Liminography

Lessons in Life-affirming Research Practices for Collective Liberation

Zuleika Bibi Sheik
Liminagraphy
Lessons in Life-affirming Research Practices for Collective Liberation

Liminagrafie
Lessen in levensbevestigend onderzoekspraktijken voor collectieve bevrijding

Thesis
to obtain the degree of Doctor from the
Erasmus University Rotterdam
by command of the
Rector Magnificus

Prof. dr. A.L. Bredenoord

and in accordance with the decision of the Doctorate Board
The public defence shall be held on

13 December 2021 at 15.00 hrs

by

Zuleika Bibi Sheik
born in Zaf, South Africa
Doctoral Committee

Doctoral dissertation supervisor
Prof. A.S. Bedi

Other members
Prof. S. Harney, Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln
Prof. B. Chilisa, University of Botswana
Dr L.A. Okwany

Co-supervisor
Dr R.A. Icaza Garza
For
Saara Chandni Dasarath
Parvez Ali Dasarath
Ella Noor Dasarath
Gerry Samuel Sommer
Gelila Binyam
Bitania Binyam
&
the beautiful one’s yet to be born

Little sparks ignite the largest flames of wisdom
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samenvatting</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUNSET</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dusk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FROM DECOLONISING THE SELF TO COMING TO VOICE</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FROM DECOLONISING THE SELF TO LIBERATING THE SENSES</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WOMEN OF COLOUR ARE NOT HUMAN. WE ARE RELATIONAL BEINGS</strong></td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DECOLONIAL RE-EXISTENCE AND THE MYTHS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HAND IN HAND: REFUSING RESEARCH DURING A PANDEMIC</strong></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIMINAGRAPHY: LESSONS IN LIFE-AFFIRMING RESEARCH PRACTICES FOR COLLECTIVE LIBERATION</strong></td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DAWN</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunrise</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IQHAWEKAZI RANI</strong></td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appendices</strong></td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>About the Author</strong></td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

To all the relations who walk with me through this lifetime

your encouragement support and kind gestures however big or small have left an imprint on the flesh of my heart

In this way I carry you with me always
Abstract

In *The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House* Audre Lorde asks us to take seriously the question “What does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy?” she goes on to answer “It means that only the most narrow perimeters of change are possible and allowable” (2017 [1979]: 17). Using Lorde’s dictum as an anchor, this thesis provides a decolonial feminist critique of the modern/colonial knowledge system whilst simultaneously arguing for a reclaiming of knowledges and research practice. In doing so it highlights the need for radical alternatives in our approaches to knowledge, justice and collective liberation, offering Liminagraphy as one possible pathway.

The research undertaken set out to find the ways in which we can cultivate knowledge that is epistemically non-violent in the context of the racialized, gendered, colonial and neoliberal university. Through conversations with women of colour and those who resist the logics of dominant knowledge production, it was learned that this involves the simultaneous processes of decolonizing the self, dispelling myths around gender and identity, refusing knowledge production as a practice, embracing multiple forms of knowing, and lastly, underscoring the necessity of building coalition across difference for collective liberation. These lessons then provided the fertile ground upon which liminagraphy germinated. Embedded in a decolonial feminist and transformative justice approach, with a relational-ethics at its core, Liminagraphy provides tools and practices which address the ‘how’ of decolonizing, ensuring that erasure, extraction and harm are mitigated in the research process. Thus, Liminagraphy is envisioned as a life-affirming approach to research that offers a pathway to decolonial re-existence and collective liberation through relationality, reciprocity, accountability and coalition.

---

Whilst this thesis builds upon the many valuable contributions to decolonizing specific disciplines and methodology its particular focus is on the unlearning of the researcher as expert and their reorientation towards life-affirming practices through being/becoming in relation. As such its main contribution is to debates on decolonizing methodology. In addition, it also contributes to discussions on anti-colonial approaches to development studies by radically questioning the inequities that underpin mainstream developmental research practices, thus highlighting disciplinary limitations. Using a radical approach which interrogates the practice of research, at the level of epistemology, ontology, methodology, axiology and the written form, this thesis contributes to generatively conceptualizing knowledge beyond disciplinary and western frameworks. Using poetry, storytelling and podcast as forms of enfleshed theorizing, its innovation lies in its refusal of taken-for-granted research protocols, providing a new approach to research which meaningfully engages with intersectional-positionality, abolitionist practices and what it means to dream-live-feel-think-sense-practice collective liberation.
Liminafragie: Lessen in levensbevestigend onderzoekspraktijken voor collectieve bevrijding

Samenvatting


In dit onderzoek is gezocht naar manieren om kennis te ontwikkelen die epistemologisch geweldloos is in de context van de geracialiseerde, gendergebonden, koloniale en neoliberalle universiteit. Uit gesprekken met vrouwen van kleur en mensen die zich verzetten tegen de logica van de dominante kennisproductie, bleek dat dit het volgende met zich meebrengt: gelijktijdige processen van dekolonisatie van het zelf, ontkrachten van mythen rond gender en identiteit, weigeren van kennisproductie als gebruik, omarmen van meerdere vormen van weten, en ten slotte benadrukken van de noodzaak van het vormen van coalities die verschillen overbruggen voor collectieve bevrijding. Deze lessen vormden de vruchtbare bodem waarop de liminafragie kon ontluiken. Liminafragie is ingebed in een dekoloniale feministische en transformatieve rechtvaardigheidsbenadering, met een relationele ethiek als kern, en biedt instrumenten en praktijken om het 'hoe' van dekoloniseren te verkennen. Hierbij wordt ervoor gewaakt dat uitwissing, onttrekking en schade in het onderzoeksproces optreden. Daarmee

---

wordt liminografie opgevat als een levensbevestigende onderzoeksbenadering, die een weg biedt naar een dekoloniale herbestaan en collectieve bevrijding door middel van relationaliteit, wederkerigheid, verantwoording en coalitie.

Terwijl dit proefschrift voortbouwt op de vele waardevolle bijdragen aan het dekoloniseren van specifieke vakgebieden en methodologie, ligt de nadruk er in het bijzonder op om onderzoekers niet langer als experts te beschouwen en ze zich te laten heroriënteren op levensbevestigende praktijken door in verbinding te zijn/te komen. Daarmee levert dit proefschrift een belangrijke bijdrage aan debatten over het dekoloniseren van methodologie. Daarnaast draagt het ook bij aan de discussie over antikoloniale benaderingen van ontwikkelingsonderzoek door radicale vraagtekens te zetten bij de ongelijkheden die ten grondslag liggen aan de gangbare methoden van ontwikkelingsonderzoek. Hierdoor worden de beperkingen van disciplinariteit zichtbaar. Met een radicale benadering die de onderzoekspraktijk ter discussie stelt op het niveau van de epistemologie, ontologie, methodologie, axiologie en geschreven vorm, draagt dit proefschrift bij aan het generatief conceptualiseren van kennis op een manier die verder reikt dan disciplinaire en westerse kaders. Door middel van het gebruik van poëzie, storytelling en podcast als vormen van ‘enfleshed’ theorievorming, ligt de innovatie van dit proefschrift in de afwijzing van vanzelfsprekende onderzoeksprotocollen. Hiermee ontstaat een nieuwe onderzoeksbenadering waarin ruimte is voor intersectionele positionaliteit, abolitionistische gebruiken en voor wat het betekent om collectieve bevrijding te dromen-beleven-voelen-denken-ervaren-praktiseren.
One fateful night in the summer of 1918, with the Great War about to end, in the heart of the darkness three menacing horsemen each in possession of a whip and sword silently breached the walls and entered the town. One was called Famine, another Spanish Flu and the other Cholera. The poor, the old and the young fell like autumn leaves ravaged by the assaults of these ruthless horsemen.

~ Jamalzadeh

Another horseman has arrived, COVID19 and we have become sick. This generation is facing a global health pandemic, the likes of which (in terms of death toll) has not been seen since the Spanish flu of 1918. Whilst being touted as the ‘great equalizer’ COVID19 has “created a captive audience forced to reckon with old wounds and underlying conditions” (Sheik, forthcoming). Like, Iranian author Jamalzadeh’s first-hand account of the Spanish flu in West Asia, it has been the poor, the elders and the young who have felt its effects the most, particularly across the old fault lines of empire. The colonies, the Third World, the Global South, the name changes but the conditions remain the same. They say ‘the sun never sets on empire’, an unnatural abomination in opposition to the rhythm of life itself, yet the time of its zenith has long past and the horizon is fast approaching.

---


4 Global South is used throughout according to Nokuthula Hlabangane’s (2018: 669) delineation of the term “while not precise, conveys a shared colonial wound that encompasses dispossession of land, lifeways, and being”.
This thesis brings into question the primacy of Western epistemology in the pursuit of knowledge. In *Decolonizing Politics*, Robbie Shilliam (2021) asks us to consider how canons (and for that matter disciplines) limit our understandings and imaginations, using the case of the so-called father of politics Aristotle, Shilliam (2021: 55-56) demonstrates the limitations of western epistemology by stating that “[i]mperial centers talk to colonial margins but rarely listen back to them; that is broadly the case in academia as well as politics proper. And, because centers rarely listen back, you will not usually find colonial voices articulating themselves in the repositories or archives of politics, that is, the mainstream recorded history of politics”. This deafening silence in the archive is not through happenstance, it is the erasure that accompanies colonial and imperial logics, which regards the ‘other’ as non-being (Fanon, 1952[1967]). This is the darker side of modernity (Mignolo, 2011) in which a dominant understanding of human has never been a safe haven for those colonized, racialized and gendered by coloniality. In *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an anti-black World*, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson (2020), extending the work of Jamaican scholar Sylvia Wynter (2003) reiterates this point by stating the distinction, making clear that the ontologizing violence of modernity/coloniality5, rather than excluding us from the category ‘human’, positions us as the exception that makes the rule. Yet, there has always been resistance to the oppressive regimes which continue to inflict violence, and the knowledges of those resistances silenced in the canon remain in the flesh, carried from generation to generation through stories, songs and folklore. As Shilliam (2021) rightly points out, those who have suffered the violence and injustices of multiple oppressions do not need to have read Aristotle to understand their condition. As such this thesis focuses on the ontological, whilst positing that the ontological and epistemological are not mutually exclusive, but rather held intimately in the flesh (Copeland, 2010; Spillers, 1987; Harney and Moten, 2021; Hurtado, 2019).

Positioned in a decolonial science which seeks to ‘cultivate knowledge’ as life affirming, a move away from the extractivism, appropriation and death of knowledge production (Shilliam,

5 Modernity/coloniality is a concept used to show the inseparability of the two terms. According to Anibal Quijano and later Walter Mignolo, coloniality is the darker side of modernity. See *The Darker Side of Western Modernity* (Mignolo, 2011).
Liminagraphy is offered as one of the pathways to onto-epistemological re-existence, with collective liberation as its horizon. Liminagraphy, as a new compound word is derived from -graphy, which etymologically means to write but also to carve, scrape and scratch; limin-being the space of in-betweenness and the deliberate misuse of -a- signaling plurality, to bridge the two (see Chapter 7). These together denote a process of growth which seeks to draw out the knowledges of the flesh by coming into deep relation, whilst attending to the ‘double erasure’ (Vázquez, 2020) of modernity/coloniality, its violence and silencing. As such liminagraphy holds an intelligibility that is foreign to colonial logics, setting it apart from other western epistemological approaches (e.g., autoethnography, self-study, reflexivity) based on a singular, separated, individual self. Liminagraphy is grounded in a trans- post- and anti-disciplinary approach to research, held together by the anti-colonial roots that connect Decolonial Feminism, Black Studies, African philosophy and Chicana Studies. As such it honours the long tradition of resistance to being erased, whilst delinking from those methodologies and approaches which have been complicit in our dehumanization. After decades of ‘return to sender’, liminagraphy is what emerges when the empire refuses to keep writing back.

**Writing Style: Speaking in Tongues**

I write to record what others erase when I speak, to rewrite the stories others have miswritten about me, about you. To become more intimate with myself and you. To discover myself, to preserve myself, to make myself, to achieve self-autonomy. To dispel the myths that I am a mad prophet or a poor suffering soul. To convince myself that I am worthy and that what I have to say is not a pile of shit. To show that I can and that I will write, never mind the admonitions to the contrary. And I will write about the unmentionables, never mind the outraged gasp of the censor and the audience. Finally, I write because I am scared of writing but I’m more scared of not writing (Anzaldúa, 2015: 167).

---

6 Inspired by Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to Third World Women Writers*
The writing style, as well as format and flow of this thesis follows in the tradition of woman of colour feminist, black feminist and indigenous authors featured in the anthology *This Bridge Called My Back* edited by Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga (2015), as well as Audre Lorde (2017[1979]), Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011; 2013; 2020), Sara Motta (2018) and countless others inspired to theorize the flesh. It breaks with academic conventions of what constitutes writing and theorization by calling forth the theory of the flesh “which sees practice as a form of theorizing and theorizing as a form of practice” (Anzaldúa, 2015: 181). At moments the writing of this thesis has flowed with the ease of a bird in flight, but mostly it has been like trying to fly wingless in gale force winds. The challenge has been two fold, one attempting to eke out space within the rigidity of academic writing (especially for publication) and two, lacking a vocabulary not connected to the production, machinery and consumption of “academic capitalism” (Leyva Solano, 2019: 49) which is invested in dichotomies of us/them, insider/outsider and self/other. It has taken time, to develop the vocabulary of knowledge cultivation finding the words in English that are life-affirming and build relation across difference; whilst honouring the languages associated with the lineages of knowledges in which my positionality is enfleshed.

In *Pedagogies of Crossing*, M. Jaqui Alexander (2005: 346) states that writer’s block is indicative of “a spiritual problem requiring a spiritual solution”, brought about when the writer experiences alienation or is brought into misalignment through a confrontation with history that immobilized their sense of being. Indeed, a constant mantra during the writing process has been ‘to soften’, to not become rigid or hard due to the violence that surrounds us. Liminagraphy makes the claim that all knowledge is relational, even those stemming from a western epistemology of separation and individuation (we return to this point later in the chapter). Due to this relational nature of knowledge we are confronted with the violence of modernity/coloniality’s “double erasure” which causes disharmony. The body freezes, the mind goes blank and the heart aches. This is the darkness (Lugones, 2003) we must descend into, in order to encounter spirit and to come to voice with our “serpent’s tongue” overcoming the tradition of silence (Anzaldúa, 1987). This theorizing from the flesh does not translate well into the rigidity of academic writing, it is free, its wings unclipped, it is not aiming for abstraction or universal
understanding. It asks of you to make the knowledge understandable and accessible to those outside academia – it asks of you to share. Through storytelling, poetry, artwork, podcast, visuals, installations, performance – it asks of you to demonstrate the co-creation of being together (see chapter 7).

The reading of this thesis may be met initially with some frustration, you may find some sections repetitive, you may struggle to gauge meaning or you may find the references obscure and difficult to follow. These are merely symptoms of our academic training, the authoritative-imperial-propertied ‘I’ wanting to center itself, wanting to come into relation through our dominant differences. It is my hope you will resist, that you are patient with me, as I learn to unlearn and come into relation as a ‘we’. Writing in liminography is about coming into relation across non-dominant differences (Lugones, 2003), this requires deep listening and reflection. There will be parts that due to our life experiences differing you will not understand, there will be languages unfamiliar to you and concepts that you may encounter for the first time, there are parts written for you and unwritten for the university. As you will come to see in Chapter 7, liminagraphy is about sharing lessons and collecting those seeds which you can take for your own garden.

