

Critical Methods for the Study of World Politics

Creativity and Transformation

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6 Beyond a classroom: experiments in a post-border praxis for the future

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This chapter is dedicated to the spirit of our friend Pinky Mayeng, an artist, positive energy, a history nerd, activist and a traverser of worlds. All the love.

On borders

The great West Indian men's cricket teams of the 1970s and 1980s represented and signified somewhat of an anticolonial revolution in one of the world's most imperial arenas: the cricket field. Of course, crushing victories against former colonists England and the settler colonists Australia, did not constitute revolution per se. What took place on the fields of the gentlemen's game during those years – the decisive defeat of the colonialist by the 'colonised' – was largely confined to the field. But it also bursts its bounds. C.I.R. James (1963) suggests that what happens on the cricket field is both reflective and reproductive of social dynamics beyond the boundary. The field is also a site somewhat isolated from said dynamics' broader contexts and thus potentially becomes a site of their concentrated playing out; a magnification, or a microcosm of society and its schisms, and a potential space for challenging them. As a somewhat synthetic and isolated, but simultaneously porous, permeable arena allowing for a struggle towards a new resolution, the field is in dynamic relation with what is beyond and outside it. The above-mentioned ascendant history of Black cricketers is intimately linked to decades of intensive anti-colonial struggle, proliferating ideas of Black Power and of course the production and circulation of Black musics resonating and echoing across the world.

The classroom metaphorically stalks us here as a corollary to the cricket field. As one of the most significant products, producers and reproducers of society, as well as a site of radical possibility, the classroom remains a site characterised by contradictory potentiality. In the classroom's encounter with the great beyond, we are with and for bell hooks, who is:

Urging all of us to open our minds and hearts so that we can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, so that we can think

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and rethink, so that we can create new visions, I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions – a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom.

(hooks, 1994, p. 12)

This chapter reflects on our experimentation with history education that is concerned with the construction and deconstruction of borders of different kinds both in and beyond the classroom, which we understand as a place that people learn together. From Kashmir to India's 'Red Corridor', Syria and Western Sahara, from Myanmar and Bangladesh to occupation in Palestine and the hardening of racialised nationalism and anti-immigration sentiment in Europe, it is easy to see the political urgency posed by borders and their associated material realities of violence, repression and exclusion. Hugh Masekela improvises on the question as it relates to Africa and African history in the current moment:

We even don't know that we live in artificial borders. That these borders that we live in were created in 1886. And we fight each other over these borders. They were not created by Africans. We have lost our heritage.... We are bad imitations of the people that oppressed us, and yet there is no richer society in the world as Africans and the design and architecture and literature we have designed, but we don't even know. We are living in an age where if we don't do something about heritage, in 20 years you will ask your children who they are and they will say, they say we used to be Africans long ago. It's sad!'

Along a similar line of sadness, in *Decolonizing the Mind*, Ngũgĩ (wa Thiong'o, 1981, pp. 2–3) maps relationships between colonisation, imperialism and the manipulation and silencing of histories, and cultural bomb:

The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. Amidst this wasteland which it has created, imperialism presents itself as the cure.

He concludes by insisting that:

The classes fighting against imperialism even in its neo-colonial-state and form, have to confront this threat with the higher and more creative culture of resolute struggle.

How can we, today, build on this radical tradition that questions and challenges the depth of the colonial imperial project to divide us from each other and ourselves? With Bra Hugh and Ngũgĩ, we are convinced that any relevant and radical politics of the future has to be based on a critical engagement with African history. It also has to be committed to a creative vision that imagines, a world beyond the borders we have inherited, and engaged in a struggle to realise that future. This requires both urgent challenges to the political and geographic walls that control the divisions and distributions of commodified resources, such as land and citizenship, as well as an unpacking of how these borders, and others, are normalised, internalised, maintained and reproduced daily by and between people.

