authors of this article, instantiated at least three of the categories that are (for different reasons) peripheral in the hierarchies of privileges across many societies (including South African) and institutions (including Stellenbosch University): being Black, gender nonconforming, bi-/homosexual (or generally non-heteronormative as far as sexual orientation is concerned), woman, financially precarious, and immigrant. While the positionality of each of us was different – indeed, no member's identity was identical to that of any other member – all of us were located at the bottom of some hierarchies. Differently put, we all were somehow marginalised in our immediate context, although the nature of this depended on our respective backgrounds. Overall, when viewed holistically, our collective was located at the absolute periphery of the perceived canon of a Stellenbosch University student and academic staff: a white, Afrikaner, cisgender, heterosexual, middle-to-upper class (affluent), man. This resulted in us being 'natives of nowhere' (Nakasa, 2005: 106) who not only don't belong in the space, but are indeed inferior citizens as far the space is concerned (Maluleka 2024; Nakasa, 2005). Such 'natives of nowhere,' as defined by Nakasa (2005), are expelled and in his case exiled from the spaces they form a part of due to their un-belonging and, specifically, their questioning of the status quo.

This overlap of being marginalised and oppressed and the collective non-canonicity that is derived from it, made our movement not about our individual struggles, but rather about our shared experience. It was this common perception of the system and space in which we found ourselves as oppressive and marginalising that transformed us into a genuine collective. Furthermore, we did not want to fragmentise our experiences into distinct ones to prevent the individualisation of issues that we viewed as systemic as well as to avoid potential retaliations

[5] Although reflexivity – and thus centring our experiences – constitutes a critical element in our research, we are convinced that the scholarliness of our study and its academic validity remain intact. Since the topic of our research pertains to the effects of decolonial praxis on leaders of transformative movements, we study how the leaders – in this case, us as the authors of the article – experience their lives during and after participating in the movement they led. However, the very effects described in the 'Our experiences' section are carefully documented with medical bills and prescriptions, articles published in academic journals, emails exchanged with or received from other people, recordings of meetings in which we participated, diary entries some of us wrote, and the journal that we as a collective have kept since the formation of our movement. Similarly, when presenting the background of our movement, we narrate the events as they occurred factually, supporting this with excerpts from emails, meetings, and official documents.

against separate members. All of this explains the approach of analysing our experiences jointly in the present article, too. Such a strategy is in line with intersectionality theory formulated in the 1980s in the USA by Crenshaw (1989; 1991), King (1988), and Collins (1990). Intersectionality theory criticises the 'single-axis' – disjointed and fragmented – analysis of oppressions and privileges. Instead, it argues for such oppressions and privileges to be researched as overlapping and interrelated, and emphasises that all oppressions are harmful and destructive and the eradication of one oppression is interwoven with the eradication of all the others (Duran and Jones, 2020; Carastathis, 2016; Cho, et al., 2013; Yuval-Davis, 2015).

Conceptual framework

Our experiences will be approached through a decolonial lens (Grosfoguel, 2011; 2013; Maldonado-Torres, 2016, 2017; Kessi, et al., 2020) – which we also view as a natural framework for our topic. Decoloniality is a complex web of ontological, epistemic, and metaphysical commitments (both theoretical and practical) that identify, counter, and reverse presuppositions, practices, and institutions imposed by and/or inherited from colonial, postcolonial, and epicolonial powers (Fanon, 1963; 1967; Grosfoguel, 2011; Kessi, et al., 2020; Maldonado-Torres, 2016; 2017).[6] Decoloniality questions, combats, and undoes the inherited 'matrix of [···] being' that still forms 'a central [and] constitutive dimension of [white] Western modernity and its hegemonic civilization project' (Maldonado-Torres, 2017: 111) manifested systemically through racial supremacy, capitalist extractivism, patriarchal hierarchisation, and Christian dominion (Grosfoguel, 2013).

Crucially, decolonial theory and praxis are not limited to critiquing; but also extend to formulation of alternative counter-discourses, counter-systems, and counter-knowledges (Kessi et al., 2020) by constantly (re-)imagining 'multiple [new] forms of being in the world' (Maldonado-Torres, 2016: 10). Therefore, in our opinion, the implementation of decoloniality in decolonisation-oriented movements is an aspectually imperfective activity (ongoing and never-ending) instead of being a perfective accomplishment (done and complete). One is decolonising (a part of) reality without aiming at (the illusion of) having decolonised it fully (Kessi et al., 2020). In Africa – the place from where we write – decolonial commitment necessarily centres the African *damnés*: Black bodies and their experiences, communities, institutions, histories, knowledges, and politics (Asante, 2020).

Decoloniality – like coloniality and its postcolonial and epicolonial mutations – pertains to four main domains: structural, epistemic, personal, and relational (Kessi et al., 2020). The structural domain – narrowed to the academy – concerns 'resources and opportunities' that replicate and propagate the colonial status quo by systemically benefiting white male heterosexual cisgender middle-class scholars (Kessi, et al., 2020: 273). This systemic privilege permeates academic institutions and transpires through unequal access to 'jobs, titles, professional recognition,

[6] Epicoloniality refers to 'phenomena for which the cause may or may not be directly traced to legacies or histories of overt or observed colonial encounters, but in which power relations and outcomes are recognizably colonial' (Kessi, et al., 2020: 271).

research budgets, leadership and gatekeeping roles, scholarships, and entries of admission' (Kessi, et al., 2020: 273).