Chapters 2 to 7 are published or papers in process appearing in forthcoming journals or anthologies, as such they each have an introduction and conclusion and appear to be distinct from each other. For this reason, the chapters can be read in any order, they do not form a linear narrative which would be counter intuitive to the cyclical temporality of liminagraphy. Indeed, what you will also find, is that due to this dance with temporality this thesis tells you about liminagraphy at the same time as it’s doing liminagraphy – making explicit the relations that collectively birthed it into form whilst welcoming you, the reader into the dance of co-creation and cultivating knowledge (Chapter 7).
Decolonizing International D/development Studies?

Much like the citizen of a nation state, marked by modernity/coloniality’s imposed categories; nationality, gender, class and ability at birth; categories which we seek to better understand in order to be liberated from them, this thesis finds itself being born in a discipline which marks it from birth. The following section accounts for its unplanned presence in the field of International D/development Studies (IDS) and what the implications are for the discipline. This thesis builds upon the many valuable contributions to decolonizing specific disciplines, in particular contributions made by Olivia Rutazibwa and Robbie Shilliam to decolonizing IDS, which will be discussed in further detail below.

IDS in its many iterations, as growth (Little, 1982), the fulfilment of basic human needs (Gal tung, 1990), and capabilities (Sen, 1985), continues to evolve along a trajectory of economic growth, modernization theory, theories of ‘underdevelopment’ and, neo-liberalism and the Washington consensus. This unilinear historical chronology takes its starting point as 1945-1948, marked by the end of World War II, the Truman speech, the Marshall plan, signing of the UN Charter and, the establishment of the World Bank and Bretton Woods institutions, with the main tenants of IDS from this perspective being the ‘civilizing mission’ and westernization. A civilizing mission that is in essence a continuation of colonial rule and oppression.

An anti-colonial reading of this period shows contemporaneously the decline of European empires, due in part to the decolonization of many African and Asian states, and the simultaneous entrenching of white domination and western superiority, for example the implementation of apartheid ‘separate development’ in South Africa. According to Olivia Rutazibwa (2019: 165) in On Babies and Bathwater, Decolonizing International Development Studies, IDS “is constitutively defined by colonial amnesia…these recurrent blind spots [mentioned above] are all the

---

7 The spelling ‘D/development’ is used to connect the narratives of ‘big D’ development and ‘little d’ development used in the discipline to differentiate between the former modernization paradigm of post WW2 development in the Global South and latter, focused on the inequalities caused by capitalism (Lewis, 2019). Marking the distinction as yet another fiction of eurocentrism.
That being said, with its relative adolescence, as compared to other more traditional and far more entrenched disciplines, coupled with its rationale of wanting ‘to help people’, IDS “is especially well placed to take on this task [of decolonizing] more seriously and explicitly” (Rutazibwa, 2019: 171). To this end, Rutazibwa (2019) offers a decolonial strategic framework for starting to think through the possibilities of decolonizing IDS: (a) demythologize, (b) desilence and (c) anti-colonially decolonize, which each operate on the levels of ontology, epistemology and normativity respectively – as depicted in the graphic below.

![Figure 1: Framework for decolonizing International Development Studies](image)

Source: Author’s rendition based on Rutazibwa (2019)

**Demythologize**

Demythologizing works at the level of ontology, ‘the what’ is. The grand myth feeding much of IDS is that “the betterment of other people’s life cannot be thought of outside of a Western presence” (Rutazibwa, 2019: 164) or put simply an “ontology of underdevelopment” requiring external intervention (Tripathy and Mohapatra, 2011: 96). This myth is not organic, but builds
on the traditions and practices of the civilizing mission, as described by Césaire (1955: 84) as “the fundamental European lie” and, Enrique Dussel (1993), Walter Mignolo (2012) and Robbie Shilliam (2015) as the mythology of the Eurocentric. According to Rutazibwa (2019: 165) demythologizing is aided by three recurring issues which assist us in breaking with the perpetuation of this myth: “(1) point of origin or departure, (2) Eurocentrism and (3) fragmentation” [emphasis my own].

In IDS our points of origin/departure matter. What Thandika Mkandawire (2011, 7-8) terms the “Truman version of developmentalism” has thus far led us to an impasse as IDS continues to “suffer from a crisis of ideas” triggered in the 1980s (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012: 50). The inability to overcome this impasse is directly linked to a starting point which positions the West now Global North as the purveyor of D/development and the Third World now Global South as passive recipients. A position that reduces D/development to treating real-life symptoms of hunger, water scarcity, disease, malnutrition and poverty, whilst dissociating these from broader questions of power, ontology, epistemology, normativity and representation which are the underlying cause (Tripathy and Mohapatra, 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012).

What if we chose a different starting point, for example the Bandung Conference of 1955, the first significant meeting of newly independent African and Asian states. With twenty-nine participating countries it represented more than half the world’s population at the time (Britannica, ND). At this conference their point of departure was decolonization and they articulated D/development “as a laboratory human aspiration to attain freedom from political, economic, ideological, epistemological, and social domination that was installed by colonialism and coloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012: 49, quoting Mkandawire, 2011, 7). Here the focus on self-determination, freedom and happiness as the tenants of D/development would fundamentally change the way IDS is taught and practiced.

The grand myth implicit within IDS also masks its explicit bias, Eurocentrism, projecting a zero point positionality as naturalized, neutral, objective and thus universal. For the sake of brevity we will focus on the concealment of this universalizing move (Dussel, 1993) rather than an in-depth discussion on Eurocentrism itself, for which you can consult the following
authors (Amin, 1989; Chakrabarty, 2000; Hobson, 2012, Quijano, 2000, Sabaratnam, 2013 and Wallerstein, 1997). This concealment is all the more troubling within IDS given its clear non-Western orientation and its vocation for the betterment of human life. In response scholars have called for the provincializing of Europe (Chakrabarty, 2000) and the de-provincializing of Africa (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018) – pointing out the fissures within the universalizing approach and calling for reparations beyond inclusion and aid.

There needs to be a resistance to *fragmentation* in our storytelling and narratives i.e., which parts of the story do we keep separate, when they in fact belong together? What do we silence in our telling of a particular narrative? Of significance here is Annibal Quijano’s (2000) modernity/coloniality dictum, which shows that one cannot exist without the other, that modernity is co-constitutive of coloniality. However, that doesn’t mean to say that we now start theorizing from the point of coloniality, whilst ignoring modernity. On the contrary scholars such as Gurminder Bhambra (2014), Rosalba Icaza (2017), and Cristina Rojas (2016) encourage us to think through connected histories, using co-creation, relationality, time, space and place. As cautioned by prolific feminist author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) the danger is a “single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story”.

**De-silence/Unmute**

De-silencing/unmuting works at the level of ontology, which also relates to epistemology if you do not view these as mutually exclusive. ‘The how’ do we know what we know. “How is it that colonial amnesia and Eurocentric fragmentation – the ‘mythological’ – can persist, is maintained and invisibilized, even in a context of sustained critical scholarship, of attempts at deconstructing and critiquing what we already know?” (Rutazibwa, 2019: 168). Through erasure, silencing, hierarchized binaries and an absence of space. Erasure works through epistemicide (Santos, 2014) which manifests in two forms, the first and more commonly known, as the overt killing of other knowledges and, the second, more surreptitious form enacted through “oppositional binaries, overrepresentation/hyper-visibilizing (e.g. the ‘crime/ terrorism-Muslim men’ combo), neglect or literal silencing (#WhyIsMyCurriculumWhite) or
oversimplification (‘Africa is a country’), vilification, criminalization (‘corrupt African leaders’) or victimization (Global South women in general)” (Rutazibwa, 2019: 169). Whilst the former has received wide-spread academic attention from various disciplines such as feminist-postcolonial studies (Gayatri Spivak, 1988), feminist standpoint theory (Donna Haraway, 1988), black feminist thought (Patricia Hill Collins, 1990), indigenous approaches (Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 1999) and decolonial approaches (Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 2014), sporadic attention has been given to the former, less obvious forms of silencing. It is only within the last decade that this silencing has been exposed through the work of Sara Ahmed (2012) On Being Included, Zuleika Arashiro and Malba Barahona (eds) (2015) Women in Academia Crossing North-South Borders, Sara de Jong, Rosalba Icaza and Olivia U. Rutazibwa (eds) (2019) Decolonization and Feminisms in Global Teaching and Learning, Sara Motta (2018) Liminal Subjects and Clelia O. Rodríguez (2018) Decolonizing Academia. It is within this emerging cohort of feminist and decolonial feminist scholars that this thesis is embedded, drawing from, learning with and cultivating together collective resistance and liberation.

Hierarchized binaries are expressed by Rutazibwa (2019: 169) in two questions: “(1) ‘Who are (not) the experts?’ (relating to the ways in which silencing manifests itself); and (2) ‘What do we (not) consider expertise?’ (engages with the systematic exclusion of the vast majority of other knowledges or ways of knowing)”. In other words, who is not around the table and why, when asked within IDS it inevitably leads to cognitive dissonance, where the opportunity to meaningfully engage is reoriented toward banal concepts and practices which restore and reinforce the status quo. For example, following Linda Tuhiwai Smith, what research is to indigenous people is what capacity building is to the colonized developing world i.e., the dirtiest word in our vocabulary. Capacity building is a denial of ability, an erasure of knowledges and ways of being and a judgement of our capacity to theorize (think-feel-sense for ourselves). We can be known but we cannot know.

An absence of space refers to the hegemonic austerity of knowledges authorized within academia and IDS. In other words, by clinging to universality and a default epistemology, academia finds itself with a choice between two extremes, an admission of the fallacy of
universality and the hard process of decolonizing (accepting a plurality of knowledges) or maintaining the status quo. A possible pathway out of this predicament is through a reorientation from knowledge production as a capitalist process to knowledge cultivation (Shilliam, 2015, see also Chapter 5).

Anti-colonially decolonize

Anti-colonially decolonize works at the level of normativity, that is ‘the why’. Triggered also by the process of demythologizing, it asks of us “Why are we producing knowledge? What project of society does our engagement with knowledges serve? The colonial status quo (Tri-party and Mohapatra, 2011: 95) or does it foreground the need to break away from it? For radical alternatives, for thinking the world otherwise?” (Rutazibwa, 2019: 171). To anti-colonially decolonize we need to challenge the objectivity and neutrality of the knowledge process by interrogating the ontological and epistemological foundations of our work and whether our work is contributing to the violence and erasure of coloniality.

In line with Rutazibwa’s framework, Robbie Shilliam provides us with the possibility of re-conceptualizing knowledge:

To my mind, decolonial science cultivates knowledge, it does not produce knowledge. Using the Latin roots of these words, we could say that to produce knowledge is to lengthen, prolong or extent, whereas to cultivate knowledge is to till, to turn matter around and fold back on itself so as to rebind and encourage growth. Knowledge production is less a creative endeavor and more a process of accumulation and imperial extension, so that (post)colonized peoples could only consume or extend someone else’s knowledge (of themselves) (Chatterjee, 1998). In short, a colonial science produces knowledge of and for subalterns. Alternatively, knowledge cultivation is a necessarily creative pursuit as it requires the practitioner to turn over and oxygenate the past. Most
importantly, cultivation also infers habitation, which means that knowledge is creatively released as the practitioner enfolds her/him/them/self in the communal matter of her/his/their inquiry. What is more, this constant oxygenation process – a circulatory one – necessarily interacts with a wider biotope, enfolding matter from other habitations. To cultivate knowledge of deep relation can therefore be understood as “grounding”.

In choosing to practice knowledge cultivation we immunize ourselves against the rampant co-option of the ‘decolonial turn’ evident in the popular use of ‘decolonize’ as adjective or metaphor (Tuck & Yang 2012). To this end, Shilliam also provides us with a framework for reading and decolonizing the canon of a discipline (in this case politics) through recontextualizing, reconceptualizing and reimagining. Recontextualizing requires reading a particular author in the colonial and imperial contexts in which their ideas arose. “The act of recontextualizing thinkers by reference to imperialism and colonialism must make a difference to how we understand the logics of these thinkers’ arguments” (Shilliam, 2021: 51-52). That is to say recontextualization inevitably leads to reconceptualization, which has implications for epistemology. Reconceptualization requires “tracking and connecting tissue that arranges concepts and categories in a logical fashion” indicating that as much as recontextualizing is about drawing from the past, reconceptualizing is about “finding concealed or ignored logics in popular and conventional arguments in the present” (Shilliam, 2021: 53-54). These two steps lead us to reimagining, in which we first have to come to understand the ways in which the canon, due to its dominance, has limited the ways in which we can know. “We must imagine, at least in principle, that those who dwell in these marginalized positions have traditions of thought that are generally edifying” (Shilliam, 2021: 54-55).

**The Cobra Effect**

*Nagaraja slithers off the shoulders of Shiva and enters the dreams of the subjects of the British Raj. Some dream of being bitten, others of being chased. The British governor of Delhi snaps awake in the middle of the night in a cold sweat, in his dream the streets were full of serpentine bodies, falling in writhing balls from trees and hissing and spitting in every direction. The next*
morning the subjects of the British Raj share their dreams with each other, it is agreed by the elders that they have been negligent in their duties and a pooja is arranged to offer milk and tender coconut as penance for their lapse. Meanwhile the British governor incensed starts to see snakes everywhere in the rope tying back the curtains, in the turbans of his servants, in the swaying of tree branches, in the curve of the faucet, in the head of the doorknob, in the reins which tethered the horses; finally startled by the dark scrawny wriggling arm of the juvenile hali who served his tea, he decided to act. He proclaimed a decree stating there were too many cobras in Dehli, ordering their slaughter by placing a bounty on their heads. The subjects of the British Raj undernourished by the effects of famine, saw this as an opportunity to feed their starving children. Having lived amongst the cobras for centuries, they had healers who knew how to charm the cobras using the hypnotizing sounds of the double-reed pungi. At the sight of cobra skins being handed over in exchange for loot the governor relaxed, chest puffed in pride at his ingenious incentivising of the natives. He earnestly got down to writing a dispatch to the governor of French Indochina, informing him of the success of his incentive plan, suggesting this could be a good strategy for dealing with his rat problem over there. In the village the elders and healers gathered in concern over the slaughtering of cobras, recalling their collective dream, they feared this would have dire consequences. They hatched a plan to start breeding cobras in order to ensure their survival. Concealing the snake mounds from the authorities by covering them with saris and incense, the subjects of the British Raj managed to keep this gambit going for quite some time. However, eventually the governor became suspicious of the beastly natives, sending his henchmen off to investigate. Once the ploy was up the governor immediately stopped the incentives. With no more bounty to be gained the healers of the village released the captive snakes creating The Cobra Effect. The governor’s dream had come to pass and the city was overrun with snakes. Nagaraja stealthily slithered back upon Shiva’s shoulder content at having helped their kin survive the famine. Meanwhile in French Indochina, Hanoi was teeming with tailless rats.