Next, we share some of our experiments towards a post-border praxis, our responses to the histories and contemporary political crises of borders. This is a praxis in process which we enact as part of a broader community through organising and education work with activists, artists, students and educators across different spaces and borders in Cape Town, and Southern Africa more broadly. We are particularly interested in acknowledging and in creating spaces, classrooms, where we can collectively and creatively study politics in the interests of changing them. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2013, pp. 110–111) put it this way:

When I think about the way we use the term 'study', I think we are committed to the idea that study is what you do with other people. It's talking, walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three, held under the name of speculative practice... The point of calling it 'study' is to mark that the incessant and irreversible intellectuality of these activities is already present... What's important is to recognise that that has been the case – because that recognition allows you to access a whole, varied, alternative history of thought.

In our practice, which combines study, organising, imagination, and creation, we have tried to take seriously and pay attention to the stubborn borders and schisms that exist inside a classroom, amongst comrades, and those which exist outside, between countries and disciplines.

Into the classroom: experiments and experiences

We first started thinking together about the political question of borders as it might relate to an educational praxis when we worked on *Know Your Continent* (KYC) in 2015. KYC was a popular education African history workshop series that attempted to break the boundaries of colonial history and the various borders that the university is built on.² That we so desperately needed an introductory course on African history, highlighted the problematic nature of 'Süd Afrika's' (A Country Without A Name)³ relationship to the rest of the continent. South African exceptionalism is a way of thinking

South Africa as peculiar and unique, particularly in the context of the continent, to which it understands itself as separate and distinct, despite the fluid, intertwined histories and presents.⁴ Related to this exceptionalism, is what has generally been called 'xenophobia' but might more accurately be understood as 'Afrophobia'. The basis of the pervasive violence targeted at African people who are assumed to not be South African citizens, which infamously erupted in 2008, is not only linked to questions of a country whose identity, a colonial and apartheid hangover, positions it *south of Africa* (and therefore ontologically separate from it), of political borders, and political imagination and imperialism; it is also related in a deep way to how South African citizens see and understand ourselves.

Know Your Continent attempted to challenge the bases of these South Africanisms and also attempted to build links and relationships across the borders of spaces and communities in Cape Town. Asher at the time was involved in the #RhodesMustFall movement at the University of Cape Town (UCT), organising discussions on race and politics with high school learners, and thinking about postgraduate work on music and politics. Koni had been doing popular political education with a range of movements across the city with the International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG), and was then doing a post doc in the Department of History at UCT where she was turning her PhD thesis on organised resistance to forced removals into a graphic novel. We drew on and grew many of these strands in building the KYC course in 2015. Through KYC we became involved with the Popular Education Programme's (PEP) youth programme, coordinated by Derick Naidoo, which is trying to build a youth movement across different spaces in the city, the country and region, and across various organisational silos.⁵ Below we write about and reflect on some of the education work that grew out of KYC organising; the PEP connection and the approach to organise and educate across borders.

Youth Without Borders

As part of the PEP programme, in early 2016, we were asked by Derrick to come and do a workshop on borders on the continent with 'Youth Without Borders',⁶ a small group of about 10–15 young people from different parts of the continent who are currently living in Cape Town.⁷ We opened the session with introductions by saying a bit about themselves as well as marking on a laminated map of the continent where we came from and how we got here – to Cape Town and to the current session. This was interesting and important as not everyone within the group knew each other so it broke some of the ice, welcomed people into the process. It also meant that people's own embodied experiences of borders and crossing them became the basis for the rest of the session.

We prepared a presentation, 'Migration is forever, borders are new', to historicise both borders and migration on the continent, asking questions like:

where do borders come from? How and why have they lasted so long? What are the material and ideological bases of borders, and who benefits from them? We explored various historical processes and events that have shaped the continent, including: the infamous 1884/5 Berlin Conference, 1963's establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the crucial defeat of the radical Casablanca Group at the first conference in Addis.⁸ Importantly, to highlight borders' relationship to imperialism and African underdevelopment, we also engaged a map of African exports by country. We closed with a clip of Thomas Sankara speaking at the OAU in 1967 about the origins and reproduction of colonial debt and dependency, and the need for self-reliance.⁹ Our intention was to start a discussion about what possibilities with regards to borders open up when you challenge neo-colonialism and have a more equal distribution of wealth. We asked questions like: would borders still be necessary in a socialist society? Why/why not?

