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## **Diffractional Memory-Stories and Response-Activeness in Teaching Social Justice**

This article presents a diffractive arts-based narrative that results from a re-turn of our work with subjectivity and memory in relation to our involvement with teaching social justice and diversity in education. Through intra-action, we explore the entanglement of subjectivity and memory in working towards different possibilities for more response-active social justice curricula and pedagogy. The concept of nested-time informs our diffractive narrative as we engage with our experiences and becomings in a non-linear and collaborative way. We use the concept of shared responsibility (Zembylas, 2018) as an intermezzo to memories of discomfort, emotions of guilt, self-doubt, messiness, frustration, and complexity and the way these might help us to think and act differently. The diffractive memory-stories thus create possibilities for response-activeness as we imagine new responses and actions against social injustices and sufferings in our classrooms and in our communities.

**Keywords:** Diffraction; memory; narrative; nested-time; shared responsibility; social justice education

### **Introduction**

In this article, we explore the entanglement of subjectivity and memory in working towards different possibilities for more response-active social justice curricula and pedagogy. We conceptualise response-activeness as responding with care and compassion by taking responsibility to (collectively) act against social injustices and suffering in our classrooms and beyond. Through the affective exchange of our work with subjectivity and memory in relation to our experiences in teaching social justice, we aim to think through transformative possibilities; through the indeterminacy of the present moment towards the creation of new socially just pedagogical responses and actions. Our use of the concept response-active

subsequently signifies our understanding that within the context of transformative possibilities, response should always be translated into action.

This article presents a diffractive collective biography that emerges from our interaction with each other and the flow of our memories and experiences of teaching the same social justice education module at different times at a higher education institution in South Africa. In this module, which is compulsory for all first-year pre-service teacher education students and has an enrolment of over 1000 students, we interrogate issues of social justice and diversity within the education context in South Africa. The concepts of nested-time and memory inform the creation of our diffractive narrative, and are discussed in depth in this article. As our memories flowed into the present, the entanglement of the past and the present – and the creative exchange between memory and the current present – enabled the affective turn of memories of discomfort, emotions of guilt, self-doubt, messiness, frustration and complexity into new possibilities. Premised on our understanding of memory as a fundamental aspect of becoming (Jones, 2011), we read our memories and narrative through the appearance of difference to move to a more response-active approach to social justice curricula and pedagogy. We acknowledge that in and through time, the entwining of memories and experiences can multiply in ways that leave the pedagogical process open for new and innovative possibilities for social justice education. In this article, we use the concept of shared responsibility (Zembylas, 2018) as an intermezzo to help ourselves and our students to think and act differently in bearing the responsibility for injustices in our communities and the world.

### **Social justice education in the South African higher education context**

Teaching for social justice in South Africa means teaching in the shadow of apartheid's legacy of institutionalised racial oppression, and in the proximity of ongoing race-based inequalities, albeit with the hope of making a different present and a new future. The first democratic election

in 1994 introduced the de-legalisation of apartheid and the constitutional protection against discrimination based on “race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth” (Republic of South Africa, 1996, section 9(3)). Post-apartheid discourse of equity and redress did, however, not absolve South Africa’s racialised history. Underneath such discourses, the production of differential status between racialised social groups remains on-going (Moses, van der Berg and Rich, 2017). Principles of social justice underpin all education reforms post-1994, yet despite social justice being enshrined in policy reform, a 2008 report on transformation in higher education found racism and sexism to be pervasive, not in institutional policies but rather in the lived experiences of students and staff (Department of Education, 2008). 2015/2016 earmarked the beginning of student protest movements against apartheid and colonial symbols and financial exclusion. Movements like #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall foregrounded the need for transformation and the decolonisation of the higher education space (Jansen, 2017). This post-traumatic context (cf. Zembylas, 2017) constitutes the teaching space into which our students and we, as teacher educators for social justice, bring a tapestry of self (cf. Arshard, 2012). In our context, the tapestry of self can entail an intricate interweaving of personal experiences, material conditions, disadvantage and privilege, and indirect knowledge and direct memories of apartheid (Kruger & Le Roux 2017, 2020; Jansen, 2009). While higher education has become a troubled space of tensionality, our teaching for social justice has further been challenged by racial incidences at our higher education institution (Dick, Kruger, Müller & Mockie, 2019), and racial tension that plays out along language lines.