Based on an anecdote, the cobra effect coined by German economist Horst Siebert (2002) is the most common form of pervasive incentive in economic game theory whereby an incentive has an unintended and undesirable result for the orchestrator, unintentionally rewarding
beneficiaries for making the problem worse. In the normative reading of the cobra effect the
subjects of the British Raj were seen as enterprising opportunists who “converted the snakes
into valuable commodities” (Newell and Doll, 2015). However, using Rutazibwa and Shilliam’s frameworks and starting with what we know, we can demythologize and recontextualise
narratives attending not only to the erasure, but filling in the volumes of silences through relational knowledge. In redressing these voids new points of departure are taken in the present
which desilence and reconceptualise taken for granted ideas and concepts, allowing us to connect the struggles of the past with those in the present, in this way acknowledging that current social movements carry placards etched with slogans from the past, recognising that resistance to oppression takes many forms and these “are forms of understanding that do not obey the epistemic frameworks, [nor] the dominant narratives of the modern/colonial order” (Icaza and Vázquez, 2013: 699).

This thesis has been nurtured by both Rutazibwa and Shilliam’s frameworks gaining from it the steps necessary for unlearning the discipline and the dominant positionality of the authoritative-imperial-propertied ‘I’. In coming to realise the ways in which we have been taught to see and how we have been educated to forget – demythologizing, recontextualising, desilencing, reconceptualising, anti-colonially decolonizing and reimagining, offers a pathway to the creative potential of decolonial work, bringing to light avenues for cultivating knowledge of the past and future in the present. Rutazibwa and Shilliam’s frameworks have collectively cleared a path for this thesis to take a different starting point. The following section discusses the trajectory of this PhD project, showing how ‘starting with what we know’ can lead to a parallel path of ‘starting with what we don’t know’.

The PhD Journey

In setting off on a decolonial path Rolando Vázquez (2020: 163) offers the following moves: “I) Modernity, II) Coloniality, III) The Colonial Difference and IV) Decoloniality. The journey of this thesis has followed this non-linear path, not deliberately but as an unfolding where, the questions raised overlap and intersect with each other. This thesis initially began in 2014 with the following research approach and question:
This study, framed within the emerging culture-centered approach to development communication aims to valorise the Kat River community as agents of change, by exploring their perceptions of the meaning and expectations of development. This leads into an interrogation of the relevance of the hegemonic nature of dominant rationalist discourses of development, as compared to local understandings of development discourse. This study will provide a nuanced exploration of the ways in which dominant and local discourses of development, either compliment or contradict each other, thereby leading to development that values community agency in light of government policy.

Recognizing the ways in which we are complicit in the silencing of others and in enacting violence while under colonial logics is a necessary first step in liminography, and one that needs to be held with non-judgement and compassion. The shame and guilt of having reproduced the violence we claim to be against can be debilitating, but does nothing to serve us in our pursuit of collective liberation. Instead, using this *conmoción*\(^8\) (shock) as fertilizer, we come to realize the fiction of modernity’s “dominance of vision and more generally the dominance of representation over experience” (Vázquez, 2020: 23). In bringing into question our internalized oppressions we start to reflect on the ways in which modernity has wounded us, leading us to question dominant frameworks, concepts and ideas.

This questioning brought with it a long period of silence. The unravelling of the ‘I’, the decolonizing of the self was painful and the shedding of this dominant ‘I’ felt like an alienation, a losing of who I thought I was. During this period 2016-2019 I encountered Rosalba Icaza, who became my supervisor, Savitri Satoe, my yoga teacher and spiritual mentor, and I met Saara Chandini Dasarath, Parvez Ali Dasarath and Ella Noor Dasarath my nieces and nephew born in these years. These teachers gave me an anchor to the present, past and future which allowed

\(^8\) Concept in Spanish explained by Rosalba Icaza. See also Flores (2015) *LA ESPINA EN LA CARNE* and Anzaldúa (2015) *Now we Shift*. 
me to slowly come to voice. The first utterance to emerge after *nepantla* (Anzaldúa, 2015), the in-betweeness of the borderlands was a poem penned in 2018 after an encounter with Olivia Rutazibwa at a seminar organised by Rosalba.

Feast

Knowledge  
I am hungry for it  
With gluttonous abandon  
I devour it  
Leaving you depleted  
Exhausted  
Drained  
Still you come back for more

Why? Because I promised you something  
A piece of paper  
Legitimacy  
A seat  
A table

Ah... your ancestors fell for that too  
So many generations, yet so little learned  
Once a coolie, always a coolie

You say you are doing this for them  
But you did not heed their warning  
Silly, they could not read,  
what's your excuse?  
A print too small

You can stay here you know,  
and feed off the knowledge of others as I do  
Drain them, deplete them, leave them worse off than before  
Call this research  
We will reward you, praise you  
hell we’ll even give you that piece of paper

Go on then...this is what you came for  
Cannibalise yourself in the pursuit of knowledge  
Gnaw on the bones of your ancestors  
Drink their blood spilled in the (sugarcane) field
So that you may arise, anew…in my own image
And…whilst we drown you in a black gown
Think not of your ancestors draped in the *kala pani*
Think not of their sweat fertilizing the soil
Think not of their tears watering the sugarcane
Think not of their backs broken to sweeten my tea

Think instead that you are one of us now
and feast

In June 2019 during the co-creation of knowledge that took place in the workshop entitled *Undoing Colonial Patriarchy in Academia from the Margins*, the serpent tongue emerged uttering a refusal ‘I am no longer willing to use the methodologies that have been complicit in my own dehumanization’. This statement once voiced created a doorway, yet darkness lay in its midst. A few months later through an encounter with elder Linda Tuhiwai Smith at the Millennium conference on *Extraction, Expropriation, Erasure? Knowledge Production in International Relations* at the London School of Economics, a new research question emerged.

*In what ways can we cultivate knowledge that is epistemically non-violent in the context of the racialized, gendered, colonial, neoliberal university?* This was linked to two objectives (1) provide a collectively conceptualised methodological approach to epistemically non-violent research, and (2) foreground the experiences of women of colour in Dutch academia who are resisting, cultivating and transgressing academic spaces by questioning what it means to be erased, to have their/our knowledges omitted, to be hyper-visibilized and silenced at the same time.

*Modernity*

In questioning “the what” attached to the interrogation of modernity the following two chapters emerged: Chapter 2 – *From Decolonizing the Self to Coming to Voice* and Chapter 3 – *From Decolonizing the Self to Liberating the Senses* calling into question the ways in which we have come to be conditioned into reproducing modernity. Chapter 2 starts with positionality, using Fred Moten’s (2018) “I consent not to be a single being” as the mantra which accounted of not knowing. In this chapter the taken for granted subjectivity of the individual subject is
interrogated in order to create space for the relational plural self to emerge. Following on from this Chapter 3 continues the life-long journey of decolonizing the self this time interrogating modernity’s hold over the senses and its connection to the separation from ourselves and each other. Using poetry as an expression of enfleshed knowing which heals the colonial wounds caused by modernity’s violence, this chapter inscribes revolution as a relational act, one which cannot be done alone. These two chapters are an attempt to escape the enclosure of modernity’s representation and attends to the positionality necessary for approaching the aforementioned research question.

Coloniality

The next two chapters: Chapter 3, Women of Colour are not Human. We are Relational Beings and Chapter 4, Decolonial Re-existence and the Myths of Knowledge Production attend to coloniality’s displacement and erasure of other ways of knowing-being in as much as this is co-constitutive of modernity. Chapter 3 seeks to question coloniality through the imposition of the gender and race as colonial constructs which connect us in struggle and resistance. Extending this argument to the category human, it then goes on to reclaim our ways of being through the spiritual work of return to nature, returning to the soil allowing us to come into deep relation with ourselves, each other and the life of earth. Chapter 3 creates an awareness of the “plurality of worlds of sensing and meaning [and] a plurality of positionalities” (Vázquez, 2020: 165) necessary for the question of knowledge production and disciplines in Chapter 4. Structured around three interrelated myths of knowledge production in the social sciences this chapter reveals what types of knowledges have been “rendered invisible, irrelevant and disposable” within the canon. Marking these absences the chapter moves on to state the conditions necessary for a reorientation away from knowledge production and towards knowledge cultivation as a life-affirming approach to research which hold the potential for decolonial re-existence.

Colonial Difference

In 2018 I attended the Decolonisation and Re-Afrikanisation conference held at the UNISA campus in Pretoria, there I met one of the co-organizers Nokuthula Hlabangane, whose kind words of encouragement lent volume to a shaky, stuttering and insecure voice emerging from a fledgling serpent tongue. It is through the work of Hlabangane that Chapter 6: Hand in Hand
Refusing Research during a Pandemic emerged. Hlabangane's (2018) deft justifications for the incompatibility of ‘methodology’ to African and relational ways of being-knowing provided the arguments for questioning the colonial difference. Following Anibal Quijano’s dictum “there is no modernity without coloniality” (Vázquez, 2020: 165), it takes complicity as its entry point refusing western methodologies, thereby opening space for the emergence of relational research practice. Offering hand-in-hand as one such practice which facilitates the drafting of a collective relational ethics which holds us accountable. This redirection nullified the aforementioned objective; as methodology, in its explorative search for certainty and stability, regulates, measures and controls our ways of being together, making these methods anti-relational.

Decoloniality

Decoloniality is grounded in practices which aim to counter the “double erasure” of modernity/coloniality and the colonial difference (Vázquez, 2020). In recognising the depth of what has been lost and reclaiming the vestiges that remain, decoloniality is a “move beyond resistance”, a “movement of re-existence’ where through mourning and healing we co-create relational worlds where life is affirmed. Decoloniality concerns itself with the ‘how’ of decolonizing and as such this thesis offers Chapter 7, Liminalgraphy: Lessons in life-affirming research practices for collective liberation and Chapter 9, IqhawekaziRani an anthology of poems, as examples of the how. In coming to the how, an encounter with Stefano Harney in December 2019 at a symposium entitled Collaboration, Creativity and Change in the Imaginations of our Kingdom co-hosted by Francio Guadeloupe in Amsterdam, changed the way in which the understanding of ‘relations’ shifted in this research from ‘representation’ based relations founded on difference to interconnected relations based on mutuality, reciprocity, reception, respect and love, bringing to light the creative potential of being together and co-creating. Thereby shifting the focus of the research question from ‘epistemic non-violence’ to ‘life-affirming’.

Chapter 7, is the core of this thesis offering an approach to research that is positioned metaphysically in the borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987) and materially in the flesh, calling forth
knowledges through life affirming research practices that honour relations and aim for collective liberation (discussed in further detail below). Presenting a snapshot of a few of the many relations which birthed liminagraphy, Chapter 7 honours these relations through the podcast ‘Liminal Hangouts’ in which their worlds and words can be heard in their own voice, thereby avoiding decontextualization, abstraction and analysis. As with the naming of relations in the preceding chapter descriptions of each episode’s relation/s bares a name/s and in line with the ethics of relational accountability (Wilson, 2008). These lessons form the ‘how’ of liminagraphy reveal the creative flow of co-creation which comes from being together. The lessons, in no particular order, are as follows:

- **Whom is leaning from whom** with Rosalba Icaza, Associate Professor of Global Politics, Gender and Diversity at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Erasmus University Rotterdam. Here we discuss learning to unlearn, mentorship or the undoing of mentorship and the importance of questioning.

- **Being together** with Erasmus School of Colour (ESOC), where members Merel Dap, Zouhair Hammana, Melisa Ersoy, Nia Nikoladze, and Alyssa Renfurm share with us the challenge of self-organising as students whilst coming up against the bureaucracy of the university; as well as the importance of cultivating safe spaces through friendship.

- **Finding our Rhythm** with social art-ivist Anima Jhagroe-Ruissen, we dance through rhythm attending to the silences of separation, by discussing the co-creation of knowledge that happens during dance and how this changes the performer and observer.

- **Listening** with Constance Dupuis and Nanna Kirstine Leets Hansen, both PhD researchers, the former based at the ISS and the latter at Roskilde University in Denmark. With Constance and Nanna we discuss our journey of unlearning and loving across difference
and the valuable lessons in learning to listen and what possibilities that opens up for relational accountability.

• **Being/Becoming** with Luthando Ngema and Charmika Samaradiwakera Wijesundara, both lecturers and PhD researchers, the former based at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban and the latter at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Collectively we discuss the concept of Ubuntu, its philosophy, use in our everyday lives and its appropriation into the canon and the implications of this on our journey of being/becoming.

• **Writing our Collective Liberation** with Rosa Itandehui Olivera Chávez and Paulina Trejo Mendez. Paulina is an artist and lecturer at the University of Bonn in Germany and Rosa Itandehui is an indigenous economist, storyteller and poet. Here we discuss the ways in which we are unseen by dominant logics, discussing whether this violence ever touches our soul and how spirituality is central to decolonizing the self.

Music for the podcast is performed and produced by the indigenous artist Ntombi’Yelanga based in South Africa. The title song *Siya nibingelela bo Ma* (greetings to all our mothers), instrumental interlude and closing title are inspired by the reading of From Decolonizing the Self to Coming to Voice (Chapter 2) and poems from *IqhawekaziRani* (Chapter 9) some of which were written through collective writing sessions (listen to podcast *Writing our Collective Liberation*). This sharing of knowledges across geographical location, disciplines, genres and languages is a characteristic indicative of liminagraphy’s cross-pollination approach to getting creative with our differences (Lorde, 2017[1979]).

**Liminigraphy: a thesis**

Sharing the burden of unanswered questions and starting with what we don’t know liminigraphy reaches out for relations in order to know ourselves, each other and all life on earth. Thus, putting forth the thesis that all knowledge in the human and social sciences is co-created
and relational. It argues this by demonstrating the ways in which colonial logics underpinning western epistemology denies this relation, positioning itself as separate in the zero-point of earthlessness, worldlessness and contemporaneity (Vázquez reading Castro Gómez, 2020). In enacting the Cartesian dismembered subjectivity, the objective observer with the gods-eye view (positivist) represents experience as quantifiable data thereby reproducing the codes of colonialism and imperialism (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999); codes based on the exploration, seizure and bordering of lands, the genocide, capture and enslavement of peoples, and the epistemicide of other ways of knowing and being. As Nokuthula Hlabangane (2018: 671) notes in approaching the question of whether methodology can subvert the logics of its principal, “[s]uch data depend on a speaking individual with unbridled agency who is able to abstract himself from the webs of significance in which he is caught”. This position based on the work of Réne Descartes whose claim to have “birthed himself out of himself” (Wilshire, 1989: 94) through isolation and self-reflection, is the fiction upon which the individualism of the researcher is based. An individualism which “is a singularly Western trait and ideal” (Hlabangane, 2018: 672). Countering this monoculture of objectivity, qualitative research with its attentiveness to experience and subjectivity, positions itself as being more amenable to co-creation and relational ways of knowing, yet its origins in psychoanalysis crossing into the market economy in the early 20th century belies its aims. Its servitude remains to the sovereignty of the individual as consumer and the market betraying any meaningful attempts at relational ways of knowing. In other worlds, it cannot escape the “solitary, self-discovering traveller…conquering and subjugating the world for his own gain” (Hlabangane, 2018: 672). It remains in the enclosure of an authoritative-imperial-propertied ‘I’, a position where it’s only recourse “to become someone is to project an image of itself”, a self “seeing the world as representation, experiencing the world as representation, experiencing itself as representation” (Vázquez, 2020: 155).