The past and the future often seem far away. As does the possibility of challenging national borders. Despite this, the session's beginnings, with all of us inserting ourselves into the pedagogical process by bringing our histories and experiences of borders and crossings into the room, provided both a conceptual basis for the rest of the session, and acted as an invitation to participate in analysing the past and the present, and discussing possible paths forward. Sankara as an example of a radical approach to shifting neo-colonial dynamics, opened up space for engaging different imaginations of the future beyond the tyranny of the present.

PEP Youth Camp

We developed the above workshop method further for a session at a PEP youth camp in August 2016 which we called 'Historicizing and Politicizing Borders: Mapping Space and Race in Cape Town'. The group was about fifty people who came from all different organisations and parts of Cape Town – from community theatre, to young workers and housing activists. To start, we got everyone to draw or map their own world, asking people to draw all the places they go in a regular day, week, month or year and to draw in any style or format they wanted or were comfortable in. People really got into it, taking a lot of time and care to think about and draw their worlds. As inspiration and context we stuck maps of the continent and Cape Town on the walls in case people wanted to use their shapes as starting or reference points. We drew to the soundtrack of Abdullah Ibrahim's trio album *Cape Town Revisited*. After drawing their maps, still with Abdullah swinging, everyone introduced themselves, via their maps, to three people in the room they had not met before.

Through those map-introductions we got to see that people drew some really interesting and imaginative pieces. One person had drawn their neighbourhood with their house, school and local spaza shops, as well as his bedroom and the inside of his head (represented as a cloud on the map) as

the place where he spends most of his time. Another activist collapsed spatial conventions and drew the outline of the continent and filled it with all the places in Cape Town where they go. Someone else drew familiar places in Cape Town as well as the airport because they would like to travel overseas one day. Some drew their rural homes which they visit a few times a year while others drew just their neighbourhoods or even just their own block.

After introducing ourselves and our worlds, we worked our way through a presentation which we had prepared. Here we went beyond the broad history of borders on the continent, to think about land and why it was important, before moving through histories of some of the areas where people who had come to the camp, lived – places like Manenberg, Khayelitsha and Crossroads. The idea here was to try to give some historical context to the maps which people had drawn, and to give a sense of how Cape Town had been made. It was also to show that the borders, whether race, class or gender-based, that shape and dictate people's experiences of the city, are not inevitable but were and are intentionally constructed and policed. And, importantly, that many details of their histories are intentionally hidden or glossed over making the conditions that people live in seem 'natural' or 'normal'. Following the presentation/discussion we broke into smaller groups to collectively think and imagine a future Cape Town beyond the borders that characterise it today; what that might look like and what it might take to get there.¹⁰

Housing Assembly Political School

It is one thing to try out this creative work with activist youth, but how to take this approach into radical frontline struggle spaces of militant adults? We were compelled to respond to this question at a workshop with a similar focus but in a slightly different context in March 2017 when comrades and friends from the Housing Assembly asked us to come and do a history session at what would be their first annual Political School.¹¹ The theme of the school was unity in the working-class struggle for housing. Our session was on borders and divisions within the working class, and challenges to building unity. Spaces in Cape Town, as well as being deeply gendered, are starkly constructed and segregated along lines of class and race. A significant aspect of construction of the white supremacist order that Cape Town so liberally reflects, reproduces, and reveals in, has historically been the construction, separation and segregation of 'African' and 'Coloured' racial groups. The classic colonial strategy of divide-and-rule has been weaponised here to divide Black people through mechanisms such as Coloured Labour Preference Policy (CLPP) which designated the Western Province (of which Cape Town is a part) the preserve of 'White' and 'Coloured' people (Erasmus, 2001). The CLPP was part of a series of laws which made it very difficult for 'African' people to live legally in Cape Town. The intention of these laws was to create a social buffer group, 'Coloured' people, between 'White' and 'African' people. 'African' and 'Coloured' were constructed and curated as

