

1990

“The entire school was ordered to report to our common rooms because the new president, FW de Klerk, was delivering his opening of parliament speech. The bald Afrikaner told the country that he’s going to change South Africa and dismantle apartheid. With one flick of his podgy finger he unbanned the African National Congress and declared that he would free Nelson Mandela. Mostly for the white kids staring at the TV this didn’t seem to matter much, but judging by the faces of the four black boys, including our head of house, Luthuli, this was something huge and incredible... A hot wind blew papers and leaves around the cloisters and everything seemed sticky and on edge.”

- *Spud*, John van der Ruit¹

2015

“In these schools, we find a certain universalism rooted in the white child and white culture, despite the schools now having black children. Former model C² and private schools included black children under the same assumptions despite the different names, despite the different bodies, despite the different hair, despite the different socio-economic backgrounds. I call it the ‘Add blacks and stir’ model. Stir, while continuing with the same structure, same rules, same teachers, same traditions, same school songs and same curricula. And, of course, this is symbolic of the wider Rainbow Nation project:

¹ John van de Ruit, *Spud*, (London: Penguin, 2012), 215.

² Former model C schools are public schools which were previously reserved for white school children under apartheid.

include blacks but don't dare touch the underlying structures of inequality that rely on racism."

- *Of Coconuts, Consciousness and Cecil John Rhodes*, Panashe Chigumadzi³

These vignettes serve as glimpses into the context of this article: South Africa's (un)integrated schools and universities which have become central within a wider zeitgeist of disaffection. Student activists have demanded a reassessment of the terms which were imagined to have made integration possible in these institutions, terms which did not translate changes in demographic composition into changes in institutional culture.⁴ However these frustrations cannot be isolated from the broader context in which these institutions find themselves, that is, persistent interracial inequality and growing intraracial inequality.⁵ Articulations of transitional *injustice* are challenging the dominant narrative of the success of South Africa's restorative justice process, embodied by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

In this article, post-apartheid South Africa serves as a case study for more general theoretical claims I will advance about the relationship between truth commissions, social transformation and education. I argue that social

³ Panashe Chigumadzi, "Of Coconuts, Consciousness and Cecil John Rhodes", 14th Ruth First Memorial lecture, University of the Witwatersrand, Accessed August 19, 2015, http://www.journalism.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Ruth-First-FINAL-Draft-_-Panashe-Chigumadzi.pdf

⁴ Mbali Matandela, "Rhodes Must Fall: How black women claimed their place," *Mail and Guardian*, March 30, 2015, Accessed August 1, 2015, <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-03-30-rhodes-must-fall-how-black-women-claimed-their-place>

⁵ Elodie Morival, "Top incomes and racial inequality in South Africa" (Master's Thesis, Paris School of Economics, 2011), 3, 6.

transformation will not be meaningfully furthered if young people simply learn that a truth commission occurred and if educators portray commissions as unproblematic emblems of reconciliation. Commissions are inescapable focal points in vernacular and academic debates about transitional politics: whose interests were *served first*, whose interests were *acknowledged but deferred* and whose interests were *ignored entirely*. When these debates are avoided in the formal education space, young people are not given the opportunity to discuss the contestations they inherit. Without an understanding of the friction produced by 'the truth commission option', contemporary political debates about social transformation become decontextualized, difficult to decipher and ultimately misunderstood. Further research may determine whether these claims are relevant to other contexts.

I begin by discussing my own positionality within this analysis before briefly sketching where in the South African secondary school syllabus the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is discussed. This is followed by an explanation of why the TRC is presented uncritically by many teachers. Lastly, I show how this presentation exacerbates the confusion experienced by young political actors trying to understand and act upon their circumstances.

Reading other accounts of history teaching in South Africa I am more acutely aware of how my own analysis reflects aspects of my social position which are not shared by authors of other accounts. I am specifically referring to how

I was a high school student of the 'born free' generation⁶ experiencing these new curricula and experiencing being taught the TRC. I was also a university student in South Africa in 2015 during the first significant wave of post-apartheid protests at South Africa's older universities. This position makes me acutely aware of (and potentially overly sensitised to) the failures of superficial reconciliatory teaching and the anger of the 'born free' generation. There are certainly other aspects of positionality which are interwoven in my analysis such as being a white middleclass woman, but in the context of the available literature on the issue I felt it most important to discuss my generational position.