This reveals the limitations of representation, in what Vázquez (2020: 177) calls the “era of enunciation”. Reminiscent of Gaytri Spivak’s (1988) *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Enunciation only allows the subject to speak within the enclosure of modernity/coloniality, that is to say the subaltern is only invited to speak their pain and humiliation (Tuck & Yang, 2014). A related limitation to enunciating within the enclosure of modernity/coloniality is that the representation
of subjectivity forecloses on the possibility of a plural self or plural ways of knowing (Lugones, 2003). The intelligibility of modernity/coloniality is set upon the universal, a singular subjectivity observable through a dominant gaze which searches for purity and authenticity through abstraction (Lugones, 2003). This abstraction of a gaze which is nowhere/everywhere consumes all that is other. Put another way, the separation inherent in the move to abstraction diminishes the possibility of relationality to near impossibility (Vázquez, 2020).

Whilst the argument above may appear on the surface to overly focus on the researcher or the subjectivity of the researcher, it has further reaching implications for the ways in which we practice research and gain knowledge. The first is the orientation towards knowledge as something to be found ‘out there’ in the colonies, in the field, in the plantations and factories; in other words, not in the everyday of the researcher. This convenient separation of narratives reinforces the hegemony of knowledge produced in the North (Western Europe and North America in particular) deepening inequality and perpetuating a neo-colonial science under the guise of collaboration. In addition, this extractive approach to knowledge - where knowledge is seen as an extractable commodity, to be produced, marketed and consumed - implicates the process in violence and (academic) capitalism (Leyva Solano, 2019). What many indigenous peoples have come to call the ‘death project’ (Suarez-Krabbé 2016, see also Tufiwi-Smith, 1999; Chilisa, 2012 and Tuck and Yang, 2014).

Importantly this has implications for the practice of research in the Global South⁹ and increasingly from the margins in the Global North which is more attentive to epistemology, cosmology, ontology and axiology as co-constitutive. This relationality at the ontological level can be expressed through the dictum “umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye abantu “(a human being is a human being in the ethical sense only through the recognition, respect, affirmation, and promotion of the well-being of other human beings, including the whole of nature) found in the ethics and philosophy of Ubuntu, but which resonates across indigenous understandings of being (Ramose, 2019: 262). This statement disrupts the assertion that we can only know each other across

⁹ See Epistemologies of the South by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014).
difference through power relations. It offers us a way to be with ourselves, each other, all life on earth and in the spiritual plain across non-dominant difference whilst orientating us towards life and living in harmony.

For the ways in which we cultivate knowledge this orientation towards life-affirming research practices, makes a significant impact particularly to the ways in which we can start to decolonize and reclaim knowledges on multiples levels. Liminography, positioning itself as a relational approach which affirms life seeks collective liberation through relations, spirituality, the metaphysical, cosmological and ancestral. An anchoring of positionality, in the case of liminagery being in the flesh, opens up onto-epistemological space for the disavowal of the authoritative-imperial-propertied ‘I’. For as Gloria Anzaldúa reminds us “[y]ou share a category of identity wider than any social position or racial label” (Anzaldúa, 2015: 138). In other words, it gives us a way out of representation. Spirituality, an important means of resistance which has survived the impositions of colonialism and imperialism, is the essence of liminagery, guiding the hands, eyes, ears, lips and nose. When the senses are orientated towards flesh and towards life, it opens the possibility for entering the “era of reception” (Vázquez, 2020: 177). Here listening takes on a heightened role, tuning into the subtleties of receiving, hosting and reciprocating. Through this “spiritual activism” (Anzaldúa, 2015) we not only return to the practices stripped away through the violence and brutality of monotheistic religions followed by strict secularism but in the reclaiming of knowledges we set out on a journey of healing which counters the fragmentation of the selves, calling into harmony our beings, whilst simultaneously attending to collective generational trauma, colonial wounds and the harm caused by clashing with the violence of oppression in the present.

Dusk

At the time of writing this chapter, the Zapatista’s arrived on the shores of Europe, sailing across the Atlantic, a reverse route of that taken by the conquistadores 500 years earlier. They arrived in Spain with the resonating call of, “[w]e weren’t conquered – we won’t surrender” (Vidal 2021), emphasising that the history of indigenous resistance is equally as long as the
history of colonialism and imperialism. Carrying with them the message of arriving in Europe “to listen and learn from local struggles” for social justice we are reminded of the liberatory praxis of encountering each other across non-dominant difference.

As the horseman of COVID-19 is upon us sword and whip in hand, we are reminded of the social protests that lead to social change in the wake of its predecessor’s hoof beats. In We Will Not Cancel Us and Other Dreams of Transformative Justice, Adrienne Maree Brown (2021: 42) points out that “we are in the very infantile stages of learning how to be in transformative justice practices with each other, to be abolitionist in real time, because we are still beginning, but the crises are so big, urgent, and constant that there is some leapfrogging, rushing ahead of ourselves, ahead of understanding a clear shared framework, clear distinctions”. Liminagraphy is an attempt to provide a pathway which helps us to come into relation with ourselves, each other and the life of earth, so that we can be together in transformative justice practice without causing harm to each other. It hopes to demonstrate the creative potential of being together, even through physical distance, showing us what is in our hands and how we may start to collectively dream our abolitionist present-futures.

You, me, and I’s
stand at a crossroads
awaiting a signal
in murmuration\textsuperscript{10}
we
bring tons of steel
to a screeching halt
choosing life
we
defy
capitalisms urgency
a rush towards death

\textsuperscript{10} See the choreography of Sadeck Waff in Murmuration/Tutting \url{https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9Ixog-vCxo&t=189s}
we carry the story
of us
with
every breath
practicing
revolution
From Decolonising the Self to Coming to Voice

Of the myriad calls for decolonising—the university, the museum, the curriculum, the mind, and so on—few have given attention to decolonising the self. In my/our process of decolonising the self, poetry has been pivotal in giving name to the nameless, which is dreamed but not yet realised (Lorde 2007, 73). As a black woman/woman of colour, following the pen strokes of Audre Lorde (2007) and Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), who put flesh back into words, poetry is a necessity in decolonising and reconstituting the self. In what follows, I hope to walk with the reader on this path of realising my colonised self, decolonising it through the emergence of the plural self, and the eventual reconstituting of self as a coming to voice (Lorde 2007, 79–86).

For those of us seeking higher education as former colonised beings, we enter the academy as both the researcher and the researched. There is a pressure to present ourselves either as a traditional representative of an entire region or ethnicity, or as an assimilated “modern” researcher, with the dichotomy never being questioned. Yet this fragmenting of the self points directly to the limitation of the individual subjective “I”. In The Universal Machine, Fred Moten (2018, ix) challenges us to contemplate the exhaustion of phenomenology due to its clinginess and servitude to the individual, an inherent assumption within phenomenology that “renders no-thingness unavailable and unavowable” (2018, ix). What Moten alludes to here is the absence of space within phenomenology for us to claim our humanity. In other words, a self that seeks individuality through subjective representation remains colonised and any “decolonising” aims are cancelled out by the individual’s obedience to modernity/coloniality (cf. Quijano 2007).

---

12 This project is inspired by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o’s iconic project of “decolonising the mind” (Ngũgĩ 1986).
13 The poetry referred to here is the “revelatory distillation of experience, not the sterile word play that, too often, the white fathers distorted the word poetry to mean—in order to cover a desperate wish for imagination without insight” (Lorde 2007, 73).
Decolonising the self, then, requires grappling with what is left after we strip away the years, accolades and achievements bestowed upon us by indoctrinated formal schooling and learning how to speak from and beyond the colonial wound as an act of collective healing and what it means to live-think-be and do decolonial feminist work. It asks us to reimagine ourselves in relation, invoking within us the connection to ourselves, our ancestors, the land, our bodies and others, so that the knowledge that is inherent and deep within us may be cultivated. It asks, when we peel away the layers of scar tissue necrotised at the colonial wound through ‘epistemological deep listening’ and heal all that has been erased, denied, shamed, negated and exiled, what emerges?

**IqhawekaziRani**

I am not a daughter of this soil  
It is my adopted home  
A home that cradles my orphaned soul  

You say, I am not African  
I am African  
I am African in my heartbeat  
I am African in my compassion  
I am African in my generosity  
I am African in my determination  

It is the only reality I know  

You say, I am not Indian  
I am Indian  
I am Indian in my breath  
I am Indian in my kindness  
I am Indian in my courageousness  
I am Indian in my resilience  

It is the only existence I know  

I am a daughter of two Mothers  
I cried for *Umama waseNdiya*\(^\text{14}\), as I was held by *Am'mā āppirikkā*\(^\text{15}\)

---

\(^\text{14}\) *Umama WaseNdiya*—Mother India in isiZulu.  
\(^\text{15}\) *Am'mā āppirikkā*—Mama Africa in Tamil.
Do not ask me to choose!

Both have raised me
one breast feeding my fire
one breast feeding my spirit

My feet move to the rhythm of your drums
one foot following the *tabla*\(^{16}\)
one foot following the *isigubhu*\(^{17}\)

It hurts *Am'mā āppirikkā*
It hurts *Umama waseNdiya*

My tears fall at your feet
You catch me as they fall

My child, your heart beats with the rhythm of *Am'mā āppirikkā*
My child, your breath moves with the harmony of *Umama waseNdiya*

My child, your body is Indian
My child, your being is African
Moving in perfect synchronicity

Rise *Qhawekazi*\(^{18}\)
Rise *Rani*\(^{19}\)

Rise, so you can raise others

In my/our process of decolonising the self, echoing Fred Moten’s (2018) dictum, *I consent not to be a single being.* In foregrounding the privilege inherent in the choice of positioning ourselves as black women or women of colour, I/we acknowledge the “scales in the intensity of colonial wounds” (Mignolo and Walsh 2018, 125). As a third-generation South African woman of Indian ancestry, whose caste oppression was dropped to the depths of the *kala pani* (black waters), only to be picked up as hoes and machetes in the sugar plantations of British Natal, followed by white domination, brutality and dehumanisation known as apartheid, I/we consent

\(^{16}\) Twin hand drums from the Indian subcontinent

\(^{17}\) Double-headed Nguni drum

\(^{18}\) *Qhawekazi* in isiZulu refers to a queen and heroine who fights for her being and her people.

\(^{19}\) *Rani*—Queen in Tamil.
not to be a single being. As the first generation to attend university, first in KwaZulu-Natal and currently at a northern-European institution, and the first woman from a lineage largely erased to be in the privileged position of being able to write ourselves into history, I/we consent not to be a single being, because our fates are inextricably tied. My dear black women and women of colour mothers, sisters and daughters, don’t you see, to not be in solidarity is to “sit on the same throne we have been forced to kneel before … [to] meet the crooked standards of excellence of the [baas, master, sahib, memsahib] conquistadores and slave holders … still in the grip of imperial thinking … [which] always sacrifices someone to imperial dreams” (Morales Levins 1998, 39).

**Voice**
Who are we when we are not spoken for
spoke of
spoken over
when we are not given a voice
not given a platform to amplify our voice
not given the volume control of our voice

Who are we when we find ourself hypervisibilised
invisibilised
represented
erased

What sounds have been muted in the depths of our colonial wound
A cacophony of visceral screams
filling our mouths
swallowed
stuck in our throats
swallowed
wrenching our guts
carried
womb to womb
grandmother to mother
mother to daughter

Our scream
is the sound of your first breath
is the sound of birth
of life itself
of thunder rolling
of wind howling
of waves crashing
of night turning to day
of sun rising
of clouds moving
of flowers blooming
of leaves falling
of day turning to night
of stars shining
of moon waxing and waning

This is the sound of our voice.
From Decolonising the Self to Liberating the Senses

The rains were so late that year. But throughout that hot, dry summer those black storm clouds clung in thick folds of brooding darkness along the low horizon. There seemed to be a secret in their activity, because each evening they broke the long, sullen silence of the day, and sent soft rumbles of thunder and flickering slicks of lightening across the empty sky. They were not promising rain. They were prisoners, pushed back, in trapped coils of boiling cloud. ~ Bessie Head, Maru (2010: 221)

maAfrika amahle, let us take stock; as we sit here with nothing but thin air, the spray of mist our only reminder that there once was a ‘rainbow nation’. A useful metaphor during turbulent times. Rainbows by their nature are not meant to last and can only be seen under very specific conditions: the sun has to be behind us, it also has to be low in the sky and there has to be rain, mist or water droplets in front of us to refract light creating the iridescent colours. In other words, where we are positioned matters. It has become viscerally clear, in the month of July 2021, that the majority have constant clouds raining poverty overhead, covered in a never-ending thick fog of precarity and survival, and those lucky enough to have jobs leave home before sunrise and return well after it has set. For this majority, there is no rainbow; the native South African remains “a pariah in the land of his [her/their] birth” (Plaatje, 2007 [1916]: 21).

Black Sun

Clouds hang low
blanketing those beneath
in dusk’s golden glow
we stand
black silent spikes
like those on the walls
prisoning
homes

---

21 isiZulu translation to English ‘Beloved Africans’.
22 In July 2021, social unrest broke out in my home province KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng (South Africa) following the arrest of former President Jacob Zuma. A spark which ignited a powder keg resulting in rioting, looting, murder and violence, fueled by harsh lockdowns, unemployment and extreme inequality worsened by the COVID19 pandemic. The worst violence experienced since the end of Apartheid, lives were lost with stockings of a race war between the Indian and Black communities.
23 All poems in the article are by the author.
in Chatsworth
Umlazi
Lamontville
Phoenix
KwaMashu
Wentworth
Cato Manor

in our thousands
common, innocuous
stoic statues
in deep meditation
we wait

as the last rosy ray
of sun’s dying wish
lands upon the tip
of our *iklwa*\(^{24}\)

inspired
we shiver and shake
galvanizing swiftly
we melt and murmur
one after the other
until there is no
one or other

wings fan feathers
countless *ihawu*\(^{25}\)
pierce the skies

maneuver left
we di(v)e
ascend right
how can we survive?

black suns of the night
whose irises shine stars
mistaken for gems
eye for an eye
bleeds blood diamonds

\(^{24}\) IsiZulu – meaning short spear
\(^{25}\) IsiZulu – meaning Nguni shield
as we cry,  
“where are our stolen fathers?”

Clouds hang low 
blanketing those beneath 
in dusk’s golden glow 

as the star-lings take flight

Properties of the Self\textsuperscript{26}  
Come, \textit{maAfrika amahle asihambe ndawonye}\textsuperscript{27}.

Recent events have brought to the fore the critical need for us to address our colonial wounds, beginning with a decolonizing of the self (Sheik, 2020). In order to enflesh (see Spillers, 1987; Copeland, 2010) ourselves back into being of and from the earth, we first need to acknowledge the depth of colonial logics we have internalized and the degrees of separation we have come to take as given. As we reflect \textit{maAfrika amahle}, let us begin with the question of what has really been stolen? The opening line to Stefano Harney and Fred Moten’s \textit{All Incomplete} (2021: 13) reads “The first theft shows up as rightful ownership”. They go on to delineate this ownership through two mutually constitutive strands: private property and the self. You see \textit{maAfrika amahle}, in order to own pieces of the earth we need to first separate ourselves from it. We need to claw out the ochre from our skins, drain the waters from our eyes and douse the fire in our souls, so we may take ownership of ourselves as individuals. Whilst, during colonization and by extension apartheid, our bodies were marked as “property that can flee” (Harney & Moten, 2021: 17) through slavery, indenture, the \textit{dompas}\textsuperscript{28}, arrest, kidnap; where we were owned, traded, bought, sold, tortured; our cages imposed upon by the overlords, plantation owners,
baas\textsuperscript{29}, landlords; these days through this self-owning individuation we choose our cages becoming private property, individuals, consumers, and as such we begin to extract, harm and steal from ourselves, from others and from earth. Trapping ourselves we hawk our time for currency to buy back our freedom from apartheid’s coffers. Yet, our freedom can never be granted by those systems whose laws and acts require us as slaves and the extraction of the life of earth.

