

# Embodied Pedagogies: Performative Activism and Transgressive Pedagogies in the Sexual and Gender Justice Project in Higher Education in Contemporary South Africa

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## Introduction

The last few years in South African higher education has been characterised by student protests as referred to and explored by a number of chapters in this volume. While students' challenges to continued exclusionary practices and injustices in the university and its curriculum are by no means new in the country's history, such activism has reinvigorated these efforts and captured the imagination of many beyond the 'ivory tower'. In this chapter, I examine how certain moments, actions and events that have been directed at gender and sexual justice dialogue with critical posthumanist and new feminist materialist thinking, both with respect to decolonising the curriculum and also in relation to larger struggles against intersectional gender injustice and the violence that accompanies this. In this chapter I focus on a number of current examples of embodied gender and sexual justice activism to think about how we might engage materiality in disrupting the colonial and patriarchal heritages of inequality and exclusion in higher education. The chapter argues the importance of acknowledging such moments as forms of posthumanist activism in that they bring to consciousness the binarisms inherent in a humanist academy. I also suggest the value of recognising and bolstering such disruptive moments and events through inviting creativity and performativity into the classroom.

While South African universities have been engaged in a long project of 'transformation' in higher education, the last two years has witnessed an intensification of calls by students, staff and workers to 'decolonise' South African

higher education. Such moves are encapsulated in #Rhodesmustfall, #feesmustfall and #fallism and other related activisms, and have shifted higher education into a renewed urgency to re-think such efforts (Mbembe 2015a; 2015b; Badat 2016; Jacobs 2016). Students' activism has in particular foregrounded the significance of the material and symbolic realm and how the geographies, spaces and territorial contexts of higher education, evident in architectures, classrooms and curriculums, are implicated in discomfoting, unsafe and marginalising experiences for many.

Higher education in South Africa remains characterised by multiple forms of discursive, social and material difference and inequalities, which shape exclusionary and unequal practices both inside and outside the academy (for example, Badat 2010; Badat and Sayed, 2014; Bozalek and Boughey 2012; Department of Education 2008; Jaggesar and Msibi 2015; Msibi 2013). In the South African context of higher education, exclusionary practices have also been powerfully entangled with raced and classed inequalities which shape certain erasures, often directly excluding certain peoples and bodies from a sense of belonging and safety in higher educational contexts (see for example, Bhana 2014; Bradbury and Kiguwa 2012; Clowes, et al., in press; Ngabaza, et al. 2014; Shefer, Strebel, Ngabaza and Clowes 2017; Vincent 2008).

South African higher education has had a long engagement in challenging inequality and injustices in the academy. A proliferation of efforts over the last few decades have been directed at ensuring historically excluded students' access to university both materially and intellectually (see Morrow 2009; Muller 2014 for notion of epistemological access), and social justice pedagogical projects (for example Bozalek and Carolissen 2013; Bozalek et al. 2010; Leibowitz et al. 2012; Gachago et al. 2013; 2014). Yet, student protests across the country flag the lack of progress as well as the complexity of the project of social justice in higher education and South African society more generally.

Notwithstanding the emphasis on change and justice in higher education in South Africa, much of these efforts have been driven by an inadvertent humanist and western endeavour which focuses on promoting individual scholars within the normative orthodoxies of the (post)colonial academy. There has been little acknowledgement that scholarship in South Africa (and globally) is characterised by centuries of a humanist project pivoting about a Cartesian dualism, privileging consciousness, cognition and rationality, and 'marked by disembodiment, egocentricity and ocularcentricity' (Jung 1996, p. 3). New feminist materialism's critique of the humanist project of control over other species and the planet,<sup>1</sup> has contributed to a deeper understanding of how these histories and presents shape

hegemonic practices of scholarship, exaggerated by contemporary neoliberal imperatives and the commodification of education.

