Working the 'in-between-spaces' for transformation within the academy

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This paper considers the importance of 'in-between spaces' within the academy for challenging dominant institutional culture and hegemonic power relations towards a 'de-colonised' university. It questions 'mainstreaming' of transformational initiatives, as this can bring about regulation, rather than the turbulence that is often what is needed for substantive change to occur. I draw on a case study of the work of the Division for Lifelong Learning (DLL) at University of the Western Cape and in particular two examples of its marginal activities which were hosted regularly over a 10 year period. These are: the *Vice-Chancellor's Annual Julius Nyerere Lecture on Lifelong Learning* and the cross-campus *Annual Women's Breakfast*. I use documentary evidence and insider knowledge to reflect critically on the relevance of the spaces that were created for enacting such alternative institutional practices. I employ 'knowledge democracy' as a lens to bring the margins to the centre of the analysis. The argument is made that the work in the 'in-between-spaces' is a critical part of 'decolonising education' through disruptive, political, pedagogical, and organisational transformation.

Keywords: decolonising education; feminist popular education; 'in-between' pedagogical spaces; knowledge democracy; lifelong learning; transformation

Preamble

It is 12 October 2010, and the foyer of the University of the Western Cape (UWC) library auditorium is crowded with students, staff, and the public, milling about, eating Tanzanian delicacies which are served by Tanzanian students, dressed proudly in Tanzanian regalia. The strains of a guitarist are luring people into the auditorium, emblazoned with cloths from around Africa; large posters of 'Mwalimu' (teacher) Julius Nyerere exclaim: "Adult educators cannot be politically neutral"; "Adult educators' work is to activate people and arouse their consciousness"; "The purpose of education is liberation of people from restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency"; "African nationalism is meaningless, dangerous, anachronistic if it is not also pan-African."

Each participant is handed a pack of printed cards as a memento bearing quotes from Julius Nyerere, other well-known radical educators like Paolo Freire, and speakers who have previously led the Vice-Chancellor's Annual Julius Nyerere Lecture on Lifelong Learning – all of whom have been leading women educators and activists. Today, the address is to be given by another leading scholar, Tara Fenwick (2010a). Tanzanian students lead the packed auditorium in singing the Tanzanian National Anthem in Swahili. Tina Schouw, a local feminist musician, performs a beautiful rendition of a song written especially for the occasion, 'Open up your heart,' in which she pays tribute to Julius Nyerere, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Helen Joseph, and many other prominent men and women who have been 'freedom fighters.' In Africa in particular, the role of critical adult learning and education are integral to struggles for freedom. The Vice-Chancellor introduces the speaker, who questions what counts as the most important knowledge in a global knowledge economy, and describes the 'knowledge wars' that are raging around the world. Intense and lively discussion follows the provocative presentation.

Another annual Julius Nyerere lecture ends with people leaving in animated debate with their friends, having been challenged both to recognise the legacies of great African thinkers and to engage deeply on questions of local/global concern for educators and activists. A student from the Democratic Republic of the Congo approaches the programme director from the hosting organisation, the Division for Lifelong Learning (DLL), and asks if it is not possible to hold other, similar events, which acknowledge the significant philosophers and thinkers from this and other countries in Africa.

Introduction

On 14 December 2016, the UWC Council approved the following matter:

> The disestablishment of the Senate Lifelong Learning Committee (SLLC). The functions of the Division for Lifelong Learning (DLL) will reside within the Teaching and Learning portfolio. The functions of the SLLC will reside within the Senate Academic Planning Committee (SAP) and the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee (STLC). (UWC, 2016)

This decision closed the chapter on the 17 years of the formal existence of the DLL. It came into being in December 1999, with a decision of Senate and Council, after three years of action research. During the 20 years of lifelong learning advocacy, policy development, research and service provision to students, staff, and communities, UWC gained the reputation of being the leading university for lifelong learning in South Africa. The decision to close DLL was presented by some as an indication of the successful 'mainstreaming' of lifelong

learning. Others saw it as the closing down of important transformative pedagogical and organisational spaces. The conundrum that this paper addresses is the question of what is lost when transformative institutional initiatives are mainstreamed. In particular, I will address the work of the 'in-between-spaces,' which often disappear in processes of 'mainstreaming.' Two illustrations will be used to pry open this discussion in the context of the urgent calls to transform and 'decolonise' universities: they are the *Vice-Chancellor's Annual Julius Nyerere Lecture on Lifelong Learning* and the *Annual Women's Breakfast*, both co-hosted by DLL. My purpose in focusing on these activities, which happened in the interstices of the DLL's main work, is to understand them more fully as transgressive/ transformational practices within their time and space, and whether they are suggestive of practices towards 'decolonising' the university.