There is no freedom to be found in the shopping malls, at the bottom of trolleys, in aisle number four nor five, at the tills or through smashed store-fronts. Where some pay cash and others don’t pay at all, both are acts of ownership, of taking for the individual. You see *maAfrika amahle*, “[t]he moment you say it is mine because I worked on it [or for it] and improved it, or you say that I am me because I worked on myself and improved myself, you start a war. And by misattributing that initiation of this war to nature, you then codify this war as the (anti)social contract” (Harney & Moten, 2021: 32). What has really been stolen is the flesh from our bones, the flesh that identified us as pieces belonging to the earth, belonging to each other. “All property is loss because all property is the loss of sharing” (Harney & Moten, 2021: 14).

When we start this journey of decolonizing the self and healing, the loss, can often feel debilitating. We are losing the “properties of the self” (Harney & Moten, 2021: 33) we have been accumulating; those temporary wound dressings which the ego so calculatingly placed. These ‘properties of the self’, race, religion, gender, sexuality, class, disability and their intersecting oppressions of the individual, are only ever constituted through the imposition of colonial logics (Lugones, 2007, Harney & Moten, 2021). These are ‘the master’s tools’\textsuperscript{30} of continued

\textsuperscript{29} Boss in Dutch and Afrikaans. Used in the South African context to refer to a supervisor or employer, especially a white man in charge of black, brown and coloured people.

self-improvement\(^{31}\) which have gentrified our existence from ‘private property which flees’ to private property which accumulates. Put another way, where these intersections were meant to name our struggles, we have come to be defined by them; where we identify with it as part of our being. This is the trap of representation, we begin to mimic the modern/colonial order (Vázquez, 2020), we compete, loot, horde, accumulate, stockpile, take more than we need; when questioned, we point fingers, navel gaze and blame each other; we withdraw into our bleeding, tortured, aching bodies; seeking refuge by dressing it up, drinking it down, masking its scent, gorging our stomachs, binging our eyes and still the longing never subsides, the pain does not relent and the colonial wound festers.

**Enfleshing\(^{32}\) Poetry**

We are a people “bearing trans-generational trauma, widespread mental illness and extreme levels of violence” (Ndlovu, 2020: 14). We have been maimed by cycles of abuse unable to flee, to become fugitive; the dehumanization has stripped us of our stories, our indigeneity, culture, languages, rituals and traditions, ancestors and kin. As a private-propertied-self we have in its place “the self-justifying mythologies of the perpetrators” (Morales, 1998: 4). In *Medicine Stories* Aurora Levins Morales (1998: 4) makes a key connection between abuse and collective oppression, stating that “abuse is the local eruption of systematic oppression and oppression the accumulation of millions of small systemic abuses”. As if foretelling the reality of post-apartheid South Africa, she goes on to say that this abuse, inexplicable in the face of ‘humanity’, must either be explained away i.e., the rainbow nation or “we accept that we are less than human and lose ourselves, and our capacity to resist, in the experience of victimhood” (Morales, 1998: 4).

\(^{31}\) Following Harney & Moten (2021: 33) self-improvement is understood here as the individual created in order to enter into the anti(social) contact. This self-improving individual then begins to accumulate properties which it can put to work.

\(^{32}\) In *Enfleshing Freedom*, liberation theologian M. Shawn Copeland (2010) uses enfleshing to explain how the connection between the brutalization of black bodies under slavery and their denied freedom, attends not only to the dead but also to those of their living descendants. In this article enfleshing is used to speak of the spirits of those who have departed with their freedom denied, as well as to us, the living descendants who possessed by these spirits, carrying their and our wounds on our bodies, unaware that the remedy is to be found in the flesh.
Let us tend to our wounds, maAfrika amahle. The healing must begin. We start with the flesh. Not the animated skeletal corpse of the private-propertied-self, modernity’s anatomical body, who is enclosed in “the generalized conditions of earthlessness (separation from Earth), worldlessness (separation from communities) and contemporaneity (the loss of relational time)” (Vázquez, 2020: 155). In decolonizing the self, we soften and journey inwards and touch the mnemonic body – the one who remembers (Chávez & Vázquez, 2017). The mnemonic body is the one who cannot be captured, enslaved, reduced, commodified, enclosed. The mnemonic body is light, she flows with the wind, floats on waters currents, whilst still being grounded and rooted, she makes many ‘crossings’ between worlds seen and unseen, felt but not touched, heard yet unspoken.

Liberate our senses

as we breathe
to die a self
suffocating
intestines snaked noose
inside our necks

touch our eyes
with words
we dream
while awake

our ears speak
tongues
taste lines
sung in silence

our lips read
visions
out of sight
in mind

---

33 M. Jaqui Alexander (2005: 23) in Pedagogies of Crossing, uses crossings to refer not only to the ocean routes across the Atlantic and Indian oceans which carried bodies as cargo, but also “to evoke/ invoke the crossroads the place of convergence and endless possibility, the place where we put down and discard the unnecessary in order to pick up that which is necessary”.
our skin smells
verses
heard incense-d
by spirits

liberate our senses
as we breathe
life
back into
being

When she, the mnemonic body speaks—what is voiced is poetry. Enfleshed poetry speaks to deep relation, where the mnemonic body evokes that which has been stolen, the flesh off our bone which identified us as belonging to the earth and to each other. *Andihambi ndondwa*[^34].

We hear you there, comrade at the back “*ai voetsak wena*[^35], *we are revolutionaries not Shakespeare*”. You are right, enfleshed poetry is not the “sterile word play…”[of] the white fathers” (Lorde, 2017 [1979]: 2) nor the rhyme, meter, scales and form of Anglo-Saxon poetry we learned in high school. We are talking about the verses imprinted in our flesh, the ‘struggle poetry’ written in exile, *izimbongi*[^36] praised on the streets, *ku femba*[^37] in the township and spoken word in the ghetto. We are talking about that poetry which is not a luxury, that is a “vital necessity of our existence” (Lorde, 2017 [1979]: 2). Enfleshed poetry heals in community, through a reconnection with spirit, a remembering of who we really are, in “the bearing witness, in the naming of trauma and in the grief and rage and defiance that follow” (Morales, 1998: 16). This enfleshment is present in the healing work of poet Angifi Dladla. Through the Femba Writing Project Dladla taught poetry and play writing in schools, prisons and community centers for 30 years. He was keenly aware that there is “something the dead know” (Dladla, 2017) and much of his work is dedicated to healing the wounds that keep the spirits of the dead[^34] Ngiyabonga sis Ongezwa Mbele for sharing and translating the isiXhosa phrase *Andihambi Ndondwa*: I walk with many.

[^34]: Ngiyabonga sis Ongezwa Mbele for sharing and translating the isiXhosa phrase *Andihambi Ndondwa*: I walk with many.

[^35]: South African slang, closest equivalent in English would be ‘ah, get outta here’.

[^36]: Praise poetry, songs and oral history performed by an orator at ceremonial events and important communal gatherings.

[^37]: Poetry through divination which summons spirits to cure the ills of society.
trapped. Working with youth who were involved in necklace murders in the 1980s, they collectively worked through the pain, grief and trauma, healing not only themselves, but freeing the spirits which haunted them, reconciling with their families and community (Bila & Abodunrin, 2020: 12).

This is the transformational shift necessary for collective liberation. When faced with ongoing abuses, massacres, inequality, poverty, gender-based violence and state pillaging, healing the collective becomes harder, yet by refusing to privatize ourselves, refusing to leverage our properties, refusing to cannibalize ourselves through the consumption of others and the life of earth (Vázquez, 2020) we become mnemonic fugitives. This “refusal to cooperate with our dehumanization even when we may not be able to stop it increases our reserves of dignity and hope” (Morales, 1998: 17). It allows us to become unintelligible to colonial logics, as mnemonic fugitives we become intelligible to ourselves and each other in relational ways. In doing so, we set out on a path to recovery, where we stop robbing ourselves of freedom, the collective freedom that can only come through being together, “sharing is our means, the earth’s means in us and our means in earth” (Harney & Moten, 2021: 15). Reciprocity, sharing, listening, offering, receiving – these are the lessons the mnemonic fugitive offers us.

**Decolonial aesthesis and the spiritual crisis**

You see *maAfrika amahle*, the mnemonic fugitive’s expression through poetry evades modernity’s monopoly on subjectivity. This brings us back to the statement in the opening paragraph ‘where we are positioned matters’. Positionality has become a cornerstone of social justice, yet so much of it is contingent upon the performance of identity under the dominant logics of modernity/coloniality – a co-constitutive concept with the former denoting the historical western civilizing mission and its corresponding erasure of worlds of meaning and the latter demarcating the erasure and displacement of pluriversal ways of being and knowing (Vázquez, 2020). In the decolonizing of knowledges, emphasis is placed at the level of epistemology – our ways

---

38 During apartheid necklacing (torture and execution where a rubber tire is filled with fuel forced over the victims chest and shoulders and set alight) was used in black communities to punish those members suspected of conspiring or collaborating with the apartheid government.
of knowing, but many have been misled into the labyrinth of the mind as the center of knowing. The mnemonic fugitive lives in the flesh of the mind, as it does in the flesh of all organs, none are principal – as such eyes, mouth, ears, nose, fingers, which we use to experience the external world, and heart, womb, lungs which we use to experience the internal world, are all equally important. For this reason, attempting to decolonize at the level of the mind alone continuously leads to the nonsensical logics of coloniality where the Cartesian split between body and mind is reinforced.

To better understand this divide, we need to turn our attention to aesthetics – notably associated with the arts, aesthetics’ control over sensing and experience through a normative western world view extends into our everyday social lives and as such holds as much weight as epistemology. In Vistas of Modernity – decolonial aesthesis and the end of the contemporary Rolando Vázquez (2020: 13-4) demonstrates how aesthetics – “the things perceptible by the senses in distinction from the thinkable or immaterial” - through the separability of subject-object came to regulate the senses and govern perception, representing itself as the “field of experience”. Following this reasoning, aesthetics which “determines the space of appearance and the possibilities of recognition, as an enclosure of the senses” (Vázquez, 2020: 14), can only recognize the private-propertied-self – the one who performs identity, the owner and the owned, one out of space and out of time. In this way, aesthetics is in the service of coloniality, where expression is for consumption under the universalized terrain of intelligibility which requires a subduing of the senses. This dulling of the senses is of pivotal importance as M. Jacqui Alexander (2005: 346) points out in Pedagogies of Crossing “there is a cost associated with taking refuge in the borrowed gifts of alienation that cultivate the practice of forgetting”. She goes on to explain that the learned “mistrust of our senses” and “the shame of our spiritual inheritance” forms another layer of oppression. You see maAfrika amahle, we are in spiritual crisis. Following Alexander’s guidance, we come to see the ways in which epistemology and aesthetics are intricately interwoven where this misalignment inevitably provokes “a confrontation with history, both its Cartesian variant that produced the splits in the first place and the history that is being mobilized to displace it” (Alexander, 2005: 346). We live in continuous war with our internal worlds, the effects of which play out in our external worlds.
In order to heal from the Cartesian split, inflicted upon us through formal education and learning through erasure; to bring mind, body/flesh and spirit into harmony, to inhabit the mnemonic fugitive, the one who belongs to the earth, to become intelligible to ourselves and each other, we need to address the ways in which we have been taught to sense. For this task Vázquez (2020: 15) offers us ‘decolonial aesthesis’ which “undoes the silencing of coloniality” whilst reorienting our perception to the senses. As both a critique and practice, decolonial aesthesis, opens space for the mnemonic fugitive to teach us, guide us and lead us. Where aesthetics regulates and governs the senses, decolonial aesthesis liberates the senses through re-membering and enfleshing. As such decolonial aesthesis provides us with a grounding for those “positions which we cannot escape” (Cairo, 2021: 79). “When we speak of decolonial positionality, we mean that all of us have a geo-historical position along the colonial difference. It is a position that is not of our choosing, that we cannot choose as one could choose to perform an identity” (Vázquez, 2020: 149). This marks an important move from the private-propertied-self, the authoritative ‘I’, the sovereign individual, the subject/object who positions themselves through leveraging identities in opposition to a dominant subjectivity, claiming representation through enunciation; to the enfleshed mnemonic fugitive who takes a decolonial positionality that is always reaching out in search of relations who can help us remember, healing towards collective liberation through listening and reception (Vázquez, 2020).

Doesn’t this sound familiar dear maAfrika amahle. When we say we want to decolonize this and that, we are not asking for the current systems to work better, nor to be included in systems that are dependent on the suffering of countless others and the destruction of earth; we are asking to return home to the ‘we’. *Umuntu Ngumuntu Abantu*39. In Ubuntu we have a horizon, one that is beyond mere survival and perpetual resistance. Let us draw strength from its oral traditions, drink deeply from its well of wisdom and move towards ‘re-existence’ where the pursuit of an ethical life is a life-long journey (Ramose, 2002; Vázquez, 2020).

______________________________

39 In the philosophy of Ubuntu: A person is a person through other people / I am because we are.
Optical illusion

In meditation
her eyes roll back
dropping down her throat
landing in the center of her chest
now she sees clearly
what her heart already perceived
the isigubhu40
which kuthu41 beats
the rhythm of life
is held by another
dropping down bloodstream
landing in the body of her womb
her vision recedes
a touch
from inside
remembers the navel
whose cord
holds dreams
she must be
willing to
receive

Encircling Collective Liberation

We’re almost there, maAfrika amahle. “Crossings are never undertaken all at once, and never once and for all” (Alexander, 2005: 318). The journey from enunciation to reception is a necessary ‘crossing’ and one which we will have to make many times, for we still have to deal with our complicity as we work for institutions, buy to feed and clothe ourselves, rent to shelter ourselves. The microaggressions are ongoing, the abuses never ending, but we have a choice – we can choose each other, we can choose to host each other in our non-dominant differences, we can choose to “hold space” (Cairo, 2021) for each other so we may lay bare our wounds and be held in community, so together we can call forth the spirits of our ancestors we keep trapped in the carrying over of our generational trauma.