The epistemic domain, underpinning the structural one, concerns 'worldviews, […] theories and ways of knowing' (Kessi, et al., 2020: 274). Decoloniality undoes the view that a certain knowledge type – namely the one rooted in the tradition of Euro-American 'metropole' – is universal. Instead of such a 'monologic, monotopic, imperial, [and] global knowledge' (Grosfoguel, 2013: 89) – which 'dehumaniz[es] and eras[es] African civilizational innovations, politics, and cultures' (Kessi, et al., 2020: 274) as well as the civilisations, politics and cultures of other 'peripheries' – decoloniality argues for pluriversity (Grosfoguel, 2013; Mignolo, 2000). That is, a kaleidoscope of knowledges where 'the many defin[e] for the many […] instead of one for the rest' (Grosfoguel, 2013: 89).

The personal domain concerns the everyday actions of an individual (Ramugondo, 2019). A person committed to decoloniality, 'cultivat[es] consciousness and engag[es] in disobedient decolonial praxis', denouncing and disrupting (post/epi)colonial tendencies by refusing to assimilate into academic normativity and perform it according to a script that determines *the* manner of behaving 'in front of the classroom, at conferences, […] doing research or [replicating] citation practices' (Kessi, et al., 2020: 275).[7]

As the individual is always situated within a collective, the personal domain 'never transpire[s] through individuals alone' (Kessi, et al., 2020: 275). It involves communities and necessitates a relational dimension. Acknowledging and embracing one's interdependency with other, decolonial theorisers and activists strengthens solidarities, identifies 'intersecting oppressions', and develops 'equity, mutuality, and reciprocity that cut […] against the grain of privilege and power' (Kessi, et al., 2020: 275). This means that they collectively give voice 'to scholars from excluded and marginalized communities, whether they have been marginalized due to gendered, racialized, epistemic, religious, ethno-linguistic, or embodied hierarchies' (Kessi et al., 2020: 275). This sense of community within decoloniality is indicative of decolonial love, which humanises individuals beyond the categories they fit into (Maluleka, 2021; 2024). While love is not often considered a key part of the 'sociopolitical, cultural, economic, epistemic, pedagogical and ontological struggle,' it plays an integral role in the creation of a holistic post-Apartheid South Africa, as love has the capacity to transcend power hierarchies and expectations and enables us to recognise one another as people worthy of compassion and respect (Maluleka, 2024: 73).

Our experiences

Writing about human experiences – intrinsically multifarious and chaotic – is a complex task which necessitates some form of simplification and/or grouping. In line with our decolonial theoretical

[7] In this study, we interpret the personal domain more personally than Kessi, et al. (2020) as well as Ramugondo (2019). For us, it mainly refers to the effects experienced as individuals in one's mind (emotional/psychological) and body (physical/somatic).

principles, we thematically bundle the effects our involvement in Masivule has had on us into four domains or dimensions: structural, epistemic, personal, and relational.

Structural domain

The structural consequences of our involvement in Masivule were initially confined to strictly negative effects which significantly jeopardised our academic careers. This structural violence was experienced the most by those of us who, at the time of the protest, worked or studied at the department. These members faced the full might of the institutional power of the university. As explained above, the faculty invalidated the work done by the Transformation Office and the other offices specifically designed to deal with cases like ours, removing these units from the process entirely. The faculty management usurped the structural authority it held and inserted itself despite being poorly equipped and qualified to address issues of transformation. This left us unprotected and allowed the institution – whether at a faculty, department, or central administration level – to weaponise a wide range of administrative hurdles, intimidations, and pressures against Masivule. These included: threats of disciplinary actions; refusal to provide letters supporting visa applications for foreign members; threats of writing to the ministry of home affairs regarding residence permit applications;[8] refusal to provide Masivule students with reference letters necessary for future job and/or study applications; refusal to continue the supervision of a student; conditioning the appointment of the new supervisor of another student upon that student's demonstrated ability to cover the university fees in the following year (something that is not required by the university); and eventually leaving students without supervision.

During our activism, we also experienced increased institutional surveillance, both in the physical (i.e. the department/faculty) and virtual space (i.e. social media), and fell prey to doxxing, whereby the department used its institutional position to source information on individual members. Eventually, as already mentioned, the staff member who participated in the collective was dismissed and two students had to abandon their postgraduate programs. This negatively affected international, national, and university-internal research grants and scholarships obtained earlier. Overall, at the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023, we found ourselves virtually outside of the academy with our careers brutally interrupted.