I will begin with a brief description of my approach, and then provide some historical context to UWC and DLL. This is followed by a discussion of the concept of knowledge democracy, within the context of 'transformation' and 'decolonisation' as a framework for understanding learning that happens in 'in-between spaces' and as a lens for analysing the particular examples presented. Finally, I will provide concluding thoughts for challenging dominant institutional and hegemonic power relations within the academy.

Approach

I take my cue from Vincent (2015), who suggests that the concept of institutional culture is extraordinarily slippery, and proposes that through stories, we can surface contested social realities that contribute to institutional culture. This paper tells stories by drawing on documentary evidence of the history of lifelong learning at UWC over 20 years. They are also informed by my insider knowledge as the Director of the University Mission Initiative on Lifelong Learning (UMILL), which preceded DLL, and as the founding Director of DLL, until July 2014. Over the 20 years, DLL colleagues and I have written extensively on different aspects of actor strategies we deployed to embed a philosophy and approach to lifelong learning at UWC. These included Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Continuing Education (CE), Part-Time Studies and Flexible Learning and Teaching (see for example: Cooper, L & Ralphs, 2016; Jones & Walters, 2015; Walters, 1999, 2012; Walters, Daniels & Weitz, 2017). While I will not rehearse the arguments captured in this literature, the stories I tell are inevitably imbued with it.

Setting the Scene: Lifelong Learning at UWC
UWC is an historically black university that was founded in 1960 to fulfil the needs for 'coloured'

bureaucrats and professionals to service the apartheid political vision. It is a medium sized University with a student profile of primarily black, poor and working class students, the majority of whom are women who are, on average, older. From the beginning, offering evening classes to working students was part of the University's mandate.

The arguments for the establishment of DLL to promote and champion lifelong learning across the university mirrored the imperatives for lifelong learning nationally. These were driven by South Africa's reinsertion into the global economy and by the social and political necessities of equity and redress after the years of colonialism, segregation, and apartheid. It was therefore not surprising to find the discourse of lifelong learning infused into new policy documents, both nationally and at the university.

The five years from 1996–2001 at UWC were extremely difficult, as higher education institutions were adapting to the new democratic dispensation. Some key members of UWC leadership were drawn away to assist with the establishment of the democratic state. Jakes Gerwel, UWC's Vice-Chancellor, for example, became the Director-General in President Mandela's office. Those of us remaining at UWC had to learn to work in cooperation with the government as opposed to being in relentless opposition to it. Also, student numbers dropped dramatically, as they no longer were compelled to attend their designated 'tribal universities,' in addition to the economic stress which made university education unaffordable. The new government wanted to rationalise the number of institutions, both in an attempt to shift from legacies of apartheid, and influenced by economic efficiency models from elsewhere. UWC, as an historically black university with a majority of first generation students (named University of the Working Class by a previous rector, Richard van der Ross), was struggling for its survival on several fronts.

The introduction of lifelong learning into this heady mix was in part successful because it was seen as a potential solution to several of these contradictory problems. The fact that it meant very different things to different people enabled it to be taken up institutionally – it was highly contested – with motives ranging across a spectrum: from opportunities for individuals to enter the labour market more effectively; to strategies for equity and redress of individuals and groups who had been excluded because of gender, race, age and class; to an opportunity to challenge whose knowledge counts when, where and how within higher education. It was an idea with a champion who had access to key decision-making fora in the institution.

The DLL was a small advocacy, service and research unit working across all faculties to

promote the lifelong learning mission of the institution. Its mandate was initially to focus on part-time studies, CE and RPL, reporting to the deputy vice-chancellor (academic) and the Senate Lifelong Learning Committee.