separate and distinct groups, forced to live apart and forced to compete for scarce resources while White folks, bellyful, slept safe in the suburbs. These schisms within the Black working class still exist and are still reproduced in various ways in society and are present in organisations and movements too. Through the workshop, we wanted to highlight these racialised divisions and through exploring their histories show how they are very intentional constructions but can be collectively deconstructed.¹²

We were about 100–120 people altogether that included housing and land activists from all over South Africa, as well as a representative from MST in Brazil, and movements in Namibia and Zimbabwe. After introductions, we explained the mapping exercise, asking everyone to draw their worlds which they would then share with three other people. A lot of people were initially slightly sceptical and we felt a little uncomfortable asking people mostly older than ourselves, some in their seventies, to draw maps of their world. But once begun, most people got really into it and a lot of people were eager to share their own maps or what they'd seen in others'. With such a big group, this activity was really important. It would have been very difficult to pull everyone into the process and make everyone feel welcome and included without an activity like this where people were able to lay claim to the space and the process by interacting with other folks. It was also a space to breathe and laugh, chat and draw in the political school's context of having long days filled mostly with lectures.

After the maps, sharing and plenary feedback, we went into the presentation, a similar one to the PEP youth camp, which was animated by a number of people adding information, telling stories, asking questions, and generally waxing lyrical about Cape Town history, world politics and Selsassie I. Due to time constraints out of our hands, we unfortunately didn't get to the last bit of the session which was on Sun Ra, Afrofuturism, the importance of imagination and the last activity – mapping and sharing our imagined positive futures. Despite not finishing the workshop as originally designed, the session seemed to crack open new ways of questioning, seeing and speaking about these challenges. A number of people came up to ask questions and ask for the Powerpoint presentation to take back to use in their own organisations. Some conversations continued over dinner and into the next days. Beyond the confines of the political school, the main points of the session have come up in ongoing Facebook conversations and in other activist workshop sessions where issues of Afrophobia, resource extraction, and the role of borders in creating schisms outside and within movements, continue to be discussed as urgent political questions.

History Workshop with Artists

Outside of working with activists in Cape Town and South Africa, we have been working on building community across disciplines and across borders in the Southern Africa region. In preparation for a set of meetings in Namibia

and Botswana in 2016, we organised a workshop with artists in Cape Town. In this session we explored some interesting and largely hidden African histories and made artworks through a process of collective engagement with those histories.¹³ The artists, eight altogether, came from various collectives such as Burning Museum, Afrikan Hip-Hop Caravan and iQhaya (of which our dear friend Pinky Mayeng, to whom this chapter is dedicated, was part of this gathering). At the workshop we had breakfast together and then we played a popular education game – radical history bingo¹⁴ – which introduced and then initiated extended discussions on the histories. The histories that we selected were Bisho Jarsa, Fathima Al-Firhi, Malombo, Dora Tamana, Clements Kadalle, Festac '77, Medu Arts Ensemble, and Cuico Cuanavale. After collectively exploring and discussing these histories, everyone was given a resource pack containing articles, images and other materials relating to the history of their bingo clue. Working with these materials, in their own time, everyone began to create something out of their own engagement with the history using any of the basic art supplies that we had provided (coloured paper and cardboard, pipe cleaners, pins, glue, spray-paint, glitter, etc.) and anything else they wanted to use.