Once faced with the cruel reality described above, we pursued alternative study and work avenues which gradually opened new and exciting structural opportunities to us. These included

[8] Indeed, foreigners are one of the most vulnerable groups within the academy, and are extremely susceptible to exploitation, bullying, and abuse due to 'threats to cancel [their] visas' (Fleming, 2022a: 425). Foreign staff and students are easy prey for managers and supervisors because their presence in the country, and associated way of life, depends on the validity or renewal of their study and/or work permits that are directly linked to their employment (Fleming, 2022b). The Transformation Office noted this threat and qualified the department's acts as disingenuous and malicious. To the Transformation Office, this constituted a clear example of the manipulation of employment equity targets and unemployment statistics to exclude a scholar who was in fact challenging the white supremacy of the department and university.

admission into fully funded postgraduate/research programmes at leading national (University of Cape Town and University of Pretoria) and international universities (Cambridge University and Union Theological Seminary in New York), as well as work at a renowned research institute combatting language endangerment. This, in turn, allowed us to undertake several research visits to Europe, North America, and Africa, participate in scholarly conferences across the globe, and benefit from more pan-African and international career prospects.

The fact that all of us not only remained within academic structures, but have further thrived within them (see further below), is the clearest demonstration of the gradual mutation of structural effects from negative to positive. Overall, the structural effects of blacklisting and character assassination (which pertain to the relational domain as well) – often listed as typical consequences of opposing institutions (Uys, 2020) and raised as warnings against potential protesters – seem not only exaggerated, but entirely unfounded in our case. In fact, it is because of our protest that we have been given various career opportunities and established a wide network of novel collaborations. Of course, we know this stems from the new epistemic orientation adopted by us (see next paragraph), which was and is celebrated in other movements and resistances like ours.

Epistemic domain

The epistemic consequences of our participation in Masivule were also strongly negative during the protest. A particularly cruel effect was the further reinforcement of the monologic, monotopic, and 'mono-formic' narrative that we had experienced in the department. The clearest expression of this was the silencing implemented – or at least promoted and endorsed – by both the faculty and department management. The faculty forbade us to distribute informative material and, later, share the Transformation Office's report online. The department removed some of our posters; refused to reflect verbal abuse suffered by a Masivule staff member in the meeting's minutes; framed a protection request for those who disclose irregularities and oppressions as an attack and reported it to the university administration; removed information about our talk at a decoloniality seminar from the department's website; refused to provide online space for the collective, contrary to the Transformation Office's ruling; and continuously intended to discredit the scholarly value of our research project, again, contrary to the Transformation Office's decision, who found it 'perfectly sound' (meeting with the Transformation Office, 7 April 2022).

This silencing was ultimately evident in the rules imposed by the university administration and endorsed by faculty management. These rules overtly forbade staff members to continue to express unhappiness and disagreements, or discuss views critiquing the department in other (public) fora and with parties who were not involved. We were told not to undermine colleagues or the department and display respect for authority. The enforcement of these silencing measures fortifying a single 'official' episteme was possible because of the structural power held by the department, faculty, and university management.[9]

[9] This threat of silencing was clearly recognized in the report developed by the Transformation Office and the other units who stated the following: 'As we understand [⋯] Dr XXXX [a staff member in the Masivule

While we felt epistemically oppressed by the various university authorities, we were able, from the very beginning, to extract several positive epistemic effects from our experiences as well. We gradually widened our epistemic horizons by embracing alternative knowledge systems (whether fields of research, methodologies, or conceptual paradigms) – especially those that were alternative to the monophonic 'culture' practiced in the department. Most importantly, we discovered the fields of decoloniality, social justice, and critical studies, which liberated us from the narrow, deeply colonial departmental practices in the fields of classics, Greco-Roman, and Biblical studies. We recognised the importance of intersectionality in addressing overlapping structures of discrimination and injustice, and thus the interconnectedness of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, power abuse, hyper-hierarchisation, and several others (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; King, 1988). We embarked on research in entirely new scholarly areas: Black Liberation theology, radical and critical pedagogy, institutional-culture studies, masculinities, gender and queer studies, Pan-Africanist studies, African languages, engaged sociolinguistics, and multimodal and inter-species communication – as well as social justice and decoloniality more broadly. We also expanded our epistemic horizons by highlighting the crucial role of academic institutions in fostering transformative activism and activists' contributions to societal change.

All of this resulted in a more diverse research agenda and extraordinary academic growth, certainly empowered by the freedom of expression and thought we discovered at our new institutions. This has, in turn, led to a wave of successful publications by our members. The following articles, which are ordered chronologically, have directly emerged from our Masivule struggle and clearly illustrate the above-mentioned epistemic resurgence: Andrason (2022) – on the hyper-hierarchisation of small university departments; Okyere Asante (2022) – on the politics of Africanisation and the field of classics; Van Schoor, et al. (2022) – on decolonising classics in Africa, (2022); Andrason and Van den Brink (2023) – on epistemic recolonisation through the manipulation of research output; Andrason et al. (2023) and Matutu and Andrason (2023) – on anarchist/critical pedagogy and the reactionary responses of (conservative) university departments to such educative experiments; Wulfekühler and Andrason (2023) – on the ethics of whistleblowing at tertiary education institutions; Van den Brink and Andrason (2024) – on the monopolisation of knowledge production in the South African publishing ecosystem; Andrason (2025) – on the relationship between queerness and polyglotism; Sekowe (forthcoming) – on the connection between Black theology and cognitive linguistics; and Andrason (forthcoming) – on decolonising colonial-language courses through the use of African languages.