Dominant forms of knowledge production, notwithstanding decades of critique such as foundational Foucauldian analysis of governmentality and bio-power, continue to privilege the pursuit of 'neutral', scientific knowledge towards the reproduction of rational, disciplined subjects and knowledge that predominantly serves ruling social interests. The materiality of everyday embodied life, including the bodily, material and affective experiences of those who participate in academic life as teachers or learners, have been largely excluded from such endeavours, predominantly finding their place as 'objects' of research and regulation. Decades of feminist scholarship, built upon and taken forward in current theoretical work within the frameworks of posthumanism and new feminist materialism, have foregrounded the exclusion and marginalisation of the body and women's knowledges, evident at multiple levels in spaces of higher education. Indeed, on the basis of being 'embodied others', those 'who are not allowed *not* to have a body', those embodied in female, Black and other subjugated bodies have endured centuries of exclusionary practices, constructed as 'inevitably disqualifying and polluting bias in any discussion of consequence' (Haraway 1988, p. 575).

The exclusion of the body and the erasure of embodiment within the cartesian binarism of mind/body, is arguably poignantly implicated in students' educational journeys at universities. Thus, while much emphasis in social justice education is placed on entry, representation and the curriculum, little attention has been placed on the materiality of everyday life on campus and in classrooms, and how such materialities matter and are implicated in multiple forms of exclusion. Yet bodies continue to intrude, transgressing the erasures of body and affect and disturbing normativities and power inequalities that are interwoven into the shape and form of universities in South Africa as they are elsewhere.

In this chapter, responding to the call to rethink 'the fundamental concepts that support such binary thinking' and to recognise 'the agential possibilities and responsibilities for reconfiguring the material-social relations of the world' (Barad 2007, p. 35), I explore a number of activist and performative events that have been a part of the contemporary student decolonisation movement in South Africa to think about the disruption and disturbance of 'business as usual' in the patriarchal, colonial and neoliberal project of the academy. Three inspiring occasions of performative activism of feminist and queer activists are shared here as providing powerful pedagogical interventions through the deployment of particular bodies in particular spaces. I argue the importance of acknowledging

and intra-acting (Barad, 2007) with such 'disturbances' within a critical posthumanist social justice pedagogical project.

### Young women disrupting the colonial project of higher education: the ascendancy of African femininity in the case of the fall of Rhodes

Since the start of current student protests in South African higher education in early 2015, young Black women have been particularly active in leading sexual and gender justice struggles in the decolonial movement (Gouws 2016, 2017). While feminist discourse has notably been historically rejected as a white, middle class and colonial import in South Africa (Dosekun 2007; Gouws 2016; Shefer, Potgieter and Strelbel 1999), a clear feminist and queer agenda was evident in student activism calls for intersectionality in the decolonial agenda, as will be elaborated in the cases studies that follow.

On 9 April 2015, a statue of Cecil John Rhodes, the most infamous colonial figure in South Africa was removed from its prominent place on the campus of the University of Cape Town (UCT) after some weeks of protest calling for its removal from the university. While the physical removal of the statue was taking place, a well photographed installation by Sethembile Msezane, a Masters graduate at UCT's fine art school was performed in parallel.<sup>2</sup> Msezane stood on a plinth near the Rhodes statue for the entire time, a few hours, that the statue was being removed. She was dressed as a Zimbabwe bird, representing soapstone statues that were removed from the ruins of Great Zimbabwe during the colonial period and that were sold to powerful settler men like Rhodes (see Huffman 1985; Hubbard 2009). Rhodes purchased one of these art works, ironically known as the 'Cecil Rhodes' Bird', and the piece is still housed in his former home in Groote Schuur estate in Cape Town (Hubbard 1990). Msezane's performative activism is a powerful material-discursive disruptive moment in reminding the viewers of the multiple layers of colonial theft and violences. Further, the installation gestures to a disruption of the imperialist, humanist civilising project that drove (still drives) the pursuit of dominant academic knowledge. In this decolonial moment of the ascendancy of African femininity, of the taking flight at the very moment that the statue of the male, northern settler topples down, there is not only a symbolic reclaiming of that which was stolen, but also a disruption of colonial and patriarchal power in the academy and elsewhere.