In 2001, DLL co-hosted an international meeting, which produced The Cape Town Statement on Essential Characteristics of a Lifelong Learning University (DLL, University of the Western Cape, 2001). These included a philosophy and approach to ensure students of all ages were accommodated through policy frameworks, student support systems and services, administrative mechanisms, strategic partnerships, and teaching and learning. It argued for a radical re-thinking of all aspects of UWC which, paradoxically, mirrored in many ways universities which had been established to serve mainly the needs of elite, i.e. middle class, young, white, heterosexual men (Michelson, 2015). The institutional culture needed to shift dramatically.

Within this context, I argued that lifelong learning needed to be positioned within an emancipatory narrative, which is concerned with social justice and active democratic citizenship amongst groups who are marginalised within particular societies (Walters, 1999). The aim was deeply transformative. It was very much about organisation, pedagogy and politics, which required, as Bourgeois, Duke, Guyot and Merrill (1999) maintained, a combination of successful actor strategies and conducive conditions related to organisational structure and context.

With this brief institutional and DLL background, I now turn to a discussion on knowledge democracy, within the context of 'transformation' and 'decolonisation,' as a framework for understanding learning that happens in 'in-between spaces' and as a lens for analysing the particular examples presented here.

Knowledge Democracy

Hall and Tandon (2014) link knowledge democracy to social transformation. They state that, just as we recognise the importance of biodiversity for the survival of the planet, so we must preserve the diverse ways of knowing that exist among humanity. For them, knowledge democracy acknowledges the existence of multiple epistemologies including organic, spiritual, and land-based systems; frameworks arising from social movements; and the knowledge of marginalised and excluded people everywhere. In this approach, knowledge is both created and represented in multiple forms including text, images, numbers, stories, music, drama, poetry, ceremony, meditation and more. Also explicit is the conviction that knowledge is a powerful tool for taking action to deepen democracy and struggle more effectively for a fairer and healthier world. Knowledge democracy

intentionally links the values of democracy in action to the processes of creating and using knowledge.

This viewpoint has similarities to the philosophy and approach of feminist popular education (Manicom & Walters, 2012), which promotes collective learning that engages different identities, divergent politics, and varied capacities towards challenging women's oppression and achieving social justice for all women. It valorises diverse women's ways of knowing and being. It emphasises the importance of the co-construction of knowledge through imaginative, playful, disruptive pedagogies that strengthen the position and condition particularly of poor, marginalised women.

Knowledge democracy also resonates with the 'decolonising knowledge' debates in South Africa, which Gatsheni (2018) summarises to include the need to transform institutional cultures, embracing ecologies of knowledge that affirm African ways of knowing and being. He references Santos (2007), who argues that the struggle for global justice must be a struggle for cognitive justice. Santos describes "abyssal thinking," which divides knowledge into the western canon on one side of the abyss, and all other knowledges on the other. He describes how colonialism systematically committed a form of "epistemicide," that is, that colonial powers were intent on erasing any other ways of knowing besides their own.

In post-apartheid South Africa, this western canon still holds power in higher education, often to the exclusion of valuing African scientists, philosophers and thinkers, and has led to student movements to 'decolonise the universities.' Both students and educators are engaging actively in what this means for the knowledge project at universities.

'Decolonisation' of universities, is the latest rendition of debates and struggles for university transformation. Lange (2014:1) usefully captures the discussions of transformation within South African higher education. She describes the evolution of the understanding of transformation from 1994 to a point where "it has lost its intellectual, moral, and political content" by becoming institutionalised. The 'decolonising' movement of students can be seen as a response to this de-politicisation and as resonant with her argument for real change on the campuses.

With this broad framework as backdrop, I turn now to discuss what I mean by 'in-between spaces,' and their potential not only for enabling learning, but also as spaces for alternative knowledges to be explored.

'In-Between-Spaces'

To attempt to capture what I mean by 'in-between-spaces' I will draw on two metaphors. The first is from urban planners and architects (Can & Heath,

2016), who refer to intermediate spaces between/at the entrance to buildings and between buildings and the street. These in-between spaces allow for informality and for different social interactions, which are different from but which impact use of the formal spaces of buildings, and vice versa – there is a fluid relationship between the informal and formal architecture.