Personal domain

The personal effects of leading the Masivule movement were profoundly negative. All of us, without exception, experienced severe mental health problems, including stress, angst, and panic attacks, because of our involvement in the collective. The constant fear of being subjected to

collective] has been effectively banned from speaking further on the matter of Masivule, and if he does so, may face dismissal. We feel this is in very bad faith [⋯]' (Stellenbosch University, 2022: 3).

disciplinary actions, losing employment, or being unable to continue studies, as well as the various threats we received exacerbated the psychological struggles. In addition, while our experiences were fully understood and supported by the Transformation Office, Equality Unit, Employee Wellness, and external assessors, the faculty, who inserted itself and assumed all power, continuously gaslit our experiences. In each meeting with faculty management, we felt dismissed, doubted, and condescended to. It is therefore not surprising that we were eventually diagnosed with anxiety and depression, experienced acute sleep deprivation, and battled with suicidal ideation, needing to rely on medication to manage our symptoms.

When the dismissal and abandonment of studies became reality, the above mental-health problems only intensified due to the loss of financial stability. Ultimately, some of us had to abandon our partners and loved ones for a long period of time because their visa depended on being employed or studying at Stellenbosch University. These members then had to battle their mental health problems on their own without their family and friends' support. All of this profoundly bruised our confidence in research and study capacity and our value as scholars. It made us feel like less than our peers as we perceived ourselves as failures in our academic careers. These experiences also eroded our self-esteem, making us feel unworthy as persons. We saw ourselves as losers, pariahs, and 'human trash' – as one of us phrased it. This eventually impacted our physical health, manifesting in persistent tiredness, severe weight changes, illnesses due to nutrition problems, and sleep deprivation, as well as substance and/or medication (ab)use.

At first, it seems almost impossible to identify any significant positive personal effects that could be attributed to our participation in Masivule. While all of us managed to partially heal (the visible manifestation of this is the fact that most of us no longer necessitate chronic mental health medication), episodes of depression, anxiety, and sleeplessness persist. Even now, writing about our experiences has caused us to relive our trauma in excruciating detail. Some of us are still unable to revisit, much less process and deal with their experiences, or even conceive of visiting Stellenbosch – the place of our oppression. We cannot say we have become stronger mentally, psychologically, or emotionally. We survived, but has this survival made us stronger? To the contrary, we feel much more fragile and vulnerable than before Masivule.

Nevertheless, even in the personal domain, our fight has not been futile. The effects of embracing reflexivity as our daily praxis, centring self-reflection and self-care, have been largely positive and have enriched our lives. Reflexivity has also allowed us to explore auto-ethnography as a research method(ology) and adopt more personal, intimate, and multimodal styles of writing – including creative prose, poetry, and artistic images. We certainly feel richer as people, although half-broken. We have found a sense of purpose which is more aligned with our values. We are committed to social justice, decoloniality, and resistance against all oppression types – a commitment that we enact through our lives. But the price of this *integrity* has been far too high. Only us and our loved ones know how close to death we were. No one should have such experiences. No one.

Relational domain

Many of the personal effects listed above are intertwined with the relational domain – the effects of which have also contributed to our struggles with mental health. One such effect was isolation or separation from peers and colleagues, particularly during the time of protest. This isolation was manifested clearly through overt ostracisation, whereby Masivule members were ignored or excluded from the in-group culture of the space by not being invited to social gatherings, being avoided in passages and, very pervasively, not even being greeted. Supervisors and mentors became unavailable to their mentees, with many emails and personal messages being ignored for months on end, if they were answered at all. Information which had previously been disclosed in confidence to these same supervisors and mentors became office gossip, which further served to ostracise.

While seemingly small and barely significant, such micro-aggressions led to despair and hopelessness, which were exacerbated by academic bullying and harassment. We were shouted or laughed at in meetings; offensive messages were written on the doors to our offices; and we received verbal threats such as 'the gloves are off'.[10] When these behavioural patterns were raised as concerns to faculty management, members were gaslit into believing that the isolation and bullying we felt was our own unjustified perception rather than a harsh reality, making us feel even more unsupported and othered. In addition to the relational difficulties in the workspace, our involvement in Masivule also affected our relationships in home and family life, even with our children. As we brought our problems home and could not hide them from our loved ones, our partnerships became strained and family members, especially partners and spouses, experienced their own secondary traumas. They were subsequently confronted with symptoms of depression and anxiety, which also resulted in a requirement for medications.

Despite these negative effects, there were several positive relational outcomes as well. Most significantly, our collective provided a platform where our voices were heard and we could connect to one another, making us feel less isolated and ostracised. Furthermore, we have been able to connect with activists and scholars outside of Masivule who are dedicated to decoloniality, social justice, and radical/critical pedagogy. Interacting with other transformative grassroots movements – such as the Academic Parity Movement – has fostered a sense of solidarity within our experiences. We have also received several emails from around the world showing support for our cause and understanding of what we went through, further reducing our sense of aloneness.[11]

---

[10] The Transformation Office identified this behavior as bullying and demanded reaction against it. The report that the Transformation Office helped prepare concluded: 'We [...] support [the complainant's (i.e., one of us)] claims that he is being unfairly targeted' (Stellenbosch University, 2022: 3).