Before exploring my claims of how teaching is happening and how that is shaping young people's politics, these need to be contextualised by explaining the 'new curricula' that I have referred to. Several attempts were made to develop an inclusive history curriculum that would decisively replace the Afrikaner-nationalist narrative perpetuated in schools.⁷ Under the first post-apartheid curriculum, history became relatively disenfranchised within the polis of high school disciplines, but was somewhat revived through the efforts of Education Minister Kader Asmal in 2002.⁸ By 2004 new resources

⁶ South Africans born into post-apartheid South Africa in the course of the 1990s.

⁷ E. van Eeden and T. Vermeulen, "Christian National Education and People's Education: Historical Perspectives on Some Common Grounds", *New Contree*, 50, (March 2005).

⁸ Elize van Eeden, "South Africa's revised History curriculum on globalism and national narratives in grade 12 textbooks," *Historia*, 55, 1, (May 2010): 112.

were finally being published for a new high school history curriculum.⁹ As Alta Engelbrecht noted, “Although it took ten years, South Africa’s history textbooks have begun to reflect the democratic realities of the country.”¹⁰ The new curriculum controversially included teaching the history of apartheid, which some educators and parents believed was too divisive and too painful to be discussed in schools.¹¹ The TRC itself recommended not only that the history of apartheid be taught nationally, but that its own work and findings be part of the syllabus.¹² Although the TRC

did not produce a didactic version of its report, or even an abridged version intended for and easily available to a general audience, South Africa has nonetheless made considerable commitments in education policy and curriculum to teaching about apartheid and the issues taken up by the TRC—guilt, healing and reconciliation. The TRC and the challenges of facing the past and how it relates to the nation’s future is a theme presented briefly in the national Curriculum Document, and in more detail in the national Assessment Document.¹³

⁹Alta Engelbrecht in Eluned Roberts-Schweitzer (ed.), *Promoting Social Cohesion Through Education: Case Studies and Tools for Using Textbooks*, (World Bank Publications, 2006), 74-74.

¹⁰ Ibid, 74.

¹¹ James Wilson, “The High Stakes of Remembering The Past in the South African History & Social Sciences Classroom: Creating A Way Forward For White Staff & Students”, *Yesterday and Today*, 1, (2007), 239.

¹² Glenda Wildschut, “Some Lessons for Education to be Learned from the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission”, VHS DVV International, (2007) <http://www.dvv-international.de/en/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-682007/history-workshops-and-adult-education/some-lessons-for-education-to-be-learned-from-the-south-african-truth-and-reconciliation-commission/>

¹³ Elizabeth A. Cole and Karen Murphy, International Centre for Transitional Justice Research Brief, “History Education Reform, Transitional Justice and the Transformation of Identities”, October 2009, 3.

The TRC appears briefly in the Grade 9 curriculum, crowded in the same module as other transitional topics such as the negotiations leading up to the 1994 elections, the South African Constitution and governmental bodies for land restitution.¹⁴ However, in Grade 12, the final year of high school, the commission is discussed in more depth in the course of “Topic 5: The coming of democracy in South Africa and coming to terms with the past.”¹⁵ For this reason, my analysis will primarily be concerned with the dynamic of teaching the TRC in Grade 12, rather than in Grade 9.

Although I draw on theoretical literature, news media and political commentators for my analysis, I have attempted to ground the analysis in the experiences of history teachers themselves. The experiences that I refer to in my analysis include articles written by teachers published in the South African history education journal *Yesterday and Today* as well as the written reflections of teachers in a guide to teaching sensitive history published by the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, based in Cape Town, South Africa. However one of the limitations of using these accounts is that the context of writing for these publications may have increased the likelihood of the accounts speaking to the importance of reconciliatory teaching.

Including the TRC in the syllabus presents an opportunity for educators to speak candidly about the disaffection associated with the commission, the

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Department of basic education, “Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Grade 12; History” Accessed August 1, 2015, 30.
<http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=F99lepqD6vs%3D&tabid=570&mid=1558>

limited justice received by victims of apartheid and the contestations around 'reconciliation' that still persist. As one teacher acknowledges, "the History classroom is the only designated space for continuing dialogue about race and power on a national scale."¹⁶ However, many teachers do not choose to display an openness to critique of the commission or restorative justice in South Africa more generally. The following section explains why classroom dialogue on this issue is constrained at multiple levels, beginning at the level of the school as a whole.