The entanglement of patriarchy with colonisation, long theorised by postcolonial feminists is powerfully represented here. As Rosemarie Buikema (2017 p. 147)<sup>3</sup> argues, Msezane's performance 'thus inserts both academy and art into an activist performance, creating an image which forever links the de-colonisation movement's critique of imperialism and patriarchy in an innovative and thought-provoking way'. Msezane (2017) herself is very clear that her artwork is about addressing intersectional inequalities and redressing erasures and marginalisations that are the legacy of apartheid, colonisation and patriarchy. As she articulates this in her artist statement at her recent exhibition:

Having been confronted with monuments erected to celebrate British colonialism and Afrikaner nationalism, I revisit contested sites of memory in my performances and choose African women as re-imagined protagonists . . . For this reason, performance has been key, in my practice to re-locating the presence of the black female body . . . Collectively these works narrate resistance and self-assertion in response to dominant ideologies in the public space.

Msezane 2017, n.p

Deploying the imagery of a stolen artwork that represents an animal<sup>4</sup> is perhaps significant not only for 'correcting' the colonial plunder, but also in that the installation speaks to an entanglement of 'subalternity' (Spivak 1988) – colonised 'subjects', femininity, non-human beings (the Great Zimbabwe Bird) and the non-sentient being (a statue). The entanglement is subjugated within a humanist, 'civilising project' with universities like the University of Cape Town, at the helm of the associated intellectual endeavour. Strategically intra-acting with the moment at which the statue of a white northern patriarchal colonialist was removed, Msezane draws attention to intersectional inequalities and abuses of the past. She performs the ascendance of an African woman in the form of a Zimbabwe bird stolen from Great Zimbabwe, historically a place of power and strength. Not only is a symbolic challenge to patriarchal (post)colonisation and the university as vehicle articulated, but so too is a symbolic disruption of the civilising and violent humanist scholarly project achieved.

### Troubling the erasure of bodies

Queer activism and an emphasis on LGBTIQ+ struggles have undoubtedly been an integral part of student activism over the last few years. While clearly not uncontested, the argument that sexual and gender justice and intersectionality in

general is entangled in the decolonial struggle has been powerfully articulated within the larger framework of student protests (Gouws 2017). Key in taking forward sexual and gender justice concerns has been a strident voice from queer and feminist activists, notably a group located primarily at UCT, the Trans Collective (#transfeministcollective),<sup>5</sup> who have taken up the exclusion of non-normative sexualities and genders and placed these struggles firmly on the decolonial agenda:

An intersectional approach to our blackness takes into account that we are not only defined by our blackness, but that some of us are also defined by our gender, our sexuality, our able-bodiedness, our mental health, and our class, among other things. We all have certain oppressions and certain privileges and this must inform our organising so that we do not silence groups among us, and so that no one should have to choose between their struggles. Our movement endeavours to make this a reality in our struggle for decolonisation. (<https://www.facebook.com/transfeministcollective/posts/113220963351248>, accessed 18 June 2016).

The centrality of embodiment, both in narrative discourse and in the forms of activism taken up, has been key to this group's activism, arguably serving to trouble the continued erasure of bodies, and particularly those of marginalised groups, in the academy.

In March 2016, the Trans Collective presented a powerful embodied intervention when they disrupted a photo exhibition held at UCT to commemorate a year of student activism. Protesting in partial undress, yet painted with narratives in red paint, this group of activists also painted slogans in matching red paint<sup>6</sup> over some of the exhibited photographs to flag what they experienced as an erasure of their contributions to the larger student movement and a lack of serious commitment to an intersectional struggle. Protesters further lay in front of the entrance to the exhibition as a performative illustration of their sense of being both marginalised in the movement and yet exploited for strategic political purposes, arguing that: 'It is disingenuous to include trans people in a public gallery when you have made no effort to include them in the private. ... We have reached the peak of our disillusionment with RMF's trans exclusion and erasure.' (Wagner, 2016).