[11] In one such email, the author states that they were 'very impressed with [our] research' and that our work 'was both excellent and very courageous' (an email from 5 February 2023). In another communication from 6 April 2022, a person devoted to transforming university spaces reiterated that we were not alone; on the contrary, there were many people who could see the need for and value of a project such as Masivule and who supported us. That person encouraged us to continue to do our work even though we would certainly

References made to our articles have demonstrated that our work was not futile.[12] Overall, we comprehended that we were becoming a reference point – however minute – to others. They could recognise themselves in our struggle and we saw our struggle was real and productive. By centring activism within marginalised and oppressed peoples, we have committed to impacting change. We could relate to other movements by both benefiting from and contributing to them.

Against all odds, now in 2025, Masivule – both as an intellectual project and a support network – continues to exist. We still meet in person and online, do research, write and publish, and help, advise, and hold space for each other. Above all, we have cultivated the most beautiful friendships.

Discussion and Conclusion

The experiences recounted above demonstrate that architects and leaders of decolonial movements at tertiary education institutions are profoundly impacted by their transformatory activities. On the one hand, contesting the (post-/epi-)colonial powers at universities triggers canonical types of violence: structural, epistemic, personal, and relational (Kessi, et al., 2020). Such negative effects are significant and, from the initial stages of the protest, brutally disrupt the lives of the people engaged in the decolonisation of the spaces in which they have (sub-) existed. While in structural, epistemic, and relational domains, this harmful influence gradually dwindles, personal ramifications stretch far into the leaders' lives. The most damaging and long-lasting negative implications concern mental health, leaving behind scars on peoples' minds (and bodies) which may never fully heal. On the other hand, leading a decolonial movement also results in generative outcomes (again, structural, epistemic, personal, and relational) – the range and impact of which intensify gradually. Within these, only epistemic and relational effects are visible immediately (of course, coexisting with negative counterparts). Later, once ejected from the oppressive institution and welcomed by new academic homes and communities, members of a decolonial movement seem to enjoy an increasingly wider range of such positive epistemic and relational consequences, and, in addition to these, positive structural outcomes too. Positive effects in a personal domain are the least patent, being largely eclipsed by their negative counterparts. While colonial violence may never be eradicated in the personal domain and a complete healing remains unattainable, the decolonial struggle is not futile even here. On the contrary, it transforms protesters into people of integrity: hurting but beautiful. Driven by decolonial love, protesters cultivate a mutual respect and acknowledgement of the humanity extant in one another. As such, one can therefore conclude that, in most domains, colonial

---

be met with resistance; this would happen because other people did not want to lose their status and power.

[12] See, for instance, Mieke Struwig (2024) who compares her experiences of shunning of critique at music departments to our case. She writes that 'the situation documented by Andrason (202[2]) is an eminent example of this [silencing]' and adds that 'institutional retaliation to [···] critique can lead to trauma for those involved, as described by Wulfekühler and Andrason (202[3: 852])' (Struwig, 2024: 431-432).

violence is eventually overcome, positive effects replace negative ones, and people can flourish structurally, epistemically, relationally and, to some extent, personally.

The above conclusions should not be interpreted in an excessively optimistic light or an encouraging manner. The positive outcomes – when these occurred – can only be attributed to persistent, and often extremely painful, battles that *we* (and our loved ones) have fought for weeks, months, and now years. It is only through our own relentless dedication and continuous work – always accompanied by suffering, tears, and moments of despair – that we have managed to reach the point where we are now. It is not our oppressors' doing; nor those by whom this oppression was enabled.

The conclusions of our study corroborate the duality of activists' experiences – negative and positive – reported in South Africa (Abba Omar and Basson, 2022; Hotz, 2015; Kunene, 2018; Luescher, et al., 2020; Morwe, 2020) and other countries (Buheji, 2024; Gusfield, 1971; Rossouw, 2020; Strong, 2013). Our results are also congruent with the types of effects experienced by leaders of decolonial movements, as described in scholarly literature. The only exception in our case is the absence of direct physical violence and the evasion of criminal trials or prison. Furthermore, similar to the consequences discussed in scholarship, the effects we have experienced range from immediate to long-lasting and potentially permanent.

Overall, we think that the most powerful ways to deal with any and all traumatic experiences and render them generative is to embrace decoloniality – tautologically, the *raison d'être* of any decolonial movement – not only as a method of transforming a particular department, university, or field, but as a philosophy governing one's professional career and life.

To achieve this, at least in our case, the understanding of and commitment to intersectionality have been crucial (Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1989; 1991; King, 1988). As explained above, we have become a type of reference point, however minute and ephemeral, to individuals and small collectives who fight (similar, yet also different, oppressions) in silence and feel alone. And, inversely, we have learned from the myriad injustices and harassments they've suffered. As a result, our movement has ceased being about the oppressive space from where it emerged, and instead centred oppression in all its shapes and forms. In agreement with intersectionality theory, we treat all oppressions – whether related to race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, class, socioeconomics, or ability – as deeply interconnected (Bauer, et al. 2021; Carastathis, 2016; Duran and Jones, 2020; Hancock, 2016; Yuval-Davis 2015). Therefore, like many other intersectional scholars, we believe that we will never be entirely free until all of us are free and all oppressions are eradicated. Judging from the responses that we have received thus far; we have already been able to equip some people's fists with the glove of our experiences in their own decolonial fights, whatever oppression they are fighting against.