40 Double-headed Nguni drum.
41 Fast musical beat in South Indian folk dance with an emphasis on percussion.
The private-propertied-self has led us up a treacherous path, fear keeps our eyes transfixed on our feet, as we are convinced of our eventual downfall when we forget that the mnemonic fugitive is always with us. From this vantage point, *maAfrika amahle* I ask you to look up, there in the distance do you see that bright rainbow. “How?”, you ask, you have never seen it like that before. Rainbows are not actually bows but full circles, the other half is what our eyes perceive as invisible, yet is always there. It is the degrees of separation which prevent us from seeing the full circle. Likewise, *maAfrika amahle*, our position as private-propertied-self has prevented us from seeing the relationality of our existence, the other half of the rainbow. When we choose to perceive through the mnemonic fugitive, to express our knowledges through poetry, *ku femba, izimbongi*, spoken word, we heal the wounds that trap the spirits of our ancestors, we heal ourselves, our communities and the earth – we come full circle. Look around you *maAfrika amahle*, we stand shoulder to shoulder on this treacherous path, you were never a lone revolutionary, hand in hand *asambe siye ekhaya*42. Together we can remember the way back…

The private-propertied-self has led us up a treacherous path, fear keeps our eyes transfixed on our feet, as we are convinced of our eventual downfall when we forget that the mnemonic fugitive is always with us. From this vantage point, *maAfrika amahle* I ask you to look up, there in the distance do you see that bright rainbow. “How?”, you ask, you have never seen it like that before. Rainbows are not actually bows but full circles, the other half is what our eyes perceive as invisible, yet is always there. It is the degrees of separation which prevent us from seeing the full circle. Likewise, *maAfrika amahle*, our position as private-propertied-self has prevented us from seeing the relationality of our existence, the other half of the rainbow. When we choose to perceive through the mnemonic fugitive, to express our knowledges through poetry, *ku femba, izimbongi*, spoken word, we heal the wounds that trap the spirits of our ancestors, we heal ourselves, our communities and the earth – we come full circle. Look around you *maAfrika amahle*, we stand shoulder to shoulder on this treacherous path, you were never a lone revolutionary, hand in hand *asambe siye ekhaya*42. Together we can remember the way back…

42 In isiZulu meaning ‘Let’s go home’.
lone revolutionary, hand in hand *asambe siye ekhaya*. Together we can remember the way back…

---

43 In isiZulu meaning ‘Let’s go home’.
Women of Colour are not Human. We are Relational Beings

Under embargo

---

Decolonial Re-existence and the Myths of Knowledge Production

Under embargo

Hand in Hand: Refusing Research during a Pandemic

Under embargo

Liminagraphy: Lessons in life-affirming research practices for collective liberation

Under embargo

Liminal Hangouts: A Podcast

Lesson: Who is learning from Whom with Rosalba Icaza

Lesson: Being Together with Erasmus School of Colour (ESOC)

Lesson: Finding our Rhythm with Anima Jhagroe-Ruissen

Lesson: Listening as a Practice with Constance Dupuis and Nanna Kirstine Leets Hansen
Lesson: Being/Becoming with Luthando Ngema and Charmika Samaradiwakera Wijesundara


Lesson: Writing our Collective Liberation with Rosa Itandehui Olivera Chávez and Paulina Trejo Mendez

In the light of the golden hour at sunrise we walk. Held by the rose pink of soft morning light hinting at the coming of dawn. The birds begin their early calls urging the sun out of hiding. We walk in silence reflecting on the journey we have been on, sighing at how simple it all was in the end. The unfolding of life will always happen whether we are attentive to it or not. The passage of time between sunrise and sunset, the phases of the moon, the seasons, the tides, move with the rhythm of life. It is us who have become stuck, too rigid in our ways of control and attempting to prolong life whilst hurdling towards death, the counter intuitive beating of white-supremacist-capitalist-patriarchy (hooks, 1984). What possibilities arise in the slowing down and quietening of reception? (Vázquez, 2020).

Out of the corner of our eyes we are started by a sudden swoop. There above our heads perched on a tree branch above a buzzard. It’s incredible wingspan causing the leaves to rustle. Named a bird of prey by its predator, it only takes what it needs to survive, then is accused of being lazy when it eats roadkill.

For a moment our eyes meet theirs
a calmness envelops the tight space
between skin and flesh
our vision sharpens in precision
and we see as it does
the flesh on our bones
and the urge to survive.
In acknowledgement
the buzzard takes off
knowing their message
has been received.

Liminagraphy, like the flesh that holds the knowledges it brings forth, is temporary. “Writing ideas down fixes them as objects that can be taken out of context of time and relationship. As fixed objects, ideas lose the ability to grow and change, as those who hold relations with the ideas grow and change themselves. They lose their relational accountability” (Wilson, 2008: 123). Writing in liminagraphy is meant to honour the relations that have helped us grow,
coming together around a common question or project, we are collectively changed in the being together. Recording this process is to stave off further erasure, to survive, for there is a fine line between those stories we choose to give to the university and what we choose to keep to ourselves (McKittrick 2021; Moten and Harney, 2010, Simpson, 2007). In orientating ourselves toward life-affirming practices and being held relationally accountable by our co-creators we come to handle with care the ethical question: “whether we can live an ethical life in a world in which our wellbeing is dependent on the suffering of others and on the wasting away of Earth” (Vázquez, 2020: 143). In reorientating ourselves to an affirmation of life we may respond to this question by stating: we choose to live an ethical life doing what we can to not contribute to the harm and suffering caused to others, we start with our everyday actions, caring for ourselves, each other and the life of earth. Revolution is not a one-time event (Lorde, 2017[1979]) and we are here, in it for the long haul. Every morning at the break of dawn, we give thanks for the gifts we have received, the gift of friendship, of laughter, of joy, holding hands and hugging each other, for we know how quickly these precious gifts can be taken away.

Let us pause for a moment to reflect on the steps we have taken to reach this sunrise. First by returning to the questions in the first proposal of this thesis:

_This study, framed within the emerging culture-centered approach to development communication aims to valorise the Kat River community as agents of change, by exploring their perceptions of the meaning and expectations of development. This leads into an interrogation of the relevance of the hegemonic nature of dominant rationalist discourses of development, as compared to local understandings of development discourse. This study will provide a nuanced exploration of the ways in which dominant and local discourses of development, either compliment or contradict each other, thereby leading to development that values community agency in light of government policy._
The valuable lesson held in the framing of this excerpt is the questioning of the dominant. More importantly, the position from which these questions are being asked matters. In the use of dominant developmentalist jargon, the positionality with the zero-point of western epistemology dangles somewhere in the nowhere of an objective observer and an innocent subjectivity. The instability of this mutating positionality enables the researcher to hold on to power whilst claiming to help, wanting to affect change, but being unwilling to change to make it happen. This is the enigma of knowledge production, most visible to those at the margins of academia which inevitably led to the statement: 'I am no longer willing to use the methodologies that have been complicit in my own dehumanization'. A door is opened holding the question: In what ways can we cultivate knowledge that is epistemically non-violent in the context of the racialized, gendered, colonial, neoliberal university? In searching for a methodology which would not cause harm, what we had not realised at the time is that we were already doing it. We were already building relations, through other relations, like e: xarra ilke - people who are different meet. We were already building trust, respect and reciprocity, having conversations inside and outside the university, resisting the silencing, making our own spaces, opening the doors of our homes, walking together, being collectively in awe of the setting sun over the North sea, eating together, marching together, protesting together – we were already doing the things academia wanted us to prove we were doing. Those who know “they were never meant to survive” (Lorde, 1978) hold life with a reverence and respect for its transitory nature acknowledging that holding on to it too tightly is like trying to hold onto smoke with your hands.

Through the lessons in this thesis, we have come to learn together in questioning whom is learning from whom attending to our complicity and the relations that hold us accountable through collective practices like hand-in-hand and writing together. In refusing the colonial logics of separability in the university we have come to see being together as an important lesson in revitalizing our spirits and healing our wounds, creating safe spaces for unlearning to learn through decolonizing the self and the senses. In learning to find our rhythm we have embraced the dancer, musician, storyteller and poet within, changing the beat of isolation to a crescendo of ruckus and riotous celebration of life, writing through liminagraphy the lyrics, poems and folktales tucked away in the flesh. Through deep listening we have come to receive,
to be open to being held accountable in caring and compassionate ways through radical intimacy, friendship and love. In this magnificent unfolding of being/becoming in motion, in the constant ebbs and flows of life’s rhythm—we have come to see how our everyday actions can take us away from these relations causing spiritual disharmony. In encountering each other across our non-dominant differences we start to dream our collective liberation, we call it into existence through merely being together, writing, drawing, painting, sculpting, audio recording, playing music, invoking within each other that sense of rasa, the space of transformation.

Sunrise

We pass by the basisschool, as parents drop off their children, we hear words of comfort in Polish, of encouragement in Dutch and of reassurance in Mandarin. We wonder who is learning from whom. We continue through the paved streets, near the trash cans we see a group of seagulls fiercely fighting over a loaf of bread, ain’t that a metaphor for the scarcity logics of capitalism. Reaching the edge of the park, we see a couple of Egyptian geese guiding their ducklings to the canal. Crossing the street, we reach the threshold teeming with life as the first rays of light nourish the leaves. We pass by the animal farm for children, surprised by the peacocks who somehow escaped their enclosure and were now eating with the sheep, even fences could not keep them from being together. As our gaze shifts to the ground we see a colourful chalk-drawn hopscotch grid, 1, 2, 34, 5, 67, 8 we take turns hopping and jumping, laughing at the jiggling of aging flesh. Finding our rhythm, remembering that the hops on one foot are a necessary inward journey as important as the jumps with both feet if we want to move. Reaching Rijswijksebos we breathe deeply walking amongst the sturdy trunks rooted in the soil. A couple walks by and greets us with a ‘hi’, as the woman passes by my nose picks up the familiar scent of coconut oil from her hair. A surge through time and space I feel Chatsworth, the tap-tap of my mother’s hand on the top of my head, as she felt of the tap-tap of her mother’s hand on the top of her head, as she felt the tap tap of her mother’s hand on her head, as she felt the tap-tap of her mother’s hand on her head as they sat on the ground in South India. The tap-tap of home within home.
You ask if I’m alright, my flesh is tired. We sit on a bench, the sun on our faces, we watch the breeze create waves in the grass. We are being/becoming I say and some times that hurts. After a while in silence, we start to circle back. My feet start to burn, blisters on the souls. You hear the authoritative-I say maybe you shouldn’t have walked so much, maybe…or maybe I just need new shoes, or perhaps no shoes at all. Suddenly we jolt at a loud screeching sound, overhead a heron takes off cawing away. We laugh at our knee-jerk reaction, how sometimes we hear but do not listen. We’re surprised that this morning nearly everyone we passed by greeted us. Hi, Morge, Hello, Hoi. That’s because we move different now, our heads held high with dignity, our eyes aware to our surroundings, open to receiving. We pass by the basisschool again, this time we hear a child wailing, a stark reminder of the violence of the classroom, we know that there is still work to do. But for now, we must rest.

Perhaps you’ve already noticed that liminagraphy begins in the dark. In the darkness which envelops an embryo in the womb or the seed in the soil we need to be patient with ourselves and each other. We are not the sum total of the violence meted out to us by the state and oppressive regimes, who perpetuate inequality in order to hold power. “We are the consequences of dreams deferred and opportunities unseized48" (Sheik and Dupuis, forthcoming).

There is no conclusion, no final answer, there are so many more questions. Now, as the body which holds this flesh begins to tire from the state of nepantlera – holding space and being a conduit – it is time to rest. I, an unstoried-plural-enfleshed I, will go to those relations who have always grounded, revived and nurtured my weary flesh. The children, the next generation. To the ones who see life in all its boundless opportunity, our littlest teachers, the children, whose love is given unconditionally and without reservation. A healing, soothing and joyous love which makes us feel undeserving of its magnitude. For we no longer see ourselves as they see themselves and they see us as we used to see ourselves. These teachers hold the biggest lessons for us as our flesh starts to age, they force us to be present, to come down to their level, to listen deeply for meaning in their half-formed words, and jumbled semi-developed

---

48 Translation from Spanish provided by Constance Dupuis.
sentences, they force us to dance and sing silly songs, to dress up in all the colours of the rainbow, they force us to chase them around the yard, go down the slide with them, respond to their numerous questions which are almost always met with yet another why, never satisfied with the answer. They remind us not to be satisfied with simplistic answers. They are totally dependent on us for their well-being, and we have forgotten that we too are totally dependent on others for our well-being. They remind us of who we used to be before we became rigid and hardened into self-preservation. They do this with a force as gentle as a feather landing on our arm. Their enfleshed knowing is closest to the surface, it bubbles out through their laughter and excited yelps, equally in their tantrums and outbursts. They remind us it’s okay to make up words when you can’t find the right one:

ah-dika-dika
whoisdat
relitisation
cree
cutie-pie factory
in-level
rainbow-unicorn
puka-puka
liminagraphy

In affirming life, we honour the lives of the next generation and those yet to be born. We plant them a garden worthy of their love, we sow seeds of hope, magic, wonder and delight. We tend to the garden so other relations may visit them and teach them - buzzing bees, crawling insects, tweeting birds and fleshy worms; they grow as the garden grows. For in the transience of flesh we know there are only so many seasons left.

Sapling

On a balmy night, during monsoon season, convened the council of elders. Some swayed in their opinions whilst others held fast. The great African Baobab had spoken to them in dreams and it was clear that their inaction could not remain. Simply inhaling carbon dioxide and exhaling oxygen was not enough. The oxygen only seemed to fuel logging and rampant deforestation, a genocide of their kin. “What should we do then, hold our breath?” shouted a gnarled trunk. A long silence followed.
“The citrus trees to the South have already started to produce fruit that is sour and the apple trees in the North have dropped their babies half-developed. The trees in the West have all but ignored Great Baobab’s call, should we do the same?” offered a middle-aged deciduous.

“Do the same! Do the same! The ancient Oaks of the West do nothing, as the Baobabs are dying! The coldness of the climate has crept into their roots, turned their hearts cold. They are as quick to drop their kin as their leaves during the first sign of wintertide” bellowed the hollow of a grand rugged frame.

The horizontal sheets of monsoons fiery tears fell upon their luscious green leaves, as they contemplated their uncertain future. The decision weighed heavy on their canopies and caused their shoulders to slump.

In their resigned misery they did not notice the rain change shape and begin to fall in the pattern of sacred mandalas. Mariyamman, the Goddess of healing and rain, appeared to them in the form of a Neem tree, ever-green with arms spread wide as if awaiting an embrace.

She spoke, a melodic sound of raindrops upon a body of water, “what troubles you?” she asked the burdened trees.

They all spoke at once, with a deafening sound of leaves rustling in a howling wind.

“You, little sapling, tell me what’s the matter?” she cajoled.

The tentative sapling retold their dilemma whilst Mariyamman listened with care and concern.

“And tell me little sapling, what would you do?” she asked.

The sapling looked around uncertain, afraid of the might of its much larger comrades. Deep within stemmed an unshakable voice, “our roots are all connected in Bhumi Devi, we feel the pain as our kin are slaughtered, we cannot breathe when knees pin down our brothers and hack them to pieces, and we suffer the loss of all those lives dependent on him. There is no choice, to live in pain in order to stay rooted to a world being consumed is not living. We have to act”. The other trees stood with mouths gaping to hear such wisdom from one so young. “You have your answer, do what you must, make the pain
stop” she breathed as her form melded with the droplets of rain and dissipated. Wordlessly the branches of the Karuṅkāli\textsuperscript{49} trees lifted their saris and dashed onto the flooded street, forcing down their roots, cracking the tarred surface and planting their roots deep into the soil. As their imposing figures blocked the path of the loggers and fellers, a sapling, small yet mighty, is given a chance to breathe.