Another metaphor comes from ecologists (Anderson, 2013), who describe a stream and the sides of a stream, where the water creates eddies between and over the rocks and the verges, which allow for different aquatic life to flourish. These areas are less predictable and more turbulent. Both the main stream and the playful, disruptive eddies are essential for the flourishing of different life forms that inhabit the stream.

I use 'in-between spaces' with marked caution to signal that I do not subscribe to the notion that organisational or teaching/learning activities can be neatly compartmentalised or held in discrete containers. Rather, I am influenced by Tara Fenwick's (2010b) argument that real learning processes are of enormous complexity; they are hybrid, indeterminate, deal with fluid boundaries and messy objects, and their status of formalisation cannot be described through static and more or less subjective definitions of informal, non-formal and formal learning. Indeed, Actor-Network Theory (ANT) substitutes 'domains or containers' with 'relational networks.' An actor network sensibility understands knowledge to be generated through relational strategies, through networks and performed through inanimate, as well as animate beings in precarious arrangements (Fenwick & Edwards, 2013:56–57). In ANT, learning is assumed to be a materialising assemblage, and not a cognitive achievement or way of interacting. As Fenwick and Edwards (2013:54) assert, teaching is not simply about the relationships between humans, but about the networks of humans and things through which teaching and learning are translated and enacted as such.

Some of the qualities of 'in-between-spaces' are informality, playfulness, turbulence, disruption, unpredictability and relationality, analogous to the pedagogies of feminist popular education described above (Manicom & Walters, 2012). These spaces exist in the interstices of formal programmes, structures, or funding regimes; they are contested; they are important spaces for exploring other knowledges and ways of knowing outside of dominant mainstream knowledge discourses; and they can and do impact the quality of institutional cultures and social relations within the organisation.

The following examples of DLL's work in 'in-between-spaces,' it is argued, illustrate how they deepened knowledge democracy in the university and, in this way, contributed towards transforming or 'decolonising' the mainstream institutional practices. They are suggestive of 'everyday utopias' (Cooper, D 2014), which I will return to later.

Illustrative Examples of 'In-Between-Spaces'

In 2001 Professor Brian O'Connell was appointed as the Rector and Vice-Chancellor. He was an educationalist with strong anti-apartheid credentials who was willing to hold the space for various initiatives, among them annual events such as the Women's Breakfasts and the Julius Nyerere Lecture on Lifelong Learning. He helped to create an enabling environment for the introduction of projects that lived in the 'in-between-spaces' which were in-line with the UWC's vision and mission.

Annual women's breakfasts

In 2000, Mary Hames, Director of UWC's Gender Equity Unit (GEU), and I, both long-standing staff members and feminists on campus, were concerned with the despondency and disconnection amongst women across the campus, which reflected the depressed state of the university at the time. We wanted to build connections among women across hierarches of power and privilege. Our agenda was to affirm women in multiple ways (such as celebrating an author's latest book, sporting achievement or birth of a grandchild) and to build relationships among women across departments and faculties, between administrators and academics and across positional power.

In 2001 we issued an invitation to all women staff to attend the first breakfast. The venue was off campus, my home, and out of working hours - on a Saturday morning. Eighty women came. We also invited the newly appointed Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Brian O'Connell, to meet UWC women before he took office. He remembers, "They were gracious to allow me to attend and they welcomed me warmly, but simultaneously told me in no uncertain terms that they would be watching my every move" (UWC, 2010:para. 1).

The food was a homemade feast; everyone paid a small amount and they were also asked to donate to a fund to support women students in need. The gathering was a celebration of one another, imbued with a feminist popular education sensibility – it playfully incorporated participants' 'heads, hearts and hands.' Photos from the occasion show women hugging drums and rattles, laughing, listening intensely, and communicating with one another. It encouraged generosity of spirit to those at the gathering and solidarity with other women in need.

Women decided that they wanted this to become an annual gathering, which it did. It soon moved to a campus venue, under the trees at DLL offices, but it kept the same seriously playful informality, and each year between 80 and 120

women would take time to be together. In 2010, in celebration of UWC's 50 year anniversary, we organised a "thousand women's breakfast" celebrating 50 years of UWC women's contributions as leaders (UWC, 2010). Alumnae were invited as were senior women students. This time, balloons hung from the lamp posts leading from the entrance to the Great Hall; campus pre-school children in T-shirts celebrating UWC women's contributions, lined the red carpet welcoming all the women. There were poetry performances, speeches, playful celebrations and analyses of women's conditions locally/globally.