When everyone had finished their pieces, they shared their stories about them, speaking about how they made it and how it reflected the conversation between them and the history they explored. These informal presentations were really interesting because of the way people engaged the history and made it their own by creating something out of it. It became a new mode of writing history which wasn't a regurgitation of the history but was a synthesised, re-purposed version of it. In the words of one of the participants, Kopano Maroga, 'We made [the history] manifest'. Everyone who came gave a lot to, and took a lot from the workshop. Kopano further remarked that, taught in this way, history can be an entry point into collective healing, and another participant, Lungiswa Gqunta said that the workshop, through art, was teaching new ways to engage with people. A few people said that they learned history that they had never heard of before and that it was a completely new way of learning history to them, fun and fresh, and that, because of that, they paid much more attention than they would have in a school or university classroom. This approach confronted the ways that formal history education is still considered boring, as well as the fact that arts education, is increasingly isolated from any historical or political contact and content.¹⁵

PEP Spring School: Medu and The Artists' Manual

Bringing some of anti-disciplinary moves back into the Youth Without Borders space, Koni, together with two other friends – Thuli Gamedze and Leila Khan, both radical artists amongst many other things – planned a session on 'Culture and Resistance' which Leila and Koni then facilitated at a PEP youth Spring School.¹⁶ The school brought youth activists together from

across South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Botswana. The intention of the session was to think about art and creative practice in its relation to struggle, explore some histories around that intersection, and to collectively create something out of that engagement. The first part of the session was a game where everyone has to take positions on various provocative statements. To do so, everyone moves to a point on a line drawn on the floor that most closely represents their position: strongly disagree, disagree, don't know, agree, and strongly agree. The facilitator then asks a few people why they took particular positions, after which, everyone gets the opportunity to change their own position based on the lines of reasoning they have heard. The provocative, slightly polemical statements for this session were: art is a luxury; art is central to activist organisation; art is for specialists; culture is inherited. Interestingly, while most people took a fairly radical stance on art, insisting that everyone is an artist, when the time came for collectively creating something, a lot of those same activists needed slightly more convincing to get involved in the creative work, feeling like 'art' was not their field. This exposed certain borders that exist in the way that, not only normative society, but also a lot of 'leftist' organisational cultures think about different people's roles, various divisions of labour and the position of art and creative work in organisations.

Another substantive part of that session was an exploration of Medu Art Ensemble, which was a community of radical artists, mostly South Africans in exile, who were living in Gaborone from 1978–1985. Medu was making art in service of the struggle in South Africa and a lot of their thinking and practice engaged the question: how does culture become a weapon in struggle?¹⁷ As part of Medu's response to this question, they developed a form of cross-border praxis in the collective processes that they undertook to produce art. This consisted of taking ideas which emerged from meetings, then collectively workshoping them amongst themselves and with comrades who were underground, and then, walking to the border get feedback from comrades who were in South Africa who could not cross into Botswana. The Medu praxis shows how people, in a highly politicised world, fenced by militarised borders, were able to create and sustain creative political community across those borders. In the workshop we experimented with Medu's method of collective creative production. One group produced a chapbook which creatively consolidated the idea of an organisation or movement called 'Youth Without Borders' which asked what is the political work of an organisation named such? Another group produced *The Artists' Manual*, insisting on the productive togetherness of artistic and activist practice.

On creative (&) political education

A major reflection from these sessions has been that creative work offers a different way into a political education process. In the youth camp session on the history of borders, music offered a different backdrop and language into some of the discussions and debates to the usual inherited vocabulary of struggle in South Africa. And in both the youth camp and the Housing

Assembly political school, the deep historical details of the imperialism and division within Cape Town and between South Africa and the rest of the continent were made relate-able and engage-able by the collective imaginative practice of mapping sharing worlds. Insisting on creative practice as an important element of political education has the potential to open up a classroom to a fun and more relaxed feeling, of ease and laughter, which is often repressed or dismissed as unserious by the left. Related to introducing creative practice to political education, in many political education spaces and traditions, people are seldom encouraged to think imaginatively, not even about a future we want or what we are struggling for. For example, in a movement committed to socialism, very rarely do people take the time and energy to consider, beyond workers owning factories, what a socialist future might look, feel, sound, taste and smell like. We are very stuck in struggle against the dire material conditions which oppress people that we forget the importance of imagining, and sometimes even remembering what we are struggling for. Est'kia Mphahlele was critical of the South African literary scene in the 1950s because he felt that writers were so stuck in the oppressive present that they couldn't write, tell or imagine other stories.¹⁸ We think there is a parallel here to many radical movements and their educational projects which tend to subordinate the mind to material struggle of the present rather than create space to imagine, as part of the struggle for a beyond.