It is important to briefly explain the connection between race and language within the context from which we write. In 2008, the racial tension on the Bloemfontein campus of the University of the Free State (UFS) came to a boiling point. At that stage, the campus residences were still segregated by race and the university introduced a new placement policy to accelerate

racial integration. This policy prompted four White male Afrikaner students from the Reitz residence to post a 10-minute video in which they take five Black cleaners through a series of notorious and humiliating initiation rituals (Lazenby & Radebe 2011; Marais & De Wet 2009). What is now commonly referred to as "the Reitz incident", caused huge racial tension on campus, and national reaction led to the establishment of a Ministerial Committee on Progress Towards Transformation in Public Higher Education Institutions. The committee found racism and sexism to be pervasive in institutions of higher education; not in institutional policies, but rather in the lived experiences of students and staff (Soudien et al. 2008).

The social justice module we discuss in this article was developed after the Reitz incident and thus emerged from a context where the need for rapid transformation was recognised and attended to at the UFS. At the same time, the existing parallel medium language policy with Afrikaans and English being the two languages of teaching and learning, was often translated into continued racial division in lectures. Afrikaans classes were offered to mostly White<sup>1</sup> and some Coloured students, whereas English classes were composed primarily by Black students, as well as a few White, Coloured, and Indian students. The parallel medium language policy became contentious as non-Afrikaans speaking students perceived the policy "to deny them a level intellectual competing ground with Afrikaans-speaking students" (Mwaniki, 2012, p. 230) and "Afrikaans-speaking students perceive[ing] any attempt at tinkering with the PMP [parallel medium policy] as an affront to their language rights" (p. 230). Although a newly adopted language policy in 2016 stipulated that all lectures, study material, and examinations in undergraduate teaching and learning should be in English (<https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/default-source/policy-institutional-documents/language->

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, we made a decision to refer to the racial categories inherited from pre-1994 Apartheid South Africa, namely White, Black, Coloured, and Indian. This decision was informed by the fact that the lived experiences in South Africa largely remain determined by constructed racial categories, and these categories are still widely used within educational institutions. As such, the acknowledgement of the impact of prevailing racialised identities on the lived experiences of South Africans is important to consider within the education context (cf. Bell, 2007, p. 118).

policy.pdf?sfvrsn=ea4dc321\_), the politics around the Afrikaans language remain complex and racial tension along language lines continue to persist (cf. Bargueño, 2012; Mwaniki, 2018). The preceding background seeks to clarify why our reference to the inherited racial categories from our apartheid past is primarily informed by our acknowledgment that lived experiences in South Africa largely remain determined by constructed racial categories and how such categories are often re-inscribed through language.

As three White Afrikaans speaking teacher educators, we share a commitment to the development and teaching of social justice education as a response to the oppressive history in which we are embedded. In this article, we reflect on our shared and different experiences to evaluate and develop our pedagogical response to the tension and challenges that we have encountered within ourselves and within the social justice classroom. Through our reflection, we consider new possibilities to move ourselves and our students beyond the limitations of racial categorisation towards shared responsibility for a shared future.

In the initial phases of introducing social justice education in the teacher education programme at the UFS, we were reliant on the work of US-based scholars in the field of social justice education such as Adams, Bell, and Griffin (2007), Ayers, Quinn, and Stoval (2009), and Beverley Tatum (2000). We worked, for example, with Lee Ann Bell's conceptualisation of an inclusive theory of oppression, Iris Marion Young's five faces of oppression, and Bobbie Harro's cycles of socialisation and liberation. We increasingly found, however, that theories of oppression formulated in the US were problematic when translated into the South African context. Increasingly, we have experienced the need to bring social justice closer to home, to bring the personal experiences of the students (and ourselves) into the foreground, and work through the anger and guilt that often erupt around issues of race. In crafting our shared experiences into our diffractive collaborative biography, we explore ways to teach social justice in a manner that does not inadvertently re-inscribe social divisions along racialised lines but

rather seek to create a common vision and take up a shared responsibility through deliberation and participation. Having provided the contextual background against which we created our diffractive collective biography, we next consider how the concepts of nested-time and memory inform our narrative as we engage with our experiences and becomings in a non-linear and collaborative way.