Although our conception of transitional politics is informed by the family, by the community, by physical public spaces, by popular versions of truth commission reports, by religious instruction and by the media, classroom instruction and the site of the school are still vital in shaping this conception.¹⁷ This is because within the context of a transitional society's unease and displacement, schools form stabilising symbols, representing "expectations of normalcy, safety, peace, collective learning, trust and hope."¹⁸ The secondary education system plays an immense role in socializing students into the values and beliefs prescribed for social continuity as well as in attempting to unite learners within "the reifying conceptual tyranny of the nation-state...

¹⁶ Denise Gray, "Race, power and me: My position as a History educator in relation to the position of learners", *Yesterday and Today*, 13, (2015), 105.

¹⁷ Elizabeth Cole and Karen Murphy, *Identities in Transition: Challenges for Transitional Justice in Divided Societies*, ed. Paige Arthur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 342.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Cole and Karen Murphy, *Identities in Transition: Challenges for Transitional Justice in Divided Societies*, ed. Paige Arthur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 336.

under one flag, one language and one narrative”.¹⁹ This conservative character also explains why *that with the potential to disrupt*, such as disagreement regarding truth commissions, may be subject to silencing.

The muted institutional culture of schools is exacerbated in South Africa by the racial stratification within the school hierarchy. A teacher reflects that,

“In the South African History classroom, the complexities of history and inequality are almost always immediately present in the structure of the class itself, of the school, and often in the relationship between the learner and the educator. In my case, the traces of history are most obvious where I am white and middle class, and where my learners are black and often less privileged. This historical residue might also be felt in working class and in rural schools, where by virtue of their level of education, the educator may be marked as privileged relative to their learners.”²⁰

Teachers within these stratifications perceive open discussions of the persistence of apartheid-era injustice as a threat to the structures of power of the school and that such discussion will erode the students’ faith in both school and staff.²¹ For example, these fears materialised for one teacher when during a history lesson on apartheid crimes students responded with,

¹⁹ Pierre Bordieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in society, culture and education*, (London: SAGE, 1990)

²⁰ Denise Gray, “Race, power and me: My position as a History educator in relation to the position of learners”, *Yesterday and Today*, 13, (2015), 102.

²¹ Ibid, 102.

“Don’t you think it is time for our white principal to go back to his own brothers and sisters? We don’t want whites here.”²² Criticism of the TRC may be imagined, therefore, to open up a Pandora’s box, the contents of which could undermine the legitimacy and stability of the school.

At another level, the curriculum itself reflects a constraining discourse about truth commissions which limits room to manoeuvre classroom dialogue. This is the discourse –which also very much exists outside of the curriculum and in wider political discourse- where truth commissions function to book-end atrocity.²³ Truth commissions try to demonstrate a radical break and disaffiliation from the old order so as to rehabilitate the relationship between state and population.²⁴ A caricatured but illustrative representation of what a commission symbolises is that ‘wrong has been done, we shall surface that wrong to show how different we now are from the past, and thus the past shall be put to rest.’ However, this myth of finitude has been challenged on the grounds of the continuities between modes of old and new regimes and on the grounds of harms to victims persisting into post-commission society.²⁵ Poverty, trauma, division, inequality and a host of other baggage denies that the past has (or can) be put to rest.

²² Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, “Teaching Sensitive Material in the Classroom: An Additional Resource to Teaching the Truth and Reconciliation Commission” Accessed August 15 2015, 10.

²³ Anne Orford. “Commissioning the Truth”, *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, (2006).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Therefore South Africa is an acute example where, for many victims, violation is iterative.²⁶ Engagement with this requires teachers to be able to explain not just the spectacle aspects of apartheid crimes the TRC recognised, but the aspects of apartheid's slow violence that the commission did not recognise.²⁷ The on-going, subtler effects of the apartheid system conflict with the sense of closure and resolution implied by the teleological language of the curriculum. For instance, the specific Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement which provides teachers with precise mandates of what and how to teach the history of the TRC in Grade 12 begins with "How *did* South Africa emerge as a democracy from the crises of the 1990s, and how *did* South Africans come to terms with the Apartheid past?" "How has South Africa chosen to remember the past?" (my emphasis)²⁸ The account of a teacher at an Afrikaans-medium, rural school in which she speaks about her experience teaching the TRC to a mostly "coloured"²⁹ class highlights students' own resistance to being positioned as having 'come to terms with the past':

"The learners said blacks are still targeted and are still suffering from the past. They asked whether apartheid was to blame for the way

²⁶ G.D. Breetzke, "Understanding the magnitude and extent of crime in post-apartheid South Africa", *Social Identities*, 18, 3, (2012).