This powerful moment of articulating a sense of dispensibility and subjugation, succeeded in facilitating extreme discomfort, since all who attended would have to figuratively 'walk over them' to enter, and therefore unavoidably acknowledge their impassioned call and embodied presence. Important to this performative activism was the use of semi-clothed and non-conforming bodies inserted into

a space of higher education still located in an intellectual project in which bodies are invisible. The Trans Collective, in this moment of inserting their bodies that resist regulatory and normative dress and gender, and in a manner and place (laid at entry to the venue) that cannot be ignored, into an event and space 'sanitised' by scholarly association, are multiply transgressive. The deployment of a semi-clothed body in this context, made vulnerable at multiple levels (such as the lack of material and symbolic protection in the form of clothes; positioned in a prostrate position, vulnerable to being stood on; exposure of bodies that are 'othered' in gender and raced binaried hegemonies), represents a powerful subversion of the heteronormative, patriarchal, colonialist and humanist project of the university and the larger social world. Further, the performativity of lying down at the door to the exhibition, so that all who enter are forced to step over their bodies symbolises, in graphic terms, the sense of 'being walked over', of being both brutalised and invisibilised, not only in terms of the exhibition itself but within a larger hetero-patriarchal society in which non-normative desires, bodies and practices remain 'othered' and subject to symbolic and physical violence.

### Unruly bodies against sexual violence

A final set of activism to consider here is a strong current of protests against sexual violence, which signify a powerful intersectional understanding of sexual violence as embedded in histories and continuities of patriarchal colonisation (Gouws 2016, 2017). Over the last few years there have been several protests across the country at universities that challenge high rates of violence, viewed as endemic in South African societies (Gqola, 2015), and also shown to be a major challenge at universities with high rates of gender-based violence and women's lives regulated by fear of sexual violence (for example, Bennett et al. 2007; Collins 2014; Hames 2009; Dosekun 2013).

One key example within the student protests has been a wave of activism at various universities against sexual violence. In April 2016, Rhodes University students protested, formed human chains, and marched in the streets of the small city around the University (see Macleod and Barker, 2016, for a more detailed overview). Students called on university management to revisit policies that they argued fail to protect rape victims. This followed the presentation of a list of alleged rapists, 'the RU reference list' to university authorities who had failed to respond in any meaningful way but rather drew on legal discourse to

protect the accused. A majority of Black women<sup>7</sup> students led the protests, again foregrounding their embodiment and deploying partial nakedness through exposing their breasts and writing texts such as ‘revolt’, ‘still not asking for it’, calling into question the shame of the victim, victim-blaming and sexist rape myths that are widespread in South African popular contexts (Shewarega Hussen, in press). As Gouws (2016, 2017) points out, these struggles were important in bringing an intersectional project to sexual violence activism, in flagging the coloniality and racism of sexual violence. The narratives employed in the protests also extended, as did the actions of the trans collective, an intersectional vocabulary to the larger decolonial movement in higher education and further afield:

The actions of women students in the #endrapeculture campaign, on a symbolic level, articulate how the intersectionality of race, gender and sexuality positions black African women as sexual subjects in relation to men but also in relation to white women and white men – something that an intersectional African feminist identity expresses.

Gouws 2016, n.p.

Naked protest, while of course not uncontested, has a long history internationally and locally (see for example, Meintjes 2007), and across contexts and histories, ‘strategically employed as a mode of social and political action’ (Lunceford 2012, p. ix) and with ‘embodied performance as a critique of the social system we live in (Sutton 2007, p. 141). As with the protests of the Trans Collective, these activists, deployed the semi-naked body strategically, articulating both vulnerability and agency and ‘claiming space’ in the university and the larger city space to destabilise higher education’s binaristic attempts to keep its intellectual project apart from embodied and material experience. It is a powerful reminder that what happens on university campuses is also about what happens to bodies, not only intellectual pursuit. Moreover, the use of the uncovered body, asserted with pride, strength and agency, gestures to the ways in which naked bodies have been part of historical subjugations and violences, implicated in slavery, genocides, sexual violence and everyday humiliations, and by implication the way in which these are bound up with the kinds of authority and power invested in the university. In addition, within the university displaying undressed bodies, in particular bodies that historically ‘don’t belong’ (Black, female, transgender) disturbs and disrupts the sanitised logic of an academy founded on a mind-body divide which excludes body and affect/other logics/sensibilities.