### **Nested-time and memory**

The concepts of nested-time and memory inform the creation of our diffractive narrative. Koro-Ljungberg and Hendricks (2018) note that although the organisation of time stands central to narrative inquiry, the relationship between time and narrative have not adequately been considered. These authors draw on Bergson and Deleuze to “rethink time as a mass of connecting differences” (Koro-Ljungberg & Hendricks, 2018, p. 1). With his concept of *durée* (pure duration), Bergson presents time as a constant blending of instants in contrast to the more common understanding of time “as the chronological succession of instants in consciousness, as an irreversible and linear progression of psychological states” (Al-Saji, 2004, p. 204). Time as *durée* posits that, “each of its instants is internally related to every other instant” (May, 2003, p. 145). This means that the past exists in the present albeit in a different way (referred to as the *virtual*) than the existence of the present in the present (referred to as the *actual*). Given this relationship between the past and the present, Deleuze proposes that “time splits and divides into two flows, the presents that pass and the pasts that are preserved” (cited in Ansell-Pearson, 2005, p. 1120). In this splitting, the past “has not ceased to be. Useless and inactive, impassive, it IS, in the full sense of the word” (Deleuze, 1991, p. 55). One implication of this conceptualisation of time that is important to consider is that time is repositioned as an ontological rather than psychological force “that flows onto the conditions of the present etching, breaking up, and coagulating difference in the passing moment” (Koro-Ljungberg &

Hendricks, 2018, p. 1). As ontological, time is the unfolding of difference, and it is this unfolding that produces becoming. In other words, it is “we who exist and become in time, not time that exists in us” (Ansell-Pearson, 2005, p. 1120; see also May, 2003, p. 146).

It is through taking up Bergson’s proposition of time as heterogeneous, multiple and ontological that Deleuze (1994) is able to conceptualise time as a repetition of difference. Given that time is heterogeneous and multiple, it follows that “repetition does not occur in a discrete line of successive and independent units...; time can never be disconnected from that which precedes it” (Koro-Ljungberg & Hendricks, 2018, p. 4). This repetition occurs as repetition-in-itself, repetition-for-itself, and repetition-for-us. Repetition-in-itself is “time that marches on regardless of what occurs in space” (p. 4; Deleuze 1994, p. 71). This differs from repetition-for-itself in that it is an occurrence independent of consciousness. The third understanding of repetition involves synthesis of repetitions “into events and objects by a subject” (Koro-Ljungberg & Hendricks, 2018, p. 4) and is referred to as repetition-for-us. Repetition-for-itself and repetition-for-us are furthermore likened to Deleuze’s (1994) passive and active syntheses of time. Passive synthesis refers to organic time that exists independently of understanding by a subject and is thus similar to repetition for-itself. It is the time of the “living” present (Lenco, 2013). On the other hand, active synthesis of time involves the contemplation and contraction of repetition for-itself by a subject (Koro-Ljungberg & Hendricks 2018, p. 4) and is “characterized by an understanding on the level of the subject that comes through memory” (Lenco, 2013, p. 82). It is thus similar to repetition for-us. These two syntheses of time compose the concept of nested-time in which the fact that time is multiple, encompassing the past, present and future, and intimately entangled with matter and memory is foregrounded. Since time is multiple, it implies that it does not only belong to the individual as she contracts life in the present (active syntheses), but also involves the pre-personal “process of individuation and change” (Koro-Ljungberg & Hendricks, 2018, p. 5) (passive synthesis).



The concept of nested-time helps us to think differently about lives, narratives and memories as we move away from an essentialised and psychologised understanding of identity towards a subjectivity that is assembled as the various flows of life are contracted by a subject in the present. Jones (2011) argues: “We are conglomerations of past everyday experiences including their special textures and affective registers. Memory should not be seen as a burden of the past, rather it is fundamental to becoming, and a key wellspring of agency” (pp. 875–876). Memory is intimately tied to who we are; our being and our becoming for “whenever we think we are producing memories we are, in fact, engaged in ‘becomings’” (Ansell-Pearson, 2010, p. 161).