²⁷ Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the environmentalism of the poor*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011)

Oupa Makhalemele, "Race and Identity in Schools: Young South Africans Engaging with a Changing Environment", Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, Race and Citizenship in Transition Series, 2005.

<http://www.csvr.org.za/wits/papers/paprctp7.htm>

²⁸ Department of basic education, "Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement: Grade 12; History" Accessed August 1, 2015, 30.

<http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=F99lepqD6vs%3D&tabid=570&mid=1558>

²⁹ "The use of the words Black, Coloured, Indian and White refer to the apartheid-based racial classification of South Africans", Elodie Morival, "Top incomes and racial inequality in South Africa" (Master's Thesis, Paris School of Economics, 2011), 6.

people still behave; that killing is still a part of our daily lives... I could see the anger towards whites in my learners' eyes. Most of them live on farms owned by whites.”³⁰

This boundedness in the framing of the conflict in the curriculum echoes the pressure on teachers to prescribe ‘reconciliation’ in their classrooms.

Reconciliation becomes conflated with virtue, progress and principle and is constructed as apolitical. This prescriptivism is particularly severe within the subject of history. The Department of Education published “The Manifesto On Values, Education and Democracy, which serves to underpin education reform in South Africa post 1994,” stating that “More than any other discipline, good History put to good use taught by imaginative teachers can promote reconciliation.”³¹ In a similar vein Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga announced in her 2014 budget vote speech that the status of history should be elevated because of the possible “benefits” of the subject, including “contributing to nation building, national pride, patriotism, social cohesion and cultural heritage.”³²

The infusion of civic ideals into history education by the Department has been criticised by Elize van Eeden, asserting that history should not “serve as a

³⁰ Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, “Teaching Sensitive Material in the Classroom: An Additional Resource to Teaching the Truth and Reconciliation Commission” Accessed August 15 2015, 13.
<http://www.ijr.org.za/publications/pdfs/An%20additional%20resource%20guide%20to%20teaching%20the%20TRC.pdf>

³¹ Gordon Brookbanks, “Inspiring History learners: Getting the recipe right in the History classroom”, *Yesterday and Today*, 12, (2014), 92.

³² Andisiwe Makinana, “Motshekga looks to history to fix SA's pride”, *Mail and Guardian*, <http://mg.co.za/article/2014-07-16-education-dept-looks-to-history-to-fix-sas-pride>

‘social agent’ for whomever... History cannot act as an agent to teach learners about the ultimate moral way to live. It can only present the ways in which people lived and cherished certain moral values.”³³ Peter Kallaway puts it more baldly claiming that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement holds “older apartheid era ideas that the essence of the curriculum is to impart various content(s) to ‘learners’ in order to teach some kind of, usually unarticulated, though implied, LESSON. A hidden curriculum!”³⁴ And indeed many teachers have internalised the idea that they are meant to act as conduits for nationally approved value sets, but most significant here are cases where they felt it was their role to teach ‘the values of reconciliation.’ Two history teachers described reacting to a class where some learners were denigrating restorative justice: “I tried to tell them about Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu’s teachings on forgiveness and reconciliation, but I didn’t think I was very convincing.”³⁵ Another lamented that “anger dominated the lesson and we lost the focus on reconciliation.”³⁶ While it is no longer possible to argue that education can ever be a value-free process,³⁷ there is still a duty to investigate the underlying intentions and consequences of the values promoted by education. Therefore unlike van Eeden and Kallaway I am not

³³ Elize van Eeden, “South Africa’s revised History curriculum on globalism and national narratives in grade 12 textbooks,” *Historia* 55, 1, (May 2010): 118.

³⁴ Peter Kallaway, “History in Senior Secondary School CAPS 2012 and beyond: A comment”, *Yesterday and Today*, 7, (2012), 33.

³⁵ Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, “Teaching Sensitive Material in the Classroom: An Additional Resource to Teaching the Truth and Reconciliation Commission” Accessed August 15 2015, 18.
<http://www.ijr.org.za/publications/pdfs/An%20additional%20resource%20guide%20to%20teaching%20the%20TRC.pdf>

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁷ Kevin Harris, *Education and Knowledge: The Structured Misrepresentation of Reality*, Routledge, 2016.

taking issue with the existence of a 'hidden curriculum' as such, but rather its contents and implementation.