The Women's Breakfasts were low key attempts to contribute to a more egalitarian institutional culture which encouraged all women to speak up and out. I remember clearly the moving story told by a junior lecturer of her experience as an impoverished student who had no money for shoes; her brother cut out cardboard inner linings for her old worn ones. Although she told this story with some trepidation, she felt sufficiently safe to share this intimacy and expressed a certain survival pride.

A formal assessment of the impact of the Women's Breakfasts has not been attempted, but I am inclined to think that they may have emboldened some women; they may also have inspired women to use different methodologies for meetings or teaching. For example, in Mary Hames' doctoral thesis (Hames, 2016) she points to the influence of feminist popular education on her own innovative, transgressive work at the GEU. From my own experiences, the Women's Breakfasts built and consolidated 'heart and head' relationships with many women across campus, in an often hostile institutional environment. Some of these relationships continue in some form to this day as can be seen at the GEU's 25th Anniversary celebrations in September 2018. The Women's Breakfast was a small initiative in the 'in-between space' which disrupted, for a couple of hours every year, the predominant bureaucratic, impersonal, patriarchal relationships of the university.

The last UWC Women's Breakfast was held in 2014 which was the year of the retirement of the DLL Director. The DLL was dissolved shortly afterwards. Adopting a particularly technocratic view of managerial efficiency, the senior management decided that events of this kind could no longer be held during working hours – this included a much longer running 'Secretaries Day' which had a very different politics - the conducive environment for playful, convivial, extra-curricular events had contracted.

Vice-Chancellor's Annual Julius Nyerere Lecture on Lifelong Learning

Soon after Brian O'Connell's arrival as Rector and Vice-Chancellor, I submitted a proposal for the inauguration of the Vice-Chancellor's Annual Julius Nyerere Lecture on Lifelong Learning to which he and the Executive agreed. This lecture series was launched in 2004, by the South African National Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor, in recognition of the seminal contribution of the late Tanzanian President Nyerere to our understandings of human development in Africa and elsewhere. The university wanted, through this act, to recognise and acclaim one of Africa's leading scholars, educators and politicians. As UWC had positioned itself as a leading proponent of lifelong learning, Professor O'Connell felt that it was fitting to name the lecture after President Nyerere, who had made learning throughout life central to his attempts to build the newly independent Tanzania. Nyerere saw education as a means of bringing about human liberation and equality in society and the education of the individual as a means of advancing the collective good. For him, the main purpose of adult education was to inspire a desire for change and an understanding that it is possible (DLL, University of the Western Cape, 2013), and the Annual Lectures as well as the Women's Breakfasts strove to capture this spirit.

All of the presenters/facilitators over the next 12 years were leading educators and scholar-activists, with long histories of working in Africa and elsewhere in the interests of marginalised, poor and oppressed people. There was a sense that the late President Nyerere would have deeply admired the life's work of each of these inspirational women and men. The last lecture, in 2015, was a series of short vignettes by the left-wing street theatre group Jana Natya Manch (Janam), from New Delhi, which engaged the participants in the social issues they portrayed. It was held in the august Senate Hall, which was draped with anti-apartheid and social movement T-shirts and posters, honouring the South African traditions of popular education.

From the scenario sketched in the preamble, you will get a sense of the rich texture of these occasions, which celebrated African excellence. The small group of Tanzanian students, who were studying at UWC, was always invited to contribute to organising the events. They played prominent roles and took pride in their country's history and culture being celebrated at a South African university in a high status event. It was also an occasion for them to meet their High Commissioner to South Africa to raise pertinent issues.

No impact assessment has been done of the lecture series, but the positive responses, particularly from students from other parts of Africa, were very moving. In a context where many South Africans are ignorant of scholarly contributions of Africans to local/global developments, it no doubt opened windows to new knowledge and understandings, rooted in Africa. Indeed, posters from the Julius Nyerere Lectures, depicting Paolo Freire,

Julius Nyerere and speakers such as Pregs Govender, among others, hang in the corridors of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in Pretoria today.