Additionally, our study demonstrates the usefulness of Kessi, et al.'s (2020) decolonial framework in distinguishing four types of (post-/epi-)colonial violence and the decolonial responses to it. As these authors correctly note, the four domains are intrinsically connected. Notably, the structural domain is intertwined with the epistemic one and the personal domain with the relational one (Kessi, et al., 2020). We think that similar interrelations connect all domains.

For instance, structural violence enables and empowers personal and relational violence. This implies that the overall negative weight of leading decolonial movements at universities may be difficult to overcome because personal trauma may continue to affect structural, epistemic, and relational domains long after a person has left the oppressive space. However, the same interconnectivity and the increasingly positive outcome of the structural, epistemic, and relational domains may conversely stimulate the growth of an individual activist and help to mitigate highly damaging and long-lasting negative personal consequences. We will discover the outcome of all such interconnectivities and ultimately see whether these are positive, negative, or neutral on our own bodies in the futures that lie ahead of us.

Lastly, the findings of our study and our own activism lead us, inevitably, to two final reflections. First, individual people and small collectives who advance decolonial ideals, often work and suffer without acknowledgment. While large movements, such as #FeesMustFall, and #OpenStellenbosch, gain recognition to the point of being (rightfully so) celebrated and commemorated, other actors who further decolonial agendas remain unnoticed, fading namelessly out of (institutional and social) memory. They are, however, no less relevant and necessary for transformation than their 'famous' counterparts, as it is their everyday organic work that prepares the soil for subsequent changes. Second, it seems to us that universities pay attention to large movements, whereas small collectives and single individuals who uphold the same transformative principles tend to be ignored and even destroyed. This makes us think that university management (from the upper to middle echelons of the hierarchical ladder) is seldom sincere with their commitment to change. In most cases, management will accept change only when they have no other choice, rather than because they believe in it. For instance, when the crowd is too numerous, and the clamour caused (whether in the streets or media) is too disruptive to be silenced.

Author biographies

Cliff Sekowe is a South African theologian and pastor researching the intersections of theology, economics, and labor through the lenses of race, class and gender. His work analyses how systemic inequalities manifest in labor spaces, advocating for transformative justice. Leading Pholoso Ministries, he bridges faith and activism, empowering communities to challenge oppression through radical solidarity and collective liberation.

Michael Okyere Asante is an Assistant Lecturer at the University of Environment and Sustainable Development, Somanya, and a PhD candidate in Ancient Philosophy at the University of Cambridge. His research interests are Greek and African political thought and the decolonisation, presence and history of Classics in Africa.

Jessica van den Brink is a PhD candidate in Ancient Culture Studies at the University of Pretoria. Her research interests include gender spectrums in antiquity and transcultural interactions across

the Aegean, as a means of understanding social and cultural phenomena affecting the modern world.

Alexander Andrason is a Researcher in the Center for African Studies at the University of Cape Town. He holds a PhD in Semitic Languages (University Complutense in Madrid), a PhD in African Languages (Stellenbosch University), and a PhD in General Linguistics (University of Iceland). The scope of his research includes *inter alia* linguistics, pedagogy, philosophy, and LGBTQIA+ studies. He speaks some thirty living languages and has an extensive knowledge of various ancient and/or classical languages.

References

Abba Omar, R. & Basson, G. 2022. '(Un)remembering intergenerational youth struggles at Stellenbosch University'. *Mail & Guardian*, 15 June 2022. Online at: https://mg.co.za/education/2022-06-15-opinion-unremembering-intergenerational-youth-struggles-at-stellenbosch-university/ (accessed: 15 July 2024).

Andrason, A. 2022. 'An organizational "mini" monster: An anarchist critique of the hyper hierarchization of a small department at a South African university'. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*, 28(3), 31–65.

Andrason, A. 2025. 'Language repertoire as radical queer love: A boy's journey'. *Boyhood Studies*, 18(1), 67–97.

Andrason, A. [forthcoming]. 'African languages as the locus of enunciation: Decolonizing colonial-language courses through language'. *AlterNation*, 42, 1–15.

Andrason, A. & Van den Brink, J. 2023. 'Publishing (mal)practices and their (re)colonising effects: Double affiliations in academic publishing'. *Journal of Education*, 91, 70–93.

Andrason, A., Lange, H. & Gysman, V. 2023. 'Doing—reflecting—comprehending, or: how we found resonance with anarchist pedagogy'. *Anarchist Studies*, 23(1), 82–109.

Asante, M. K. 2020. 'Afrocentricity'. In Rabaka, R. (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Pan-Africanism*. London: Routledge, 147–158.

Bauer, G., Churchill, S., Mahendran, M., Walwyn, C., Lizottea, D. & Villa-Rueda, A. 2021. 'Intersectionality in quantitative research: A systematic review of its emergence and applications of theory and methods'. *SSM – Population Health*, 14(100798).