## Thinking performative activism with social justice pedagogical imperatives

What do these powerful forms of performative activism that speak to intersectional gender and sexual justice mean for higher education and critical social justice pedagogies? Bozalek and Zembylas (2016 p. 195), representing a growing scholarship engaging with reading pedagogical practice through critical posthumanism and new feminist materialism, make a passionate call for this project:

Currently in higher education where gross inequalities continue to affect pedagogical practices in South Africa and other geopolitical contexts, there is a need to consider new theories which call into question commonplace humanist assumptions, so prevalent in the imaginings of socially just higher education pedagogies.

Bozalek and Zembylas 2016, p. 195

In sharing these three examples, I have tried to surface the way in which these forms of inspiring performative activism resonate with posthumanist, new materialist, and affective thinking that question the ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies normative to the academy and that emerge from and serve to reinstate histories and presents of power and violence against 'other' humans, non-humans and the planet. The resonance is perhaps most powerfully evident in the way in which bodies and materiality are made visible in these powerful moments of challenge. In particular, a posthumanist, feminist materialist reading allows for appreciation of how such moments of political transgression speak not only to racial, gender and sexual binarisms on which violences are founded, but also to the enmeshments of such binarisms with the humanist project of control over nature in which all subjugated, peoples, non-human species and what is constructed as non-living are othered, excluded and violable.

Student protests have raised issues that remind South Africa of a lack of progress as well as flagging some key challenges for higher education that speak powerfully to new directions for pedagogical and scholarly energies. To elaborate, first, is the reminder that the entire project of higher education, as evident in global Southern contexts, is one conceived and developed as a colonialist project that has a history of authority, surveillance and regulation in ensuring hegemonic practices of privilege and power in larger social contexts. Arguably, the forms and mechanisms of the academy in South Africa, further energised by neoliberal imperatives of internationalisation and competition, remain entangled in this

'civilising' project, bolstering global and local inequalities, albeit paying lip-service to projects of social justice and equality.

Second, student protests prompt acknowledgement that, no matter what vocabulary we adopt, the social justice project in higher education is necessarily decolonial and intersectional and speaks to the entanglement of inequalities and social identities that link with multiple binaries embedded in (post)colonial histories and present, most obviously the contemporary hegemony of hetero-patriarchal, neoliberal capitalism. Third, the academic project here as elsewhere is a humanist project invested in perpetuating the power of particular groups of people, representing particular forms of geopolitical, material and social power, over 'others', the planet and non-human species; indeed, always choosing 'the side of the powerful, the winners, the victors' (Wels 2015, p. 243).

These understandings point to a radical rethink of how we 'do' our everyday scholarship in universities and this is by no means a new project. There is a growing body of work that begins to share some of these valuable and creative ways of pedagogical intra-action and post-qualitative research. Key to this project is to think about how to undo the normative pedagogical and research practices that privilege the 'expert' and 'other' students and research 'subjects' within an authoritative/authoritarian framework, hinging around competition and epistemological (and material/discursive) violence. Such thinking is not novel: bell hooks (1994 p. 7–9), over twenty years ago called for transgressive teaching, arguing that it requires 'movement beyond accepted boundaries' to creativity, enjoyment and excitement, which she unpacks as hinging around destabilising the authority of the teacher and subverting 'an absolute set agenda governing teaching practice'. Further, a large body of scholarship by feminist researchers has questioned the normative privilege of the researcher and the way in which knowledge production is invested in reproducing hegemonic discourses and practices in any particular field. Yet, dominant pedagogical and research practices, for the most part continue to model the binarism of 'expert' and those people, other species and the planet that are the 'subject' of our disciplinary projects.