By employing this concept, nested-time, in our narrative we attempt to bring into focus the entwinement of the passive and active syntheses of time, of the past and the present, and of matter and memory. Nested-time is thus employed as a creative force, rather than an analytic tool that we use to interpret our narrative. This is because a conceptualisation of time as nested allows for “various organic, temporal, and fleeting connections” (Koro-Ljungberg & Hendricks, 2018, p. 2) that are made in our narrative and the thought-in-the-act (Manning & Massumi, 2014) these produce to be explored in terms of the possible openings they create for response-active curricula and pedagogies. Our use of nested-time in our narrative is twofold: Firstly, we draw on nested-time to reconsider the relationship between the past and the present and the folding of memories in/through time in order to open new possibilities for response-activeness and practising a pedagogy of shared responsibility. Secondly, we employ nested-time in a methodological sense to experiment with how to conduct narrative inquiry differently, namely diffractively. Next, we introduce our approach to creating our arts-based narrative.

### **Diffractive memory-stories**

In this article, we use a multi-method approach that is influenced by narrative, arts-based and collaborative forms of critical qualitative inquiry . Within this multi-method approach, we

attempt to tell our stories in order to “give meaning to ourselves and our experiences – not as a way to mirror those memories and experiences, but rather as a way to construct them” (Spector-Mersel, 2010, p. 208). Furthermore, we agree with Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund (2017, p. 1) that arts-based research allows data to be represented in alternative forms that allow for issues of complexity, affect, and becoming to be foregrounded. We furthermore pursue collaborative inquiry in the form of collective biography (Davies & Gannon, 2012, p. 362) by employing memory-stories to explore the entanglement of the self and others as well as the conditions for new possibilities such entanglements make possible. For Gannon, Walsh, Byers, and Rajiva (2014), collective biography memory-stories “are not merely assemblages of familiar stories, narrated by and about essential and individualised selves”, but rather a means to explore the processes of subjectification and opening texts “to alternative readings and subsequent rewritings” (p. 184). It is, thus, a means of inquiry that concerns the “movements of affect between subjects” (Gannon et al., 2014, p.184) and decentering the “I” by foregrounding how subjects are co-implicated in the lives of others (Davies & Gannon, 2011).

The unfolding of our memory-stories in/through time was, thus, not a matter of us returning to the past as independent, reflective subjectivities who recall experiences and examine the self and the other in relation to teaching issues of social justice. We did not treat our memories as “static representations of a reality that is assumed to be pre-existing and stable” (Hill, 2017, p. 3). Informed by our understanding of memory as intimately entangled with our being and becoming, we draw on Barad’s (2014) concept of *re-turning* as a multiplicity of processes in the making of new possibilities. Within the milieu of nested-time, our turning over and over again of our always–memory-rich-practices (cf. Jones, 2011) bring into focus the entwinement of the passive and active syntheses of time, of the past and the present – and how the folding of memories in/through time opens new possibilities for the teaching of social justice. Such then is diffraction (*diffringere*); a figuration for inquiry that “involves attending

to difference, to patterns of interference and the effects of difference-making practices” (Hill, 2017, p. 2; Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017). In this article, we use diffraction to read attentively the overlapping of our memory-stories and the interference of one with another in order to map the emergence of new and modified narrative meanings. We thus employ our diffractive narrative, as informed by nested-time, as a creative force to explore possibilities for socially just pedagogical responses and actions. For Barad (2014, pp. 168 and 175), diffraction is “an iterative (re)configuring of patterns of differentiating-entangling”; “differences-in-the-(re)making” through onto-epistemological intra-activity. Diffraction creates something ontologically new; it produces differences – through on-going intra-activity, the entanglements of memory with other functions are iteratively reconfigured as creative proliferations of new possibilities. While our collective narrative follows from a diffractive reading of accounts of our memory-stories, the narrative is itself “a diffracted condensation, a threading through of an infinity of moments-places-mattering, superposition/entanglement never closed, never finished” (Barad, 2014, p. 169).

### **Our diffractive narrative**

In our narrative, we weave our memories, our divergent and convergent experiences of working on a first-year social justice module diffractively in order to explore ways that we are, become and belong in the context in which we work. This is done to create an arts-based narrative that we present as an ongoing (re)configuring of creative possibilities for teaching social justice. In keeping with the manner in which we draw on the concepts of nested-time and memory, we do not assign the memories to individual voices nor do we arrange our narrative linearly. What we present to be the voice of one person, should thus rather be understood as a collectively of voices (Müller, Kruger, Lekoala & Mokoena, 2020) given that there is always already a crowd (cf. Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 3). For as Mazzei (2016) states: “there is no longer *a* voice; but voice” (p. 152) that emerges from the entanglement of different human, non-human and

inhuman bodies. Rather, we re-work individual memories and moments in time to create a “nested” visual/textual artwork in which we foreground an affective, response-active engagement with/in curricula and pedagogy. With our visual/textual artwork we explore what it means to teach for social justice “‘with’ memories moving as a fleshy unit ‘in’ space and ‘through’ time” (Murriss & Bozalek, 2019, p. 7).