Buheji, M. 2024. 'Institutional pressures and administrative pushback in student activism'. *Journal of Social Movements*, 12(3), 45–89.

Carastathis, A. 2016. *Intersectionality: Origins, Contestations, Horizons*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Cho, S., Crenshaw, K. & McCall, L. 2013. 'Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis'. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 38: 785–810.

Collins, P. H. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment.* New York: Routledge.

Crenshaw, K. 1989. 'Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics'. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 8(1): 139–167.

Crenshaw, K. 1991. 'Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color'. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6): 1241–1299.

Duran, A. & Jones, S. 2020. 'Intersectionality'. In Casey, Z. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Critical Whiteness Studies in Education*. Leiden: Brill, 310–320.

Ellis, C. 2008. 'Autoethnography'. In Given, L. (ed.) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 48–51.

Equality Unit. n.d. 'Equality Unit'. Online at: https://www.sun.ac.za/english/learning-teaching/student-affairs/cscd/equality-unit/equality-unit (accessed 17 June 2025).

Eskell-Blokland, L. 2019. 'Are universities pathologising student issues?', *Mail & Guardian*, 11 October. Online at: https://mg.co.za/article/2019-10-11-00-are-universities-pathologising-student-issues/ (accessed: 15 July 2024).

Fanon, F. 1963. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press.

Fanon, F. 1967. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Grove Press.

Feleppa, R. 1986. 'Emics, etics and social objectivity'. *Current Anthropology*, 27(3): 243–255.

Fleming, N. 2022a. 'Bullied abroad: How foreign researchers can fight back'. *Nature*, 609: 425–427.

Fleming, N. 2022b. 'Underpaid and overworked: Researchers abroad fall prey to bullying'. *Nature*, 608: 437–439.

Francis, D. 2021. '"A gay agenda": Troubling compulsory heterosexuality in a South African university classroom'. *Teaching Sociology*, 49: 278–290.

Graziano, K. J. 2004. 'Oppression and resiliency in a post-Apartheid South Africa: Unheard voices of Black gay men and lesbians'. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 10: 302–316.

Grosfoguel, R. 2011. 'Decolonizing post-colonial studies and paradigms of political-economy: Transmodernity, decolonial thinking, and global coloniality'. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 1(1): 1–38.

Grosfoguel, R. 2013. 'The structure of knowledge in Westernized universities: Epistemic racism/sexism and the four genocides/epistemicides of the long 16th century'. *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, 11(1): 73–90.

Gusfield, J. R. 1971. 'Student protest and university response'. *The Annals of the American Academy of political and Social Science*, 395(1): 26–38.

Haffejee, I. 2015. 'Student leader Shaeera Kalla shot multiple times'. *Rhodes University News*, 15 October. Online at: https://www.ru.ac.za/equityandinstitutionalculture/latestnews/archives2015/studentleadershaeerakallashotmultipletimes.html (accessed: 15 July 2024).

Hancock, A-M. 2016. *Intersectionality: An Intellectual History*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Headland, T. N., Pike, K. L. & Harris, M. (eds.) 1990. *Emics and Etics: The Insider/Outsider Debate*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Hotz, A. 2015. 'Decolonisation essential for equality and justice'. *University of Cape Town News*, 5 January. Online at: https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2015-01-05-decolonisation-essential-for-equality-and-justice (accessed: 15 July 2024).

Holman-Jones, S. 2005. 'Autoethnography'. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Amsterdam: Sage, 763–790.

Kessi, S., Marks, Z. & Ramugondo, E. 2020. 'Decolonizing African Studies'. *Critical African Studies*, 12(3): 271–282.

Khampepe, S. 2022. *Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Racism at Stellenbosch University: Final Report*. Online at https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Documents/2022/Commission-of-Inquiry-into-Allegations-of-Racism-at-Stellenbosch-University-Report.pdf (accessed: 15 July 2024).

King, D. K. 1988. 'Multiple jeopardy, multiple consciousness: The context of a black feminist ideology'. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 14(1): 42–72.

Kunene, A. 2018. 'A Stellenbosch University #FeesMustFall herstory: Reflections of a so-called "Radical Black Intersectional Feminist"'. *Politeia*, 37(2): 1–14.

Lesch, E., Brits, S., & Naidoo, N. T. 2017. '"Walking on eggshells to not offend people": Experiences of same-sex student couples at a South African university'. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 31: 127–149.

Luescher, T. M., Webbstock, D. & Bhengu, N. (eds.). 2020. *Reflections of South African Student Leaders, 1994 to 2017*. Cape Town: African Minds.

Maldonado-Torres, N. 2016. 'Outline of ten theses on coloniality and decoloniality'. *Frantz Fanon Foundation and website of the Caribbean Studies Association*, 23 October. Online at: http://fondation-frantzfanon.com/outline-of-ten-theses-on-coloniality-and-decoloniality/ (accessed: 15 July 2024)

Maldonado-Torres, N. 2017. 'The decolonial turn'. In Poblete, J. (ed.) *New Approaches to Latin American Studies: Culture and Power*. New York: Routledge, 111–127.

Maluleka, P. 2021. 'Teaching in the time of crisis: A decolonial take of my experiences of online teaching at a rural university in South Africa'. *African Perspectives of Research in Teaching & Learning*, 5(1): 78–94.