Importantly, the performative activism shared here are themselves powerful pedagogical interventions in their affective and intellectual impact which disturbs and discomforts, both at a material individual and ideological, symbolic level. As argued by social justice pedagogy scholars, a pedagogy of discomfort and affect is to be embraced rather than avoided for its pedagogical possibilities (for example, Boler and Zembylas 2003; Zembylas 2013a; 2013b). Zembylas (2013c p. 110) argues '... discomforting emotions – which occur as the very result of attempting to address the 'difficult' issues of living with the 'enemy-other' – serve

as the springboard to uncover and undo the mechanisms with which hegemonic values and beliefs about others continue to operate in daily habits, routines, and unconscious feelings'. The effect of the occasions elaborated here on those intra-acting with them is evident at an affective, bodily and cognitive level. Social justice pedagogies, inspired by the critiques of current posthumanist and new materialist thinking, may draw fruitfully on these disruptive moments, moments that challenge the erasure of bodies, affect and materiality in the neoliberal, individualist, civilising project that is hegemonic (and gaining stronger foothold) in higher education in South Africa and globally. Articulating our pedagogy as politics and political actions as pedagogy will also challenge the reified divide between scholarly practices and the public domain and provide space for transgressive knowledges. As argued by Chantelle Gray van Heerden (2016 p. 341) in her thinking through current South African decolonial struggles:

...by interrogating form and content in educational spaces, such as higher education, and joining forces with grassroots movements and students we can, together, minimise such complicity towards effectuating socially just pedagogies. A feminist praxis that combines the contributions made by critical posthumanist/new materialist feminisms and prefigurative anarchist pedagogical practices, I argue, smooths the striated space of the State apparatus through deterritorialisations that set in motion radical and nomadic becomingswoman.

The performative, artistic and activist examples shared here indeed speak to such deterritorialisations that transgress and destabilise hegemonies of the academy, the state and the everyday, allowing for new imaginaries for social justice and ways of making knowledge.

## Conclusion

The university needs what she bears but cannot bear what she brings. And on top of all that, she disappears. She disappears into the underground, the downlow lowdown maroon community of the university, into *the undercommons of enlightenment*, where the work gets done, where the work gets subverted, where the revolution is still black, still strong.

Harney and Moten 2013, p. 26<sup>8</sup>

In this sharing of three different intersecting moments of performative activism, I have attempted to explore the value of 'the material turn'<sup>9</sup> and posthumanist

insight for destabilising the mind-body binarism endemic to and naturalised in higher education. I have argued how these moments and actions disturb the invisibilisation of the bodily, affective and material, both within learning and teaching as well as in material and geographical contexts, and in particular through the implication that certain bodies and their 'excesses' have no place, not only materially but within the academic project itself. Alldred and Fox (2017, p. 16) in a paper similarly reflecting on young people's activism through the deployment of bodies, argue that we should avoid setting up the binarism of power and resistance but rather see both as 'dual fluxes that permeate all assemblages, a shifting balance that is never finally settled'.

They elaborate: Defining a certain affect as an assertion of power or an effort at resistance is less important than assessing the capacities that these affects produce. Rather than presenting certain events as examples of coercive or disciplinary power, and others as instances of resistance, the task of a materialist sociology is to bring its micropolitical concepts and tools to bear upon the daily actions and encounters between people, things and social formations. We can ask of any affect: does it close down capacities or open them up?' These examples of young women transgressing, resisting and disrupting everyday humanist academies and by extension the larger social world, and the powerful affects of discomfort, shame, inspiration, and many other invocations, arguably open up capacities; they broaden critique and understanding and make available alternative imaginaries within and outside of the university.

I have reiterated the argument here that it is opportune, even essential, to drastically rethink our project as those involved in knowledge production and pedagogical practices in the academy. Moreover, I suggest these inspiring performances offer insight into new imaginaries, not only in relation to sexual and gender justice, but also in thinking about different practices and performances of scholarship. Some of what we, as those entangled with the academy, can do is to seek creative, inspiring and productive ways of challenging and making unimaginable hegemonic, often oppressive and violent practices in higher education. Especially significant is the opening up of possibilities for reimagining bodies, affect, materiality in the hallowed halls of a sanitised and civilising academy where so many feel unsafe, excluded, and even violated. This also means being sensitive to and opening up spaces for a pedagogy of relationality that is located in an ethics of care. This requires the foregrounding an ontology of relationality, recognition, interconnectiveness, belonging and safety both materially and symbolically, that values and draws upon embodied and situated knowledges (Haraway 1988).