However, the leadership changes and re-structuring of UWC in 2014/2015, which mainstreamed the functions of DLL into the Teaching and Learning unit, saw the end of the Nyerere Lectures. Now they are fading in institutional memory; only their records remain within the UWC Repository as part of the DLL legacy project.

Knowledge Democracy: Discussion

'Decolonising education' within the university includes the 'decolonising' or challenging of institutional cultures, which are shaped by hierarchies of power influenced by race, gender, class, physical ability, sexuality, ethnicity, language etc. While recognising the complexity of the concept 'institutional culture' (Keet, 2015), it does include learning through symbols, enactments, or an assemblage of university practices which occur in various locales, reflecting learning processes that Fenwick (2010b) argues are too complex to be definitively described as informal, non-formal or formal learning. While the Nyerere Lectures and the Women's Breakfasts were not part of the formal education programmes of the university, they certainly contributed to learning on campus by those involved. The evidence for this assertion is that both were highly popular events, which had a substantial core of regular attendees. If for some reason, either of the events was delayed, DLL staff would be stopped in the corridors or in the street and asked when the next annual event was to be held. Both of the events were creative, fun, and convivial, with the Nyerere Lecture always being led by intellectually and politically challenging activist-scholars, who emphasised that 'another world is possible,' particularly within African contexts (DLL, University of the Western Cape, 2013).

Both the interventions speak to Santos' call for epistemological diversity of the world, the recognition of the existence of a plurality of knowledges beyond scientific knowledge, both in content and in process. They also created, in the words of D Cooper (2014:2), 'everyday utopias,' which work to create the change they wish to encounter. D Cooper (2014) is concerned with broadening how we think about social transformation and where the possibilities for such transformation may lie in everyday situations where imagination and material processes coalesce. She probes, through everyday utopias, how playfulness can help to explore utopias. This is very similar to the work of feminist popular educators Manicom and Walters (2012), who argue that through play, women are able to try things out

and can imagine a world beyond patriarchal relationships. Both the events, through their overtly 'serious playfulness,' strove to emulate egalitarian relationships amongst students, academics, administrative staff, and members of communities, in an attempt to become 'the change we want to see in the world' (Friedman, 2012). The question of how 'everyday utopias' contribute to social transformation is important, but difficult to assert; they are, as D Cooper (2014) claims, suggestive of alternative ways of 'doing political life,' but their transformative effect will inevitably be dependent on different power hierarchies within given situations, at different times.

The events did, in the spirit of 'everyday utopias,' challenge and engage power hierarchies, vertically and horizontally, across the institution, from the Vice-Chancellor down. The Women's Breakfasts were open to all women staff on campus, across the administrative, technical and academic divides, and through the participative methodologies used, everyone was able to 'feel at home.' It was one of the only places where women could meet regularly as equals on campus, across positions of power and privilege. Senior students were invited to participate fully in 'The 1,000 UWC Women's Celebration.' The Rector was invited periodically, as the only male participant, to interact with the women to listen to their concerns. The Tanzanian students on campus were intimately involved with the shaping and organising of the Nyerere Lectures, where this was one of the few opportunities they had to be 'centre-stage.' 'De-colonising' the academy has much to do with the challenging of taken fore-granted hierarchies and the encouragement of different 'voices' and knowledges to be invited into spaces, so that everyone can 'feel at home,' while still being intellectually challenged.

Lange (2014:4) observes that, in many instances, the institutionalisation of transformation has reduced it to the measurement of equity, monitored by institutional research units, which are not necessarily concerned with deeper issues of transformation. While Lange acknowledges that data on trends are important, "transformation cannot be frozen in numbers." For transformation to be effective, Lange (2014:18) argues for devolved leadership that is "capable of operating within the risks of democratic deliberation," i.e. with distributed leadership. This is similar to the arguments that Edwards and Thompson (2014) make for resourceful leadership in effective organisational change strategies; leadership at all levels of the institution who can ensure that ideas for transformative practices circulate horizontally and vertically through the organisation. Both the Women's Breakfasts and the Nyerere Lectures are perhaps good illustrations of such leadership. The Women's Breakfasts started spontaneously through

the leadership of two longstanding, feminist staff members 'at the margins' of the university, and were sustained over 10 years through active participation of, on average, 100 administrative, technical, and academic women each year. Similarly, the Nyerere Lectures were initiated by leadership of DLL, but with the support of Vice-Chancellor, and were attended by 250 members of the university community and the public each year for 12 years.