What we realised through the experience of conceptualising and facilitating the mapping exercise is that when you give people the space to be creative, even (or perhaps, *particularly*) people who do not generally think of themselves as artists or 'creative' people, most people really enjoy it and fully immerse themselves in it. The map making experiment fed our sense of the possibilities of creative practice as a tool for disrupting some of the deepest spoken and unspoken boundaries reproduced in many political education spaces. These spaces, on the one hand, want to challenge hierarchical social structures outside but, on the other, often reproduce classroom hierarchies inside. In the name of political urgency the all-knowing teacher/leader is expected to inculcate 'the masses' with the 'correct' political line. This is an exaggerated view of some of the vanguardist political education tendencies or traditional leftist orthodoxies that persist in Cape Town (and elsewhere) today. Despite the exaggeration, it is certainly very rare for people to be encouraged to draw or do creative work more generally as part of a political education programme. Art is often seen as frivolous unless it is explicitly and unambiguously political, when it is used in very dogmatic ways to illustrate an ideological position. Creative practice tends to get subordinated to the political line, rather than creativity itself being understood as a liberatory orientation to the world and therefore something to nurture in and encourage in all people – especially activists.

We think we need to make and defend the space internal to movements for thinking creatively and understand this creative space as central to sustaining ourselves, our souls and our organisations. We need to imagine what

a liberatory future might be, and what it might take to get there. But we also need to move beyond the social realism that Marxist-derived political traditions often get stuck in, and not constrict our imagination to the political project. We need to dream and practice dreaming because, as Ben Okri's Dad reminds us, 'sometimes we are more awake in our dreams: we hear what the spirits are whispering ... [and] we become what we really are' (Okri, 1998, p. 329). The liberation of the mind from the confinement and the disciplinary tendencies of Euro-modernity is as much the project as the material struggle, indeed they are intimately connected. In the words of an anticolonial Martinican marxist, surrealist and philosopher René Ménil (2009, p. 83):

Nothing is more real than the imaginary especially when it is considered only imaginary.

Reality and the imagination are not opposite the way that *being* and *nothingness* are, but rather the way *being* and what *will be* are.

Of our dreams we ask questions, to their answers we listen, and we act in the light of their advice.

Any possibility of a post-border world requires unlearning and unpacking the historical baggage of borders, imagining and dreaming something different, creatively devising and planning how to get there, and struggling to realise it. Creative practice should not be seen the exclusive preserve of people who self-identify as artists. Nor should politics be seen as the exclusive territory of explicitly 'political' organisations or movements.

Beyond...

As one of the world's greatest cricket players of all time, then West Indian captain Sir Viv Richards, along with other players, refused a blank cheque to break the sports boycott against apartheid South Africa and play in 'rebel' tours in 1983 and again 1984. Frank I recalls on the resonance of the South African struggle in the Caribbean:

The anti-apartheid fight, the anti-colonial fight was very much a part of the Caribbean struggle also. It was a real sense of horror: Black people were just being shot down, mercilessly. And particularly those Alsatian dogs running through Soweto, biting up people etcetera. It brought tears to the eyes of Caribbean watchers man. There was always the feeling that we could do everything to assist them, not only in song and in cultural expressions, but in the field of cricket also, in imposing the sanctions against South Africa.¹⁹