....

I and we are not apart  
you and I  
share our stories here  
weave our memories  
to create  
a story about teaching  
for social justice  
a story about moving  
between lines  
and mapping surfaces  
seeing  
beyond boundaries  
of blame  
we try to do more  
than harm  
as we share *this*  
responsibility

### **How did we move?**

Remember back then, in 2012?  
We taught classes divided along the lines of language  
the Afrikaans classes were mostly White  
the English classes mostly Black

I often got *the stare*  
strong hostility from the White Afrikaans groups when we spoke about race

said they felt like they were being blamed  
they felt they were made to feel guilty  
for something that they did not choose  
for something that they did not do  
and on the other side of the line  
black students felt angry, frustrated and sad  
angry about injustices they had to endure  
for something they did not choose  
for something that they did not do  
for being Black  
Were we stuck then as we are now?  
We had to move  
in-between and across these lines  
that keep us apart

### **How do we map the surface?**

Part of our task was to make students aware of privilege

We tried to teach how oppression works  
we tried to engage with their lived realities  
we asked those who owned a car to stand  
“Did you notice who is standing?” asked one student  
“Well, why don’t you just buy a car?” another contemptuously replied  
Chaos erupted

We were stunned and frustrated  
we were stuck  
unable to overlay lived lives on structural fault lines that underlie inequality  
we were dispirited  
why don’t they understand?  
see beyond the lines  
beyond the boundary of I  
Grasp this  
Catch that

No

We were stuck  
as we sometimes still are  
between the lines  
on the surface

### **Were we doing more harm than good?**

We decided to put the Afrikaans and English students into one class  
long before it was the university's policy to do so  
we made use of small groups  
diverse groups  
to engage with one another  
and learn about each other's lives

We made progress (we thought)  
but still encountered challenges with  
many students resisting any discussion of diverse sexual orientations  
based on their cultural and religious convictions  
they still do

One student quoted from the bible to explain why homosexuality is wrong  
while another asked: "What if it was your child? What would you do?"  
there was anger, hurt and disappointment,  
but also opportunities to reflect deeply

Students came to us to talk about their struggles with religion  
a student shared with me how she prayed in the evening that when she woke up the next morning  
she would no longer feel the way she did  
we were scared to give the wrong advice  
or not have the right insights to share  
we often worried that we did not possess the wisdom,  
and mostly we still don't know  
we wonder  
are we doing more harm than good?

### **Who is to blame?**

We always say: "There is no blame"  
the Theory tells us this  
but the students hear something else  
"It feels as if everything and everyone is against us"  
"They included *us* because we are White"  
binary thinking that we tried to move away from  
lines that divide  
differences that negate  
a logic of *us and them* still dominates  
Who is to blame?

We told the students to reflect on why they feel this way  
we wanted them to engage with the emotions they are experiencing  
to make sense of it  
to work through it  
engage with their anger and their guilt  
but did we help?  
do we help them now?

Some students felt we were making them feel guilty about who they are  
they felt they were *being targeted*  
whilst others thought we were not doing enough  
not doing enough...this really bothered me  
I felt irritated;  
did I see myself in the students?  
did they see themselves in me?  
in the hierarchies of oppression  
are *we* to blame?

*I* am to blame

I am emotionally unprepared for what I face in this class...  
during a particular lecture, some of the students asked questions in Afrikaans, and I (without  
thinking) interpreted their questions into English  
"Let's rather keep it all in English"

I thought this was the end of it and that I handled the situation sufficiently

but

one student wrote to me saying that he lost all respect for me because I let a wrong thing happen and did not know the difference between right and wrong

Am *I* the right person to teach this module?

At times we underestimate the influence of our positionality

Not being able to discourage students from bringing polarisation into this space,

drawing lines, creating boundaries

again, and again, and again

*us and them*

... it is difficult because you need to be a few steps ahead

and most often you are not ...

we were triggered at times, and even now

we sometimes feel under attack

as if students are waiting for us to slip up

to say the wrong thing

to take sides

to be human

we make mistakes

and do not always give the *right response*

### **Is there a better way to teach this?**

We spoke about the hierarchies of oppression

about the *generic* 'White heterosexual male' as the oppressor

the Theory tells us this

we spoke against the structural legacies of Apartheid

and against persistent structural inequalities

White heterosexual Christian male students often felt we were specifically speaking *against them*

Did we treat the interplay between the structural and existential carefully enough and with sufficient nuance?