To further this point it is worth describing how this reconciliatory 'hidden curriculum' is counterproductive because the term 'reconciliation' for South Africans is not necessarily something whose meaning is open-ended and constantly in-the-making, which is the sense intended by some post-conflict education writers who use the term.³⁸ Rather, 'reconciliation' has, to a significant degree, become calcified in South Africa's popular discourse to the extent that this total openness in interpretation is not currently possible. Instead of reconciliation having the potential to disrupt power relations, it is seen by many South Africans as a discursive device to constrain action for change in power relations. This constraining view of reconciliation, a view which sees reconciliation as a concept with no emancipatory dividend for contemporary South Africa, is what Danielle Bowler describes as Reconciliation 1.0:

“The vocabulary and grammar of Reconciliation 1.0 pervades and frames many of the difficult, complex conversations that we are attempting to have, while itself presenting us with a vision of

³⁸ Zvi Bekerman and Michalinos Zembylas, *Teaching Contested Narratives: Identity, Memory and Reconciliation in Peace Education and Beyond*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 22.

Reville Nussey, “The ‘dance’ of reconciliation: Understanding the complex steps in a reconciliatory pedagogy using an oral history assignment”, *Yesterday and Today*, 12, (2014).

things that is deceptively simple: 'Apartheid happened. We are now here. We have to move on. We have to live together.'"³⁹

How teachers adopt or resist Reconciliation 1.0 has not yet been researched in depth. It is only suggested in small-scale reports of teachers' unwillingness to talk about race or 'politics' and their reversion to "a deliberately sanitised, edited version of history, veering away from any controversial topic."⁴⁰

Similarly, teachers fear that prolonged discussions of the recent past could alienate white learners as such discussions may surface questions of how they relate to the guilt and blame associated with the past and with white South Africans.⁴¹ The implication is that issues of redress and transformation are not surfaced. A crucial hypothesis of my paper is that the combination of history teachers' feelings of obligation to further reconciliation and this reading of reconciliation has a drastic effect on how teachers can refer to the TRC. They resort to narrating a truth commission like a parable, a foreordained moral lesson. To moralise a contentious process is to present it as uncontentious, in other words to present it as a metaphysically preapproved

³⁹ Danielle Bowler, "The Complexity of Revolution" *Eyewitness News*, Accessed 27 August 2015, <http://ewn.co.za/2015/08/27/OPINION-Danielle-Bowler-The-complexity-of-revolution>

⁴⁰ Peter Kallaway, "History in Senior Secondary School CAPS 2012 and beyond: A comment", *Yesterday and Today*, 7, (2012).

Denise Gray, "Race, power and me: My position as a History educator in relation to the position of learners", *Yesterday and Today*, 13, (2015), 102.

Maryke Bailey, "FeesMustFall, teacher's view: History can re-shape the future", *Daily Maverick*, 2015, <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2015-10-29-feesmustfall-teachers-view-history-can-re-shape-the-future/#.VpyckIN97BI>

⁴¹ Elizabeth A. Cole and Karen Murphy, International Centre for Transitional Justice Research Brief, "History Education Reform, Transitional Justice and the Transformation of Identities", October 2009, 3.

sermon of how things should be. This sermonising can rob a class of any real debate about the commission.

South Africa would not be alone in the co-opting of reconciliation in education to eliminate responsibility for injustice and hinder transformation. Education reforms advocated for by the Peruvian TRC were so abused that they “at times relied on assumptions and envisioned outcomes that were contrary to the vision of reconciliation put forward by the TRC, a vision that prioritised the transformation of inequalities and the acknowledgement of conflict-related injustices.”⁴² Similarly, Spanish and Chilean textbooks “translate a reconciliatory discourse of political and social harmony into a discourse in which no responsibility is explicitly attributed to the perpetration of negative or violent events, for example... ‘the violation of Human Rights continues to be a conflict that has not been resolved by Chilean society.’”⁴³

The final section of this analysis will speak to the problems associated with a history teacher only coming to an uncritical rendition of the TRC. The challenge is *not* that all students will absorb the logic of Reconciliation 1.0. Conditions of injustice will ensure that there will be those who resist this interpretation of the TRC. (This may happen silently or loudly, as reported by one teacher who screened a video of the TRC hearings: “when there were victims saying they forgave the perpetrators, the learners would shout that

⁴² Julia Paulson, *Education and Reconciliation: Exploring Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations*, (A&C Black: London, 2011), 8.