While Viv and others expressed solidarity with the South African struggle, refusing flat out to go and play regardless of the pay, certain members of that

team, 'mercenaries' as they were branded, went to play the apartheid cricket team, Michael Holding, perhaps the best fast bowler of all time, also part of that great team, was incensed at the players who agreed to play, who broke the sanction for a bunch of money. He rhetorically questioned, enraged: 'how can you go and support a regime like that?' Colin Croft, one of those who elected to play, who was publicly shamed and rejected by much of the West Indian public, refused to be characterised as a mercenary, claiming that cricket was his job and he needed to play as it was his livelihood. Viv, on the other hand, refused to reduce cricket to a job: 'You felt seriously embolded with the folks who were suffering in South Africa, these human injustices taking place for so many years'. Through this, he refused the borders between his emotions and ethics, his politics and his profession, as well as the borders between the Caribbean and South African anti-colonial struggles. What we are trying to do through our praxis is use forgotten or conveniently-ignored moments of this kind of beyond a boundary solidarity, and the debates around it, to show examples of alternatives that refuse political and disciplinary borders. The West Indian team refused to see the geographically-distant South African struggle as separate to themselves and they refused to be only cricket players. They insisted on being emotionally switched-on and ethically responsive political actors.

While in the classroom we could just piece together and teach a history of exploitation and resource extraction, or the creation and reproduction of colonial borders, and borders within borders, or even resistance histories to any of these. But what we want to do is provide space for exploration, critique *and* creation. In small ways we are trying to push against the borders that discipline and depolitise education spaces, the borders that divide and demarcate specialisations, and fragment a sense of urgency, agency, relationship, and responsibility to act on what we learn (by separating historians from artists from activists). Our anti-disciplinary praxis in the classroom has been focused on interrogating the political problems of borders – looking at what it is exactly that borders, of different types, hold in (place), and who benefits from their persistence. From that base, we collectively explore their history – how and why boundaries have been built, and how they are maintained. We try to interrogate how we have internalised these and other borders and how we perpetuate them either knowingly or (most often) unknowingly. Our praxis beyond the classroom, which shapes, permeates and, in various ways emerges from the classroom and attempts to extend it, necessitates working across borders – in the city, the classroom, in the conceptual, historical, and the political. This work has been focused on trying to extend the classroom to create relationships, solidarity and community across various divides and distances to enable prefigurative enactments of post-border futures in the present. Through the dynamic movement between the classroom and the broader context that constitutes it, we try to nurture and encourage freedom's dreams toward imagining a world beyond borders, thinking about what it will take to bring that world into being through collective action.

Post...

Dear Radical Future,

How are you, friend? We miss you and are looking forward to seeing you soon.

Thanks for letting us know about the 2027 Hispaniola Revolution and the expropriation land, socialisation of wealth, and establishment of community art centres following the dissolution of the borders between Haiti and Dominican Republic! And great to hear that the revolutionary practice was historically so well-informed.

*By way of our news, at the moment we are thinking about trying to bring radical cultural workers together from across the Southern Africa region for a gathering/conference/celebration/engagement of some kind. The idea comes from reflecting on the 1982 Culture and Resistance Symposium and Festival of the Arts which was put together by members of Medu in collaboration with the University of Botswana and the National Museum of Botswana in Gaborone. Through thinking about the importance of cultural work to revolutionary movement and the seeming hardening of national borders on the continent in recent years, this historical example of a post-border praxis engaged in struggle seems to be a useful one for us today. The intention of the gathering would be to learn from each other about the various contexts in which everyone is struggling and develop collective strategies and approaches going forward. We are thinking about calling it *The Continuum*...*

Please let us know what you think!