A Grounding Meditation


\textsuperscript{49} Ebony
IqhawekekaziRani
Queen | Warrior | Heroine

Artist: Nazrina Rodjan (2021)
To the womb that connects us
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
Parti
Nani
Ma
Mum
Aunties
Nina
Fats
Saaraa
Ella
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
Within these pages rest the words of ancestors held in shackled hearts whispered ear to ear waiting for the day when one of us would be free (enough) from all systems of oppression racism sexism caste ableism colonialism imperialism apartheid patriarchy capitalism

To allow our healing to begin
Tsunamis 66
Mothers and Daughters 68
Suspended 68
After Dark 70
Black Sun 70
Fall 72
Semelparous 73

NOMANSLAND 76
Sewing Lesson 76
Seeking Immortality 77
The War in Nomansland 80
Rutte-ing Season 82
Sugar and spice 84

SPIRIT AWAKEN 85
~ the ancestor's call 86
Roadmap 87
Pitchachi 89
Eclipse 91
Zulu Ekaharya 93
IqhaweKaziRani 95

BODIES RECLAIMED 97
Optical illusion 165
Women of Colour the Soil 99
Deliverance 101
Bibi 102
Sanctuary 103

RE-MIND 104
~ satya & ahimsa 105
a breath 173
a day 107
Feast 109
White Innocence 111

COLLECTIVE LIBERATION 113
Liberate our senses 114
Roots and Moonbeams 115
To my Black Sisters 117
This bridge called my back continued… 118
Flame 120
Voice 121
IN THE DEPTHS OF THE KALA PANI\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{50} In Hindi means black waters, referring mainly to the Indian Ocean. By crossing this ocean many Indians believed they would lose their caste, social standing and cultural identity.
I live between many lives
and one
always betrays the other

~ displaced
Citizen

Decapitated balloons
float
disembodied, defleshed

backbone un-wound
string un-tethered
self-unknown

executed empty vessels
march
decollated
dis-tinct
into glass skyscrapers
concrete offices

breathless
dis-illusioned
floating there in the upper floors

safely away from
ground
land
plantation
field

enslaved instead
by four corners of a desk
betrayed by its own wood

Tsunamis

In her eyes
tsunamis dance on sheer cliffs
never falling

receding
they are blinked absent
apologized away

defeated in a battle of will
they retreat down choke point
salting her insides
congealing in dissent
preparing for war

and in the blanket of night
they mount a charge
and weep between her legs
Mothers and Daughters

Let me know
when you’re ready to come home
She thinks it every time
but never says it

She birthed a free spirit
that crisp August morning
She was not about to ask her
to return to the womb

I don’t know
when I will be ready to come home
She thinks it every time
but never says it

She was born on the cusp of power changing hands
from white to black
one world collapsed
many took its place
She was not about to tell her
the womb is too small

So there they stand
on opposite banks
as silence descends
between the space of
woman and home

Suspended

She lost herself in a foreign land
too weary to go out
too scared to stay in

The voices, the voices
they will not stop
their words exactly
she cannot grasp

She found herself
with both hands empty
too tired to change
too drained to stay the same

The doctors, the doctors
they only prescribe
their pills precisely
she cannot gulp

On two shaky feet
there she stands
frozen in time
too exhausted to return home
too shattered to remain
After Dark

Thoughts dance circles
under her eyes
every pounding step
bruising

purple
blue
black

Nights boxing match
with sleep
she taps out
in defeat

Black Sun

Clouds hang low
blanketing those beneath
in dusk’s golden glow
we stand
black silent spikes
like those on the walls
prisoning
homes
in
Chatsworth
Umlazi
Lamontville
Phoenix
KwaMashu
Wentworth
Cato Manor

in our thousands
common, innocuous
stoic statues
in deep meditation
we wait

as the last rosy ray
of sun’s dying wish
lands upon the tip
of our iklwa\textsuperscript{51}

inspirited
we shiver and shake
galvanizing swiftly
we melt and murmur
one after the other

\textsuperscript{51} IsiZulu – meaning short spear
until there is no
one or other

wings fan feathers
countless ihawu\(^{52}\)
pierce the skies

maneuver left
we di(v)e
ascend right
how can we survive?

black suns of the night
whose irises shine stars
mistaken for gems
eye for an eye
bleeds blood diamonds
as we cry,
“where are our stolen fathers?”

Clouds hang low
blanketing those beneath
in dusk’s golden glow

as the star-lings take flight

---

Fall

Waiting in vein
crunchy yellow
red raindrops

---

\(^{52}\) IsiZulu – Nguni shield
pirouette through the sky

autumn leaves letters
under her door
each one says

its time

let go

Semelparous
The sun spins out of control
holding on to dusk’s last hope
the blanket of darkness comes
and it’s too late

Eight voracious tentacles
reach out
teeth bared
seeking out flesh

Four take over her limbs
sinking their mandibles deep

Two slither over
seal shut her eyes

One bites into her back
until it reaches bone
mimicking spine

Before her mouth
Whales out a NO!
the last tentacle
teeth on teeth
gags her scream

Immobilised
blood siphons black
black bleeds protest
of this
parasitic containment

As mantle crowns head’s
commandeered captive

entwined
ink spills
and heavy they sink
into *kala pani’s* arms
to the depths of the depths
where no light reaches

*Kali* calls out
surrender she says
the darkness serves you

for in its
Semelparous subversion
where
death anchors life

liberation awaits
Sewing Lesson
She took needle and thread
pullled her lips together
sewed them shut

pleasure’s partner pain
of men who took
beautiful flowers
pulverized them for
putrid perfume

pleasure’s partner shame

of men who took
blissful peace
weaponized it for
waging war

Oh divine mother
what have we done

birthed beasts who
barge into our bodies
violate our sacred spirit

and then call themselves men

Seeking Immortality

Ready yourself every day to
meet your maker
Pray five times a day
Follow the five pillars of Islam
Treasure the gift of this body lent to you by your Maker
So, when your time comes
*Inshallah* you may be accepted into *Jannah*

Cover up this borrowed body
Keep it hidden from men’s shameful eyes
For the sin will be yours not theirs

Keep your body covered
  your gaze lowered
  your voice pleasant
  your movements silent

  so, when the time comes to meet your Maker
  *Inshallah* you may be accepted into *Jannah*

Cover up those bludgeoned bruises
Keep it hidden from society’s betraying eyes
For the sin will be yours not theirs

Keep your body covered
  your gaze lowered
  your voice pleasant
  your movements silent

  so, when the time comes to meet your Maker
  *Inshallah* you may be accepted into *Jannah*

Where virginity restores
you join 39 of your sisters
to spend an eternity in *Jahannam*
*qurbani* for the circumcised pleasure of men
who told you

Keep your body covered
  your gaze lowered
your voice pleasant
your movements silent

so, when the time comes to meet your Maker
*Inshallah* you may be committed to *Jannah*
The War in Nomansland

Lockdown the offensive begins
a two arm-ed force
in-coming
tears pooling
erupting
on trembling cheeks
slapped

the war rages
on faces acid
with wombs smashed
defending fingers broken
with ribs snapped
running legs attacked
with skulls cracked
blood dripping
coalescing
on incarcerated hands
trapped

Ceasefire
white flag raised

crawling away
beside his de/feat
curl up into a ball
plead

But he turns on that
Kuthu beat
whose notes ferry her

across kala pani’s deceit

swaddled, rocking
from *Nani’s* arms
to *Parti’s* feet

landing on Mother’s back
back on Mother’s land

Scorched earth
Hot, too hot,
camphor snaps
flames crackle
logs pop

Until *Ganga-Ma’s* jaw drops
swallows her whole
Rutte-ing Season

Stay indoors
There is a pandemic

*intelligent lockdown*

don’t get in a rut
go for a walk
*frisse neus halen*

1.5m
social distance

100m
leering Lexus

200m
waving Audi

300m
ogling bicycle

400m
cats call

500m
wolves whistle

600m
pedestrian silence
2 pairs of eyes stare
as if death herself walked by

700m
drop your head
800m
look at your feet

900m
keep walking

1km
There is a pandemic
Stay indoors
Sugar and spice

Our bodies
had to be loved into being

It is not for you
your greedy gaze
nor glutinous compliments

Our bodies
already ravaged
when we were
underdeveloped
but skin and bone
sugar and spice and all things nice

Our bodies
devoured
before we could say NO!

What was left
had to be claimed back
from darkness

Our bodies
had to be
coaxed into existence
caressed by loving thoughts
convinced of morning’s light

Our bodies
had to be loved into being
It is not for you
SPIRIT AWAKEN
A field full of dandelions
wait patiently
for afternoon’s breeze

~ the ancestor’s call
Roadmap

I am going nowhere
both paths lead to death
so I turn back
to the past
pull it into the present

Take the path back
it’s the only one that leads to home

Scream at the horrors along its spinal column
howl at the injustices slated on my ancestors’ backs

A lifetime of healing
Taken one step at a time
Right, left, right, left
feet patter
over puddles of tears

I look up
greeted by my Nani
holding a flask of ginger tea
a comforting hand placed on my back

Her sari flutters in the cool breeze
Her jewelry sparkles in the warm sun

“Are you here to walk with me?” I ask

“No. I brought my truck”

“Truck? I didn’t know you could drive?”
With a knowing smile she says
“I don’t, but we do,
Akatikku ăkăsamēy tunai”
Heaven helps the helpless
Pitchachi

At midnight’s fury
she entered the world
as her mother howled her last breath
she took her first

the innocent *kala pani* cradled
the SS Truro on which she was born
its stillness broken only to swallow her mother whole

Mother’s body
Mother land
desecrated
discarded
and then dissolved

the inauspicious blood moon smiled down upon her
as the rest of the indentured
recoiled
retracted
“*Pitchachi*”, they screeched

her mother’s sin imprinted
skin raven
eyes sanguine
hair slithering coils

banished by Parvati
heavens denied
colonized by empire
humanity denied
orphaned she arrives
on the shores of Unkulunkulu’s star-spangled land
now under control of alabaster hands

through sweet nectar filled prison bars
she is watched
a kiss of death
2 metres long
lies in wait

their eyes finally meet
iMamba emnyama

orphaned no more
sisters reticulate
in knowing that the scales of justice
are only skin deep
Eclipse

For an eternity
he danced on barbed wire
between shadow and light
belonging and retreating

Whilst twilight swept away the last rays of sun
He walked through dunes of time and waves of memory

Astounded by his beauty
the night dropped all its stars
reaching out to touch his midnight skin

He looked up at the oil slick sky
hurling diamonds at his feet

When they finally embraced
their darkness became one
and in that nocturnal hour
they fell in love

And every night thereafter
he returned to him

During days he would pine and dance in circles
as the kala pani swirled around his longing hips
feet hastening the rotation of earth
just to see his love sooner
feel his ebony embrace
and ravenous bodhi

During nights he would rejoice and regale his Black Prince
resting Nataraja’s feet in a salve of onyx
revived and rejuvenated by his lover’s attention
only to be ambushed
by 6 degrees
below the horizon
cursing light’s violent intrusion
he swears an oath of revolution

On Laylat al-Qadr
when night precedes day
his pounding pleading feet
pinion the earth

his body
turns axis
obscured with every rotation

and in that moment
shadow turns to smoke
and on the heavenly scent of lit agrabathi
he ascends to his beloved
shooting stars along the way

For he was the dark side of the moon and belonged to the night
Zulu Ekaharya

In her *kohl* rimmed eyes
smoldering embers
still burn
longing for
jasmine-d hair
and
*mehndi-ed* hands

chum chum
*ghungroos* displaced
silk sari unraveled
*araku* pillaged

long ago
she tied her *mundhani*
to a *bodhi* tree
set foot on the *Belvedere*
and crossed the *kala pani*
in a plain cotton sari

*kuli* in the fields of Natal
calloused hands
sweat drenched hair
a new role she asked *Nattuvanar*?

In the stillness of Maha Shivrathri
a distant *Ingungu* drum
Thak-dina-ka-dink
Tha-thin-tha

In her eyes a fire erupts
Thak-dina-ka-dink
Tha-thin-tha

Her knees bow and feet start to move
Thak-dina-ka-dink
Tha-thin-tha

Her hands symbol words
Thak-dina-ka-dink
Tha-thin-tha

Her eyes speak
*Oru vari kavitaikal*
beautiful poetry
Thak-dina-ka-dink
Tha-thin-tha

Her body professes
a great new Indian epic
the Zulu *Ekaharya* is born
IqhawekaziRani

I am not a daughter of this soil
It is my adopted home
A home that cradles my orphaned soul

You say, I am not African
I am African
I am African in my heartbeat
I am African in my compassion
I am African in my generosity
I am African in my determination

It is the only reality I know

You say, I am not Indian
I am Indian
I am Indian in my breath
I am Indian in my kindness
I am Indian in my courageousness
I am Indian in my resilience

It is the only existence I know

I am a daughter of two Mothers
I cried for Umama wasendiya, as I was held by Am'mā āppirikkā
Do not ask me to choose!

Both have raised me
one breast feeding my fire
one breast feeding my spirit

My feet move to the rhythm of your drums
one foot following the *tabla*
one foot following the *isigubhu*

It hurts *Am'mā āppirikkā*
It hurts *Umama wasendiya*

My tears fall at your feet
You catch me as they fall

My child, your heart beats with the rhythm of *Am'mā āppirikkā*
My child, your breath moves with the harmony of *Umama wasendiya*

My child, your body is Indian
My child, your being is African
Moving in perfect synchronicity

Rise *Qhawekazi*
Rise *Rani*
Rise, so you can raise others
BODIES RECLAIMED
Optical illusion

In meditation
her eyes roll back
dropping down her throat
landing in the center of her chest
now she sees clearly
what her heart already perceived
the isigubhu
which kuthu beats
the rhythm of life
is held by another
dropping down bloodstream
landing in the body of her womb
her vision recedes
a touch
from inside
remembers the navel
whose cord
holds dreams
she must be
willing to
receive
Women of Colour the Soil

Women of colour the soil
hands in fists
we see
we dream

Fingers uncurled
we dig
we scream
hands in the earth we plead
we bleed

Flesh revealed
we heave
we grieve
eyes water parched skin

we rupture

Women of colour the soil
does not part

Knuckles bone raw
we stop
we breathe
knees buckle to ground

we secede

Looking down at our chests
how do we begin to heal?
Do not claw, do not dig
but start to feel
la facultad

Women of colour the soil does not part
from that which it is…from the start
Deliverance

With sand crystal speckled dark golden feet
she walks toward the receding shore
In the distance
sunset’s swollen womb is pulled down towards seas open arms
a reluctant embrace

In she wades deeper and deeper
her hourglass hips submerge
water breaks water

Still deeper she goes
with salt glistening outstretched palms
to rescue the unborn
before they drown
Bibi

The colour of soil drenched in morning’s rain

Her blink sets suns
Calling on the night

Her eyes raise stars
Drawing in the light

Her breath pulls tides
crashing in waves from the top of her head

Her hips birth mountains
sloping down the hollows of her chest

Her hands flow rivers
mouthing between her legs

Her tongue catches time
ebbing through her veins

Her lips kiss death
while her feet dance with life
Sanctuary

Tall, timeless guardians stand watch
on an abode
lodged in Mother’s lap
dwelling in her sweet breath

Where chirping neighbours nest
    bees hive
    fish dive
    squirrels hollow
    moles burrow

The sound of a gentle om

Safire light glints through tree tops
into her spacious heart
she smells of pine and earth

The house is alive
stagnant she flows
a tranquil stillness
evergreen

Deep breaths await
as peaceful moonlit nights
seduce
serene sun-kissed days

With a hand on her heart
and a smile on her face
she sighs
here lies sanctuary
home at last
RE-MIND
In a forest
that has been
logged for 500 years
the last tree
standing
was given
pencil and paper
and told
to tell their story

~ satya & ahimsa
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a breath</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1619</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaves on your boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trawling for greed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowded as always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrists bear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chains as their only chattels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaves on your boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowing for your gluttony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodies as property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaves on your boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dying in captivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A breath for escape, one breath too many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tides lash the ocean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for its complicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The clouds darken and howl in humiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1860</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indentured labourers on your boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing for Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowded as always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms carry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saris holding a few possessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indentured labourers on your boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected for profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodies as commodity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indentured labourers on your boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drenched in servitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A breath for liberty, one breath too many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swells thrash the kala pani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for its collusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The moon winces and wanes in disgrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants on a boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floating for a better life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crowded as always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands hold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcels of belongings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants on a boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinking for sanctuary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodies as disposable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrants on a boat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drowning for freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A breath for safety, one breath too many</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waves beat the sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for its connivance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sun recoils and dives down in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a day

400 years later
here she stand
on your shores

_I am here_
_I am breathing_
_Papers in hand_

“You speak English so well!”