Is there a better way to teach this?



The Theory is clear

the categories provided

students plot themselves in a certain point on a line that is presented –

White/Black/Coloured/Indian/homosexual/heterosexual/bisexual/....

to explore intersectionality and identity, power and privilege,

but life is messier than Theory

Does this not perhaps offer both an opening to and a problematising of the theories we employ?

Do social justice theories allow students to move between the points on the line, or even to fall between the points?

We encourage students to become agents of change

but what kind of change are we envisioning and what informs this change?

“Change towards what?” they want to know from us

Is there a better way to teach this?

How does theory inform experience and experience inform theory?

students fitting their personal experiences into overarching theories of oppression

we also do this

students experiencing their being as (over)determined by overarching structural narratives without having the agency to alter these narratives

we also do this

yet, if you presume that personal lives are always determined by such overarching structural narratives, are you ever in a position to change them?

You are to blame

... What if the students start to assume that if *they* change they could make a difference to the overarching structural narratives?

What if *we* assumed the same?

Then we would *share* the *responsibility* to make change possible

What would this look like?

[Insert Figure 1 here]

## **Shared responsibility as proposition for socially just pedagogical responses and action**

As a present moment of practice, our narrative is a diffractive entanglement that includes “the aliveness of the past and the present and the future” (Murriss & Bozalek 2019, p. 7). In it, we explore and produce entanglements of our memories of teaching social justice, of our responses to students and their responses to second-generation memories of a troubled past and their personal experiences of an inequitable present. Entanglements are relations of responsibility that tie our students and ourselves to one another, and in this sense, our narrative is our response to think differently about and take responsibility for “our [collective] inheritances and indebtedness to the past as well as the future” (Murriss & Bozalek 2019, p. 8; Barad, 2014). We cannot and should not break from the past, but how do we take up shared responsibility for that which we inherit from the past and the future with our students? For Barad (2014, p. 183), responsibility is an incarnate relation that is always integral to ongoing intra-actions; an iterative enabling of responsiveness. Given the tensions between overarching structural issues in our society and the very personal narratives of the students and ourselves, how do we move (without leaving the unfinished past behind) with our students towards response-ability; towards taking responsibility for and doing justice to the other through our responses and actions?

From our narrative, it is clear that educators and students often struggle with issues of guilt and anger in the social justice module. According to Sharon Todd (in Zembylas 2018), students might “feel guilt for actions they have not committed, guilt as the result of being overwhelmed by stories of suffering – but it could also turn to anger because they are made to feel guilty for actions they have not committed” (p. 1). Guilt and anger often emerge as the forces that keep us frozen in time, fixed in certain roles or identities, and stifle our ability to move within and beyond such forces to imagine interference with unjust practices. Liberal guilt places emphasis on the individual and the individual’s identity categories, and guilt personified by individual students can lead to feelings of powerless, evoke paralysis and inactivity, and

provoke unproductive action or defensive responses (Todd in Zembylas, 2018). From our diffractive narrative, new ways of thinking about being-with-the world (re)emerge, and we consider Michalinos Zembylas's (2018) concept of shared responsibility as a possibility for responsible (response-active) practice and change through the ongoing being-becoming of enlarged collectivities.

Zembylas (2018) uses Iris Marion Young and Hannah Arendt's views on collective guilt to reposition it as collective responsibility – “a shared, relational and political practice” (p. 3). In shifting the attention away from the causality of blame, collective responsibility is informed by the link between the individual and the social – through social and political processes we are not only interconnected with others, but through these connections our responsibility is formed to take action against unjust practices. In drawing on Young, Zembylas (2018) notes that “responsibility is shared among all those who contribute by their actions or inactions to the perpetuation of the harm committed by others; thus everyone is involved, directly or indirectly, having a political responsibility in evaluating and changing the conditions that sustain harm” (p. 8). Responsibility in this sense is always in relation to the present moment of practice (always now), always in relation to future consequences, and always shared rather than collective. As we have argued earlier though, the present moment cannot be separated from the past and our recollection thereof but should rather be understood as intimately tied to it. In this regard, the relationship between power and memory is potentially important, and specifically the role of memory as wellspring to agency and productive of becoming. Within the context of the current exploration, a consideration of the interplay between molar (macropolitical) and molecular (micropolitical) relations of power could be a fecund exercise. For as argued by Bignall (2010, p. 133) whereas the macropolitics is a politics of form and stable identities, the “micropolitical is a politics of transformation..., of contestation, of difference, of the creation of novel identities through shifting political relations between selves”. We, however, do not