⁴³ Oteíza & Pinto in Katalin Morgan, “Stereotypes, prejudices, self and ‘the other’ in history textbooks”, *Yesterday and Today*, 7, (2012).

they wouldn't have forgiven anybody.”⁴⁴) The major challenge is that those students who do internalise the curriculum's message (that the TRC has resolved the past) are often not exposed to serious dialogue with alternative interpretations; their views are not authoritatively challenged. Messages of overcoming the past resonate in political discourse, in educational discourse and, for many, in familial discourse but messages of the iteration of the past are less trumpeted within those authoritative channels. In other words, although resisters are more familiar with the rationale of the internalisers, internalisers have no reference point to understand resisters. As Zama Ndlovu puts it, “Over time I have had to constantly remind myself that my white friends and I occupy the same spaces but live in different worlds. In their world, apartheid was a 46-year-long incident that ended in 1994, the moment Nelson Mandela dropped his ballot into the ballot box.”⁴⁵ Ndlovu could see into the temporality of their ‘different world’, but they could not see into hers.

This schism is apparent in how young people react to youth politics which invoke redress of past injustice. Both black and white students may internalise the narrative that “the past was sad, painful and over; the way to a better life was through hard work, good grades and a respectable profession.”⁴⁶ They understood their prescribed role in the new regime to be “to move away from

⁴⁴ Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, “Teaching Sensitive Material in the Classroom: An Additional Resource to Teaching the Truth and Reconciliation Commission” Accessed August 15 2015, 18.

⁴⁵ Zama Ndlovu, “Some of my very best friends are white ...” *Mail and Guardian*, September 30 2014, Accessed August 1 2015.

<http://mg.co.za/article/2014-09-30-some-of-my-very-best-friends-are-white>

⁴⁶ Emma-Louise Mackie, “Attitudes to History and Senses of the Past Among Grade 12 Learners in A Selection of Schools in the Durban Area, 2004: A Pilot Study”, School of Human and Social Studies in the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Masters Thesis., 123.

politics and protest and take advantage of the opportunities a democratic South Africa would bring them.”⁴⁷ Without exposure to either the extent of irresolution or to alternative conceptions of the meaning of the past for the future, such students cannot make sense of their peers’ political stance to reject the official narrative of reconciliation. Some students’ demands for transformation and recognition of unfinished business have been met with bewilderment from other young people whose counter-protest was ‘apartheid is over’.⁴⁸ They -along with dominant adult discourse- can only interpret protest action, particularly within the education sphere, as automatically “failing to live up to the tenets of responsible citizenship within South Africa’s new democracy.”⁴⁹ I am not arguing here that the messages of various counter-Rainbow-Nation movements should be uncritically absorbed by young people. Such a stance would be to advocate for simply a different hegemony which, as Ilan Gur-Ze’ev points out, also does not challenge its “own situatedness, its violences, its representations, its conceptual apparatus, and its yardsticks for evaluation of the world.”⁵⁰ He asks “in what sense is the violence of normalising education within and among oppressed groups different from the violence of the hegemonic groups?”⁵¹ Therefore my argument is rather that the particular way of teaching the TRC I have

⁴⁷ Siobhan Glanvill, “Analysing the construction of South African youth in images and texts around the time of June 16 2011”, *Yesterday and Today*, 7, (2012).

⁴⁸ The Daily Vox, “#RhodesMustFall: No end in sight as students sit tight”, 2015.

⁴⁹ Siobhan Glanvill, “Analysing the construction of South African youth in images and texts around the time of June 16 2011”, *Yesterday and Today*, 7, (2012).

⁵⁰ Ilan Gur-Ze’ev, “Challenging the deception of leftist emancipatory education”, *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, Volume 9, Number 2, 2001, 281

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 283.

discussed here is impeding a valuable *dialogue* between groups who think differently.

In conclusion, the mere existence of truth commissions cannot comprehensively address the project of social transformation, a project whose timespan is necessarily longer than a truth commission's public life. Social transformation is an intergenerational project, that is, one that is not only relevant to the 'witness' generation- those who were adults at the time of the commission, experiencing the hearings in real time- but also to their children. However, this project is hindered in South Africa by the practice of secondary school teachers uncritically echoing the dominant narrative that the past has been sufficiently dealt with by means of the TRC. They equip students to recite a history, but not to negotiate their place in history, a critical skill for young citizens entering a site of on-going contestation around the meanings of 'integration' and 'reconciliation'. If post-commission societies are to flourish in all the ways that those who instituted the restorative process had hoped, then youth need to be given the skills to understand the disaffection associated with that process.