Transformation is deeply political in both its process and its content. It is confronting both new and old problems in the economy, society and the environment. In order to "undo the institution-alisation of transformation," the institutional culture needs to embrace individual and institution-al stories that are messy, contradictory and paradoxical. As Lange says, it is the knowledge of transformation and its open, passionate, difficult, unruly discussion that prevents the de-politicisation of transformation (Lange, 2014:17).

The DLL, as a small unit working across the university, created opportunities 'in-between-spaces' in order to deepen knowledge democracy, represented in multiple forms including text, images, stories, music, drama, poetry, ceremony, and more. The events encouraged participants to understand that knowledge is a powerful tool for taking action to deepen democracy and struggle more effectively for a fairer and healthier world. In these ways, the events in the 'in-between-spaces' demonstrated understandings of lifelong learning as an emancipatory praxis. In the contemporary discourse, it was very much about 'decolonising education.'

Concluding Thoughts: Challenging Dominant Institutional and Hegemonic Power Relations
In order to bring about transformation within institutions where competing views are inevitable, it is useful to reflect on Manuel Castells' perspective. He explains:

> … societies are not communities, sharing values and interests. They are contradictory social structures enacted in conflicts and negotiations among diverse and often opposing social actors. Conflicts never end: they simply pause through temporary agreements and unstable contracts that are transformed into institutions of domination by those social actors who achieve an advantageous position in the power struggle, albeit at the cost of allowing some degree of institutional representation for the plurality of interests and values that remain subordinated. So, the institutions of the state and, beyond the state, the institutions, organisations, and discourses that frame and regulate social life, are never the expressions of 'society' […]. They are crystallised power relationships; that is the 'generalised means' that enable actors to exercise power over other social actors in order to have the power to accomplish their goals. (Castells, 2009:14)

If we accept the view that power struggles are inevitable, then we cannot assume that the debates and discussions within the university are politically neutral. This understanding in turn places more pressure on the politics of organising and agitating for particular understandings of 'the knowledge project,' and for 'knowledge democracy.'

It is therefore not surprising that in striving to embed an emancipatory philosophy and approach of lifelong learning, the institutional contestations will be fierce. The political contestations for the heart and soul of UWC were captured in a very public spat that reached the press in 2014 (Walters et al., 2017:115). Therefore, some of the transformational work will lurk in the shadows of the mainstream. There are many such examples across university campuses, including the trans-gressive work of the GEU (Hames, 2016).

Likewise, the Women's Breakfasts and the Julius Nyerere Lectures, initiatives which were framed by emancipatory or 'decolonising' under-standings of lifelong learning, were small, dis-ruptive initiatives, which challenged the dominant knowledge project; each in similar and different ways. They both depended on working with networks of staff and students across the university, as well as further afield. They were imbued with understandings of popular education that embrace pedagogy, politics and organising towards the 'decolonising of knowledge,' and they attempted to effect shifts in institutional culture.

In South Africa, a 'de-colonising knowledge project' means working within and against the prevailing racialised, gendered, colonial construc-tions and assumptions that position women and black people, and their ways of seeing and knowing the world, across a spectrum of privilege and penalty. This involves the encouragement of acti-vism, which challenges prevailing institutional norms and cultures; interrogates curricula and pedagogy; and enables utopian imaginings towards alternatives (see for example, Cooper, D 2014; Satgar, 2018). This requires an organisational base, resources and actor strategies, which include networks of influence and resourceful leadership (Edwards & Thompson, 2014) that can help create a conducive environment for transformation. This flies in the face of the argument that successes of the lifelong learning initiative (or any other transformative initiative) can be measured by their mainstreaming. Mainstreaming, or institutional-isation (Lange, 2014), by its nature brings about regulation rather than turbulence – this is not how substantive change occurs. The work in the 'in-between-spaces' is a critical part of disruptive political, pedagogical and organisational trans-formation.

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