consider the relationship between memory and power in detail here, as we believe a more thorough engagement is needed. It would be necessary to explore questions about the influence of power on subjectivities and experiences of education, and the meaning of different experiences of access to power – both historically and in the present – for collectivities and taking up collective responsibility for working toward social justice.

“Collaboration inbetween people is necessary for the responsible practice of education” (Murriss & Bozalek, 2019, p. 7) and through our productive engagement and thinking with and through our students and other materialities (emotions, passions and intensities), we have to move beyond reactive emotional responses to a more affective engagement with present and past experiences. We all share responsibility for our indebtedness to our troubled past and future, but we bear individual accountability because “there are differential ways of being complicit to oppression and to others’ suffering” (Zembylas, 2018, p. 11). Our personal experiences and subjectivities require different responses and actions as we work in a shared present towards a shared future. It is through ongoing intra-actions in our pedagogical spaces that we need to work through the messiness and uncertainty of teaching for social justice towards a new collectivity; towards the ability to respond to the question: “How do I bear responsibility for the injustices in my community and in the world?” (Zembylas, 2018, p. 12). In this way, we encourage students and ourselves to move beyond the labelling and finger pointing towards a place where nobody is “good” or “innocent” or “bad” or “guilty”, but where everyone is responsible for action. While we are bound together through relations of responsibilities (entanglements), embodied, embedded and shared responsibilities produce kindness and understandings (Hill, 2017). Shared responsibilities might help us and our students to come to think of ourselves not only as being-with-the-world, but also of being-for-others in this world; to think and do differently with regard to our ethical engagement with the world and how we bear responsibility for injustices in our communities and the world.

In moving toward a response-active pedagogy would require us to focus on relationships in the classroom, the unfolding of the entanglement of the past, present and future and the various materialities (emotions, passions and intensities) that permeate this. Such an approach involves recognising the ongoing ethical engagements with the world that our pedagogical practices make possible but also require from us. In responding to this possibility and requirement, we need to consider what enlarged and different collectivities our pedagogical practices make possible (or not). In moving forward, our practices may be informed by grappling with questions such as: What opportunities do we create for students to critically engage with geographies of *inter alia* race, class and gender? How can students who do not share the same lifeworld come together and move forward as a collective? How does this social justice module enable the students to imagine different and enlarged collectivities that cut across the perceived boundaries of received identity categories? How do we enable students and lecturers to think together and outside the boundaries they now know?

### **Ongoing intra-activity**

Our narrative forms an entanglement of individual experiences that form part of a bigger longer pedagogical process. This process is unpredictable, messy and uncertain. We have come to realise, however, that we have to learn from this unpredictability, messiness and uncertainty. Our narrative is intended to create an assemblage of affective memory events that might help us to reach the pedagogical objective of shared responsibility. Accordingly, students (and ourselves as teacher educators) are "...prompted to recognise that all people are implicated in systems of oppression and injustice..." (Zembylas, 2018, p. 10), and given our entanglement with one another's being and becoming, we all share the responsibility to be(come) response-active. What we present in this article is not an attempt to provide an answer to how this might be possible, but rather to highlight the ongoing process that opens up possibilities for a different

present. As aptly indicated by Spector (2015), “there are no best practices that escape the constraints of time, space and mattering; there are only pedagogies that materialize moment to moment” (p. 448). As such, intra-action in classroom spaces remain open to “possibilities of entering new spaces of inventive learning that do not seek to present the *right* answer” (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017, p. 119). It remains open to how the entwinement of our memories in and through time can multiply the ways we can imagine ourselves in relation to sharing responsibility for and taking up action against social injustices and sufferings in our classrooms, in our communities and in the world.

### **Disclosure statement**

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### **Captions of figures**

Figure 1: Nested-time and the un/folding of memory

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