Love,

Asher and Koni

Notes

- 1 Here Hugh Masekela is in conversation with Larry Madowo on #TheTrend, NTV Kenya, 13 August 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkFvYJLNdkQ> (accessed, heavy heartedly, on the day of his passing on, 23 January 2018).
- 2 Read Benson, Gameze and Koranteng (2017).
- 3 Listen to Zam Nggawana, 'Abaphantsi (Ancestry Suite): Sida Afrika (A Country Without A Name)', *Zimphonic Suites* (Sheer Sound: South Africa, 2001).
- 4 South Africa's role on the continent, and in Southern Africa in particular, is one of a sub/imperialist power. The country's military is involved in 'peace-keeping' missions in Congo and elsewhere, these missions are little more than defending capital investments such as mines. South African capital (which to a large part is hosted offshore and in Europe) dominates the region's economy through supermarkets, financial services and other industries. Its 'internal' economy continues to attract people to work here from all over the continent while at the same time it criminalises immigrants, especially from Africa, deeming them 'foreigners' while depending on the exploitation of their labour.

- 5 The challenges to organising youth in Cape Town are multiple, two of the major ones are silos and space. Young workers are in work-based unions, students are involved in societies and activities at their schools or universities, community activists are based in their communities, and unemployed youth are generally left out of most things. In Cape Town – the colonial city that it is – this post-border work is a significant challenge. It is a challenge not only because of the logistics of coming together from across the segregated city, but also because the construction of space has historically also been the construction of race, racism and other schisms. Any attempt to cross the Cape's borders is implicated in that dialectic.
- 6 This group has now been absorbed into PEP's broader youth programme as one of a number of organisations/collectives which constitute it. At the time of our workshop it was very new and not everyone who was there knew each other or knew why they were there. One person had been invited by Derrick when they met whilst standing in the line at a bank!
- 7 'Migration is Forever, Borders are New – Discussion with Youth Without Borders' (March 2016).
- 8 The Casablanca faction wanted to eradicate colonial borders and move towards an African federation; their position was defeated by the moderate faction, the Monrovia Group. For more information see Adedeji (1993, p. 408).
- 9 *Thomas Sankara: The Upright Man*, a 2006 documentary film by Robin Shuffield. <https://vimeo.com/46137917>
- 10 We have to give props here to Robin Kelley's *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. In the epilogue he imagines himself in a park in New York City, which is where he grew up, thinking about what it looks and feels like in his liberatory vision of the future. This opened up the importance of imagining as a radical and necessary practice, particularly for people involved in struggle.
- 11 The *Housing Assembly* launched in Cape Town in 2009 as a grassroots organisation mobilising for land, water, and housing.
- 12 The workshop was officially titled 'Borders and Divisions in the Past and the Present ... the Future? Challenges to Building Unity'. It took place in Cape Town Housing Assembly Political School on 21 March 2017.
- 13 The Radical African Histories Workshop with Artists took place on 12 November 2016.
- 14 Human/history bingo works like this: each participant gets randomly assigned a historical figure, process, organisation, event, place, etc. They get a paragraph describing this thing on a cue card and a bingo sheet with short descriptions and space for an answer in small squares. Each cue card is one answer to a question square on the bingo sheet. Everyone has to fill in all the squares by finding out information about each person's clue. The first person to complete their bingo sheet wins (it's not about winning but winning is fun). After someone finishes, the group collectively goes through each clue and has a discussion on each of them. The facilitators can prepare additional resources such as videos and/or music or other interesting materials which contribute to the discussion.
- 15 For a history of the relationship between art and politics in South African arts education from the 1970s, see Thulile Gamedze, "WOW_3000ZF (8-21/05/2017)" <https://www.thuligamedze.com/putting-down-some-definitions>
- 16 The workshop was called 'Culture and Resistance/Creativity and Activism' and took place as part of the Popular Education Program Spring School. It was held on 22 September 2017.
- 17 For other creative examples of how Medu has been used in activist and art education sessions recently see *Library, 58 Years to the Treason Trial: Inter-Generational Dialogue as a Method for Learning*, compiled by Kelekele Library.

- 18 Mphahlele (2013) thought that writers should be able to push people to imagine new and different worlds rather than merely recount the miserable conditions of the present.
- 19 Interview in *Fire in Babylon* (a 2010 documentary film by Stevan Riley).

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