Arguably, the performances and activism shared here poignantly remind us that bodies and materiality matter. Further, as I have tried to illustrate, such embodied intra-actions also, in Barad's (2015 p. 382) words, in reflecting on Susan Stryker's performative piece 'My words to Victor Frankenstein above the village of Chamounix: Performing transgender rage',<sup>10</sup> allow for 'harnessing energy and power to transform despair and suffering into empowering rage, self-affirmation, theoretical inventiveness, political action, and the energising vitality of materiality in its animating possibilities.' The examples shared here represent such harnessing of energies in the current South African context and further afield, which further emphasise the value of supporting, facilitating and drawing on such occurrences in pedagogical spaces.

Finally, rethinking critical social justice pedagogies in the light of the performative art and activism shared here, and diffracted through posthumanist and new feminist materialist (re)thinking, also means as Haraway (2016, p. 1) reminds us, to *not only* stay with the trouble, but to actively 'make trouble, to stir up potent response to devastating events' while also creating safe spaces 'to settle troubled waters and rebuild quiet places' (Haraway 2016, p. 1). The latter should include spaces such as feminist, social justice pedagogical ones, which draw on creativity, agency and energy to work with entangled 'troubles' and open up new imaginaries. Occasions that 'make trouble' such as the examples of inspiring art, performance and activism shared here are rich resources for this project.

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## Notes

- 1 While new materialisms arguably build on postcolonial theory, it is noted that new feminist materialisms and posthumanism are not unitary bodies of work but complex and multiple and also contested, including a skepticism of the 'new' of new materialism. Ahmed (2008, p. 36) for example, critiques the 'foundational gesture' of the abiologism of feminist theory, arguing that 'when we describe what it is that we

do, when we consider how it is that we arrive at the grounds we inhabit, we need to appreciate the feminist work that comes before us, in all its complexity’.

- 2 See <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/may/15/sethembile-msezane-cecil-rhodes-statue-cape-town-south-africa> for more detailed description and <http://www.sethembile-msezane.com/projects/> for more of Msezane’s work (accessed 4 December 2017).
- 3 This quote appears in Buikema’s new book in Dutch, shortly to be translated, and in English in a conference in 2016.
- 4 Also of interest, authors report the Shona representation of birds as messengers, and eagles (thought to be the model for the Zimbabwe bird sculptures) in particular, as bringing messages from the ancestors and God and mediated between God and humans (Hubbert, 2009, Huffman, 1985).
- 5 See <https://www.facebook.com/transfeministcollective/posts/113220963351248> (accessed 18 June 2016).
- 6 Thanks to Chantelle Gray van Heerden for this insight and the reader is referred to her chapter in this edition for a Deleuzian and Guattarian incisive analysis of how this particular intervention serves as an example of a ‘return to the materiality of the body – the naked body, the animality of the body’, which she argues serves as defacialisation, in layperson’s terms a challenge to continued privileging and power of particular ‘faces’ in the academy and elsewhere.
- 7 Gouws (2016) points to the significance that Black women with a clear feminist agenda are leading these protests, considering the historical negative construction of feminism as white, middle class and ‘unAfrican’.
- 8 Erin Manning’s chapter in this volume engages closely with Black Studies scholarship and I acknowledge, has guided me gratefully to this particular text.
- 9 I use this term with caution, acknowledging the importance of avoiding a canonisation of the ‘new feminist material turn’ (see Juelskjær and Schwennesen, 2012, in interview with Karen Barad).
- 10 This performance was originally performed in 1993, available on Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIDKruTCsSY> (accessed 4 December 2017).

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