Maluleka, P. 2024. 'Ageism and gatekeeping: My experiences as an early career academic at a historically black university in South Africa'. *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning*, 12(2): 60–81.

Maromo, J. 2016. 'Over 800 #FeesMustFall students arrested'. *IOL*, 28 October. https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/over-800-feesmustfall-students-arrested-2084749

Matlala, L. 2020. 'Fees Must Fall activists hit out at justice system.' *SABC News*, 11 March. https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/fees-must-fall-activists-hit-out-at-justice-system/

Matutu, H. & Andrason, A. 2023. '"When we resist" – A dialogue on decoloniality in practice'. Address in the 'Decolonizing approaches to studying history and linguistic-cultural

heritage' series, Center for Research and Practice in Cultural Continuity, Faculty of Artes Liberales, University of Warsaw, Poland. 1 November 2023. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7607760

Mignolo, W. 2000. *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Morwe, K. 2020. 'The coping strategies of students who witnessed violence during the South African #FeesMustFall Movement'. *International e-Journal of Criminal Sciences*, 15: 1–22.

Mostowlansky, T. & Rota, A. 2020. 'Emic and etic'. In Stein, F., Lazar, S., Candea, M., Diemberger, H., Robbins, J., Sanchez, A. & Stasch, R. (eds.) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press, 1–16.

Nakasa, N. 2005. 'A native of nowhere'. In Essop, P. (ed.) *The World of Nat Nakasa*. Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 189–210.

Ntombana, L., Gwala, A. & Sibanda, F. 2023. 'Positioning the #FeesMustFall movement within the transformative agenda: Reflections on student protests in South Africa'. *Education as Change*, 27: 18.

Okyere Asante, M.K. 2022. 'Classics and the politics of Africanization in Ghana'. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 65(1), 18–31.

Ramugondo, E. 2019. 'Decoloniality of doing: A necessary disobedient praxis for health'. Paper presented at Decolonial Summer Schools, University of Kwazulu-Natal and the University of Cape Town.

Robertson, M. & Pattman, R. 2018. 'Feeling at home or not at home: Negotiating gender, sexuality and race in residence in a historically white university in South Africa'. In Pattman, R. & Carolissen, R. (eds.) *Transforming Transformation in Research and Teaching at South African Universities*. Stellenbosch: African SUN Media, 197–217.

Rossouw, J. 2020. 'The psychological toll of activism: A case study'. *Mental Health and Social Justice Journal*, 8(2): 51–92.

Sekowe, C.M. [forthcoming]. 'Understanding the dynamics of meaning: Cognitive linguistics and Black Liberation preaching'. *Princeton Theological Seminary Preaching Journal*, 1, 1–8.

Stellenbosch University. 2022. *Proposed 3-Step Programme Outline: Ancient Studies Institutional Culture Change*. Co-ordinated by Transformation Office, Capacity Development, Employment Equity and the Promotion of Diversity (Human Resources), Equality Unit, and Employee Wellness (Human Resources). Stellenbosch University.

Sobuwa, Y. 2018. 'What happened to the 'Fees Must Fall' movement leaders?'. *SowetanLIVE*, 28 February. https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-02-28-what-happened-to-the-fees-must-fall-movement-leaders/

Sobuwa, Y. 2020. 'The struggle goes on for Khanya Cekeshe'. *SowetanLIVE*, 17 February. https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/south-africa/2020-02-17-the-struggle-goes-on-for-khanya-cekeshe/

Strong, W. 2013. 'Repression of student activism on college campuses'. In Nocella, A. J. & Gabbard, D. (eds.) *Policing the Campus: Academic Repression, Surveillance, and the Occupy Movement*. Lausanne: Peter Lang, 14–27.

Struwig, M. 2024. 'Writing against the chain transmission of fear: Reflections on institutionalised ethics'. *Qualitative Research*, 25(2), 417–435.

Transformation Office. n.d. 'About'. Online at: https://www.sun.ac.za/english/transformation/about (accessed: 17 June 2025).

Transformation Office. 2022. Meeting with Masivule Collective, Deanery, and Departmental Chair. 7 April 2022.

Uys, T. 2022. *Whistleblowing and the Sociological Imagination*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Van den Brink, J. & Andrason, A. 2024. 'Article-processing fees and subsidies: The colonial entanglement of knowledge production in South Africa'. *Social and Health Sciences*, 22(1), 1–19.

Van Schoor, D., Ackah, K. & Okyere Asante, M. K. 2022. 'Liberation philology: Decolonising Classics in Africa: A native view from the South'. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 65(1), 1–17.

Warren, L., Van den Brink, J., Sekowe, C., Ribeiro, L., Okyere Asante, M. K. & Andrason, A. 2022. *Masivule I-Antieke Studies: From Trauma to Change*.https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7499208

Wulfekühler, H. & Andrason, A. 2023. 'We don't need another hero! Whistleblowing as an ethical organizational practice in higher education'. *Education Philosophy and Theory*, 55(7), 844–854.

Yuval-Davis, N. 2015. 'Situated intersectionality and social inequality'. *Raisons politiques*, 58: 91–100.