_________ University is strongly committed to diversity within its community and especially welcomes applications from members of underrepresented groups.

“I regret to inform you that the committee has not selected you for the final shortlist”

_The University of _______________ is an equal-opportunity employer. We prioritise diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for everyone. We value a spirit of enquiry and perseverance, provide the space to keep asking questions, and promote a culture of curiosity and creativity._

“Unfortunately, we decided not to invite you for the first round of interviews”

“Fuck off back to your country”

By morning
She serves you coffee
washes your cups
and filthy spoons
smiles when you say “praat je Nederlands wel”
400 years the _coolie_ still serves

By afternoon
She assists in research and admin
teaches your children
edits your papers
fixes your non-native mistakes
400 years the *baas* is still in charge

By night
she serves the ancestors
washes her body clean
learns as they teach her
to weave words into magic and
sentences into freedom
smiles when she hears them say

You are here
You are breathing
You will be erased
Feast

Knowledge
I am hungry for it
With gluttonous abandon
I devour it
Leaving you depleted
Exhausted
Drained
Still you come back for more

Why? Because I promised you something
A piece of paper
Legitimacy
A seat
A table

Ah…your ancestors fell for that too
So many generations, yet so little learned
Once a coolie, always a coolie

You say you are doing this for them
But you did not heed their warning
Silly, they could not read,
what’s your excuse?
A print too small

You can stay here you know
and feed off the knowledge of others as I do
Drain them, deplete them, leave them worse off than before
Call this research
We will reward you, praise you
hell we’ll even give you that piece of paper
Go on then…this is what you came for
Cannibalise yourself in the pursuit of knowledge
Gnaw on the bones of your ancestors
Drink their blood spilled in the (sugarcane) field
So that you may arise, anew…in my own image

And…whilst we drown you in a black gown
Think not of your ancestors draped in the *kala pani*
Think not of their sweat fertilizing the soil
Think not of their tears watering the sugarcane
Think not of their backs broken to sweeten my tea

Think instead that you are one of us now
and feast
White Innocence

One step forward two steps back

For every step we take forward  
we will be held back by your pity  
For every step we take forward  
we will be held back by your shame

The burden of skin so deep

For every step back  
we carry your dreams with us  
For every step back  
we carry your salvation with us

The burden of Sojourner

Look us in the eye  
and see yourself reflected  
Look at your hopes, fears and dreams  
And see them as our own

Hold fast my hand and don’t let go  
Your fate is tied to mine  
Hold fast my hand we were born of the same star  
Hold fast my hand and embrace our differences  
Your love is intertwined with my own  
Hold fast my hand we are family reunited

Sing with me so our hearts can rejoice

53 Based on Gloria Wekker’s book White Innocence (2016).
Align with me so our steps fall as one
Dance with me so liberation can be ours
COLLECTIVE LIBERATION
Liberate our senses

as we breathe
to die a self
suffocating
intestines snaked noose
inside our necks

touch our eyes
with words
we dream
while awake

our ears speak
tongues
taste lines
sung in silence

our lips read
visions
out of sight
in mind

our skin smells
verses
heard incense-d
by spirits

liberate our senses
as we breathe
life
back into
being
Roots and Moonbeams

Roots run deep
seeking you out
you crave, they creep
racing up through your legs
eager, eager
until they find what they seek
attach to your spine
they slither, slither
spiraling heart
encircling larynx

breathe, breathe

up and up
splitting third eye
reaching for the sky
to entwine its twin

a silvery moonbeam
drops into the top of your head
weaving through third eye
dropping down into your throat

breathe, breathe

sinking into your heart
squeeze, squeeze
wrapping around spine
deeper and deeper
shooting down your legs
until it reunites
with Mother Earth
over and over
root and moonbeam
over and over
uniting, entwining
over and over
tightening, compressing
breathe, breathe

until the pressure
is too much
your heart cracks open
taking in roots and moonbeams
joined together as one
a direct connection to the divine
flows through your body

breathe, breathe

racing, searching, seeking
filling spaces thought long dormant
until it reaches your fingers
turned roots
silvery moonbeams
shoot out their tips

Its time

Write dear one, write
To my Black Sisters

1619
The paper was never blank

It remembers the ax
every wood chipped splinter
that left a gasp
before timber

The paper weight
memorized time in concentric circles
now held stationery
trunk storing history

2020
Reach out
Place your hand on its surface
Breathe in the oxygen it gave to you
For life is paper thin
Feel the roughness of its bark
now rooted to your fingertips

Even in death
it offers you life
to write our stories
so that
when black ink drips
on white innocence

We remember
there is no tabula rasa
there never was
This bridge called my back\textsuperscript{54} continued...

This bridge called my back
has grown
from gnarly roots planted deep in the soil
watered with tears of failure and frustration
nourished by sun rays’ small victories
strengthened by lessons of long and harsh winters
fortified with day-long minutes of reflection
turned hours of quiet contemplation
where anger and pain
fought and conquered
used as kindling to ignite a fire
that burns deep within my heart

This bridge called my back
is for you
the ‘othered’
looking across the insurmountable ravine
at the ivory tower
This back is your bridge

For those at the margins
staring into the dark abyss of
‘I’m not good enough’
This back is your bridge

Do not be afraid to tread on me
nor lighten your footfall
This bridge is not made of lightweight steel nor crumbly-concrete

Birthed by two mothers
breathed into life by Southern winds
fortified by African shores

\textsuperscript{54} Based on \textit{This Bridge Called my Back} (2015) edited by Cherrie Moraga & Gloria Anzaldua. Specifically Kate Rushin’s ‘The Bridge Poem’ pp.xxxiii
bearing Ganga Ma’s love

This bridge called my back
leads back to you

Andihambi Ndondwa

We walk with many

---

55 Ngiyabonga sis Ongezwa Mbele for sharing and translating the isiXhosa phrase Andihambi Ndondwa
Flame
your flame is innocent
she burns with the steadiness of sun’s dance with time
she is a light that resonates from within
illuminating these darkened skies
warming this frigid earth
comforting others
it is not your fault
if your light blinds the ignorant
  burning fragile tempers
  scalding delicate egos

do not lessen your blaze
for those incensed by smoke

Tend to your fire
  rekindle her
  nurture her
  feed her
protect her from the elements and
forces which seek to douse her

Umuntu Ngumuntu Abantu
your flame is a flare
sparking floods of incandescence
blazing across deadened isolation
cascading embers of I
  me
  you
meet crumbling cinders of
  us
  they
  them
as
WE
rise from the ashes

Umuntu Ngumuntu Abantu
Voice

Who are we when we are not spoken for
spoken of
spoken over
when we are not given a voice
not given a platform to amplify our voice
not given the volume control of our voice

Who are we when we find ourselves hypervisibilized
invisibilized
represented
erased

What sounds have been muted in the depths of our colonial wound
A cacophony of visceral screams
filling our mouths
swallowed
stuck in our throats
swallowed
wrenching our guts
carried
womb to womb
grandmother to mother
mother to daughter

Our scream
is the sound of birth
of life itself
of thunder rolling
of wind howling
of waves crashing
of night turning to day
of sun rising
of clouds moving
of flowers blooming
of leaves falling
of day turning to night
of stars shining
of moon waxing and waning

This is the sound of our voice
Glossary

Agrabathi   incense stick
Am’mā āppirikkā   Mama Africa in Tamil
Andihambi Ndondwa   I walk with many
Araku   Temple jewelry worn by Bharatanatyam dancers
Baas   Boss in Dutch and Afrikaans. Used in the South African context to refer to a supervisor or employer, especially a white man in charge of black, brown and coloured people
Belvedere   Second British ship carrying indentured Indian labourers for the sugarcane plantations of Post Natal (Durban) in 1860
Bibi   meaning ‘Miss’ in Urdu, added to a woman’s name as a show of respect. Appropriated by the British to mean the native mistress of a European man in India
Bodhi   in Sanskrit means awakening and refers to the last stage before Nirvana where the soul is released from the cycles of life and death, reincarnation
Black Prince   also known as Maharaja Sir Duleep Singh (1838-1893) was the last Maharaja of the Sikh Empire. At the age of 10 he was kidnapped by the British Crown, where he was kept under lock and key for 5 years and thereafter exiled to Britain where Queen Victoria ‘Empress of India’ and serial Godmother to kidnapped princes and princesses from the colonies, adopted him
Coolie/Kuli   Tamil word ‘Kuli’ meaning those who do menial work, appropriated by the British to ‘coolie’ referring to those who were indentured, considered a racial slur in South Africa
Ekaharya   In Bharatanatyam, Ekaharya is a solo dancer who takes on many roles in a single performance
Frisse neus halen   in Dutch meaning to get some fresh air
Ganga-Ma   Goddess of the river Ganges
Ghungroos   The anklets worn by Bharatanatyam dancers
Ihawu   Nguni shield
Iklwa   isiZulu meaning short spear
iMamba emnyama   Black Mamba
Inshallah

In Arabic meaning if God wills it. Used by Muslims to speak favourably of future events.

isigubhu

Double-headed Nguni drum.

Jannah

In Arabic meaning paradise or heaven.

Jahannam

In Arabic meaning hell.

Kala Pani

In Hindi means black waters, referring mainly to the Indian Ocean. By crossing this ocean many Indians believed they would lose their caste, social standing and cultural identity.

Kali

Feminine form of kala (black). Referring to the Goddess Kali, the keeper of death, time and liberation (from cycles of reincarnation).

Kuli/coolie

Tamil word ‘Kuli’ meaning those who do menial work, appropriated by the British to ‘coolie’ referring to those who were indentured, considered a racial slur in South Africa.

Kuthu beat

Fast musical beat in South Indian folk dance with an emphasis on percussion.

la facultad

Gloria Anzaldúa’s concept which speaks of the ability to connect with the depths of our soul, a perception anchored in the body which constantly guides us.

Laylat al-Qadr

In Islam it is the auspicious night when the Quran was first sent down from Heaven and also when the first verses were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (sallalahu alaihi wa salam). Falls on one of the odd numbered days in the last 10 days of Ramadan in which night precedes day.

Maha Shivrathri

A night in which Shiva performs the heavenly dance which overcomes darkness and ignorance. It is a festival celebrated in India and across the diaspora.

Mehndi

also known as henna.

Mundhani

Decorated end of the sari that hangs loose over the shoulder.

Nani

Grandmother.

Nataraja

Hindu God Shiva in the form of the cosmic dancer. His dance maintaining the balance of the universe, between destruction and creation. The significance is to rid humans of illusions and free their souls.

Nattuvanar

Bharatanatyam Guru, who is usually the director and conductor of the performance.

Parti

Grandmother.

Parvati

Hindu Goddess of fertility, devotion and love. The spouse of Shiva.

Pitchachi

A Goddess denied a place in heaven by Parvati. She is often depicted as a demoness, flesh eating and vampiric. Used as a
slur towards dark skinned Indian women. Pitchachi, though
demonized, is the Goddess of mental wellbeing, overcoming
addictions and material attachments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Praat je Nederlands wel</td>
<td>You speak Dutch well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qhawekazi</td>
<td>In isiZulu a Queen and heroine who fights for her being and her people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qurbani</td>
<td>Ritual animal sacrifice in the Muslim tradition of Eid-al-Adha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rani</td>
<td>Queen in Tamil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS Truro</td>
<td>First British ship carrying indentured Indian labourers from Madras (Chennai) to Port Natal (Durban) in 1860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabla</td>
<td>Twin hand drums from the Indian subcontinent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unkulunkulu</td>
<td>The God of the Zulus. Unkulunkulu created humans and cattle from reeds. The creator of all land and water Unkulunkulu taught the amaZulu to hunt, make fire and grow food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umama wasendiya</td>
<td>Mother India in isiZulu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umuntu Ngumuntu Abantu</td>
<td>A person is a person through other people / I am because we are</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendices

Appendix 1
References


Breaking Methods, Youtube Channel. 2020. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCu1q-2O2HIHLTUEZswtXXbA/about Accessed on 06 May 2021.


Brown, A.M. 2021. *We Will Not Cancel Us And Other Dreams of Transformative Justice*. AK Press, USA.


Nishitani O. 2006. ‘Anthropos and Humanitas: Two Western Concepts of Human Being.’ In Sakai, N. and Solomon, J (eds.) *Translation, Biopolitics, Colonial Difference.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong UP.


Sangaramoorthy, T. and Kroeger, K., 2020. ‘In the current climate, Rapid Ethnographic Assessments are the research method we need.’ Available at: https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2020/10/13/in-the-current-climate-rapid-ethnographic-assessments-are-the-research-method-we-need/ Accessed on: 06 May 2021.


Sheik, Z.B. y Dupuis C. forthcoming. ‘Los árboles son nuestros maestros.’ In Nuestra Palabra es semilla que crece. RETOS.


Snyman, G. 2015. ‘Responding to the decolonial turn: Epistemic Vulnerability.’ Missionalia, 43(3): 266-291. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7832/43-3-77


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


Zuleika Bibi Sheik is a poet, yogi and Lecturer in Sociology – Black Studies and Intersectionality at the University of Portsmouth, UK. Her areas of focus include decolonial methodology, gender studies, decolonial feminism, black studies, critical race theory and abolition studies. As a South African scholar of Indian descent, her work centers on onto-epistemological re-existence and collective liberation. Through her PhD she has developed Liminagraphy, a life-affirming approach to research practice. Her latest publication “From Decolonizing the self to Liberating the senses” (2021) appears in the Imbiza Journal for African Writing. She is also the host of Liminal Hangouts, a podcast which brings together those who resist at the margins of academia on topics such as decolonizing the self, practices of unlearning, accountability and coalition.

Publications


Publications forthcoming


Conferences and Presentations


Development Studies Association UK Annual Conference 2021, Roundtable participant: ‘Racialised ways of knowing development.’

Amsterdam Philosophy Café 2021, Presentation on the ‘Life and Work of Black Feminist Audre Lorde’


Millennium Conference, London School of Economics, 2019, Panel presentation ‘Collective resistance and liberation by radical women of colour’.


**Event Organisation**

Diversity and Inclusion Organising Committee, Workshop 2019 ‘Undoing Colonial Patriarchies in/from the margins’.

**Podcast**
Liminal Hangouts (2021) - [https://anchor.fm/zuleika-bibi-sheik](https://anchor.fm/zuleika-bibi-sheik)